PC ZONE

PC GAMES NIRVANA

#70 DEC 1998

EXCLUSIVE PLAYTEST
From the creators of *Ultima Underworld*...

THIEF:
THE DARK PROJECT

WORLD FIRST REVIEW!

POPULOUS 3
Bullfrog prove they're back on form with *Populous: The Beginning*

SCOOP!
X-WING ALLIANCE AND **DARK REIGN II** FIRST SHOTS

SiN
1ST REVIEW!
The latest *Quake*-killer is here

OVER 40 GAMES REVIEWED
GRIM FANDANGO
CAESAR III
FIFTH ELEMENT
QUAKE II: GROUND ZERO
DUNE 2000
FA PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER 99
SUPERBIKES
KNIGHTS AND MERCHANTS

WHAT'S ON THE COVER DISC?
FULL DETAILS PAGE 174

○ **TINY COMPO:** In what year was the original *Populous* released and on which two platforms? First out of the hat wins a mystery prize – full details on page 7...

IF YOUR COVERMOUNT IS MISSING PLEASE CONSULT YOUR NEWSAGENT

£2.99 DECEMBER 1998 PCZ#70

PLUS! FIFA 99 • BALDUR'S GATE • HYPE: THE TIME QUEST • MYTH 2 • DAIKATANA
WILD METAL COUNTRY • LANDER • SHADOW COMPANY • THE REAL NEVER ENDING STORY

None of us lives for himself only
None of us dies for himself only

ROMANS 14,7

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

Just which are the games that everyone is playing this month? *PC ZONE* takes to the streets clutching a clipboard to find out

⭐ **WORDS/PHOTOS** Andrew Martin

GARETH JONES
26, television engineer

What's on your hard drive?
"*Tomb Raider II, Quake II*, lots of 3D art software, and *Photoshop*."

So, an all round entertainment/ work ethic?
"When I'm not doing anything interesting with it, or whenever it crashes, I shove it up my arse. Oh, and I did once have it balanced on a John Lennon book until I got another two drives. I now have two slaves and one master – as it should be. I hate the sight of computers, they deserve punishing."

STEVEN HUGHES
25, sales consultant

What's on your hard drive?
"*Commandos, Unreal, X-Files, Blade Runner, Lesbos Wrestling*."

Girl-on-girl action for your PC?
"Yeah, it's a very very strange Manga-type thing I got from a computer fair at Mountford Hall."

Why *X-Files*? The *Lesbos* revelation has been spoilt a bit.
"It's actually not that bad. And can I add that Gerard Talbot paid half the money towards it, if that's any excuse."

Do you play for Arsenal?
"No."

AMANDA HARPER
24, video journalist

What's on your hard drive?
"*Chuckie Egg, Tetris, Solitaire, ACDSee, ScreenCam, PCTV*."

You're easily pleased, then?
"No, I just thought I'd adhere to the myth that girls have better things to do than chase expensive pieces of circuit board in order to play games. I did play *Tomb Raider II* once, if that counts. But the woman in it reminded me of someone I went to school with. Right slag, she was."

ZACK DAVIES
10, schoolkid

What's on your hard drive?
"*Final Fantasy VII, Unreal*."

Do you ever do your homework on your PC?
"No, we're not allowed to give the teacher typed out work, so I just play games on it. My Dad does word processing and Internet stuff. But when I get *Klingon: Honour Guard* I'm going to change all his passwords and pinch the computer."

KERI WILLIAMSON
20, student of fine arts

What's on your hard drive?
"*Tomb Raider II, Worms 2, Adobe Illustrator, ICQ*."

So you play games, draw pictures and talk to strangers?
"Draw pictures and talk to strangers, yes. I haven't the time to play games, essentially because my hectic social calendar means I have a life. Spoken as a proper student, as you can see. Oh, and *ICQ* is the greatest invention of the decade."

COURTNEY HARRISON
39 (doesn't look it), security official

What's on your hard drive?
"*Carmageddon, Unreal* and *SimCity 2000*."

Which games would you say are 'not on the list'?
"3D card games, because I haven't got a card yet. But that may change – I like the look of *Klingon: Honour Guard* a bit too much to resist buying one. And I always said they'd never break me."

MICHELLE WHITTAKER
29, hairdresser and unemployed actress

What's on your hard drive?
"*Worms 2, Civilization, Command & Conquer, Addiction Pinball*."

Ooh, strategy!
"Yes, I know. But what satisfaction do you get out of running around with a pretend gun after spending all day with someone's life – their hair – in your hands? And anyway, *Worms 2* with four people shits on everything else."

MIKE KAY
30, office manager

What's on your hard drive?
"*Quake II, Unreal*, and *WarGames* when it comes out."

War? What is it good for?
"Stress. You should try working in an office all day without having *Quake* installed on your PC. There is no better game to play across a network than that. Especially when you can bully the new kid or virtually smash the boss's face in."

STEPHEN EDMUNDS
37, shopping centre manager

What's on your hard drive?
"*Sentinel Returns, C64 Emulator*."

Ah, back in the old skool, I see.
"Absolutely. *Sentinel* was a welcome return to the good old days. It would have been even better if Firebird had published it and it cost £9.99. I live in hope that we'll see *Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit '98, The Return Of Nebulus* and *Wizball 2000* in time for the millennium."

BEN PITTILLA
21, car valeter

What's on your hard drive?
"*F1, Carmageddon, Grand Theft Auto, Quake II*."

I can sense a car link here.
"Well, you know what it's like when you're messing about with them all day and night. I'm still in the middle of a full F1 Championship, but it's been nothing more than a saved game for ages since *GTA* appeared. *Motorcycle Madness* is soon to be installed as well, so it looks like the end for Murray Walker."

SHE'S BACK...

...IN HER BIGGEST ADVENTURE TO DATE

AVAILABLE FROM NOVEMBER 1998

WIN A DAY RACING AT SILVERSTONE PAGE 81
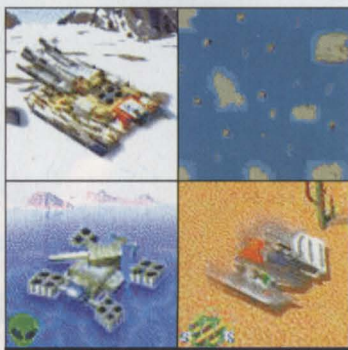
WIN THE TOP 10 PC GAMES SEE THE PC ZONE CHARTS PAGE 24

94 MAGIC & MAYHEM A real-time strategy game with a rather unique twist. Will this end the constant stream of dodgy *C&C* clones? Probably not.

90 SiN This girl is going to bust your balls.

46 THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT A *Quake*-alike with a difference.

180 TOTAL ANNIHILATION ADD-ONS New units and maps.

PCZCONTENTS

PREVIEWS

We take an early look at the games that will blow you away next year

- **16 DARK REIGN II**
- **18 X-WING ALLIANCE**
- **44 DAIKATANA**
- **45 EXCESSION**
- **46 THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT**
- **50 MYTH 2**
- **52 FIFA 99**
- **56 BALDUR'S GATE**
- **58 HYPE: THE TIME QUEST**
- **60 PLAYER MANAGER 98/99**
- **62 WILD METAL COUNTRY**
- **63 LANDER**
- **64 SHADOW COMPANY**
- **65 THE REAL NEVER ENDING STORY**

REVIEWS

The most definitive reviews section around. All the latest and greatest PC games (and, of course, some of the worst) come under the cynical *PC ZONE* microscope. This is the place to come before shelling out on that new game you've got your eye on
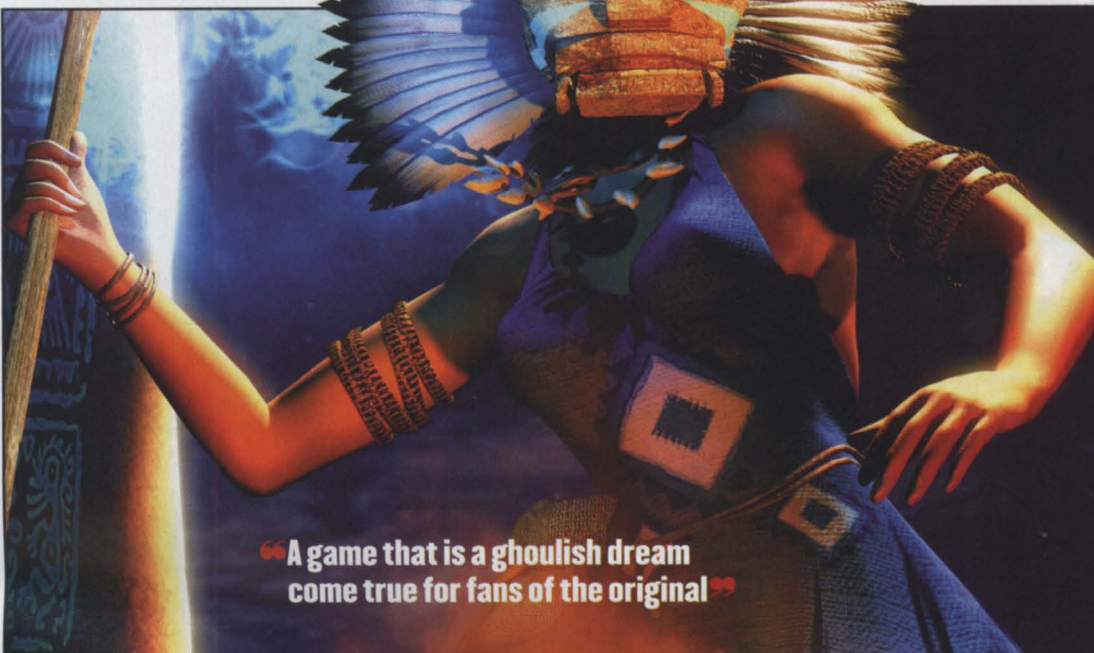
NEW GAMES

- **83 REVIEWS INTRO**
  This month's reviews, an apology, and our scoring system explained
- **84 POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING**
  An exclusive review of the most eagerly awaited game of all time
- **90 SiN**
  Is this the game to finally dislodge *Quake II* from its throne?
- **94 MAGIC & MAYHEM**
  Real-time strategy with a difference from the creators of *X-COM*
- **98 CAESAR III**
  Superbly realised city management sim set in ancient Rome
- **100 THE FIFTH ELEMENT**
  The game of the film, obviously
- **104 LINKS 99**
  The most famous name in golf sims is back
- **106 ISRAELI AIR COMBAT**
  Wreak havoc over Israel in this authentic flight sim
- **108 QUAKE II: GROUND ZERO**
  A rock-hard mission pack for *Quake II*
- **111 FA PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER 99**
  EA's latest attempt to take on *CM2*
- **112 NHL '99**
  The best version of *NHL* ever. No, really
- **115 DUNE 2000**
  Dune 2 gets a '90s revamp
- **116 RING**
  Surreal adventure game from Cryo
- **118 KNIGHTS AND MERCHANTS**
  Serious competition for *Settlers 3*?
- **123 ANNO 1602**
- **123 CLASH**
- **123 F-16: AGGRESSOR**
- **125 F-16 MULTIROLE FIGHTER**
- **125 MiG-29 FULCRUM**
- **125 FLIGHT SIM 98 SCENERY DISKS**
- **126 NIGHTLONG: UNION CITY CONSPIRACY**
- **126 RIVERWORLD**
- **126 SPEARHEAD**
- **126 WARBIRDS**
- **132 FLIGHT SIMS SUPERTEST**
  The best of the bunch, reviewed and rated

BUDGET REVIEWS

- **129 TOTAL ANNIHILATION**
- **129 BETRAYAL IN ANTARA**
- **129 APACHE LONGBOW**
- **129 LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY**
- **130 UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN**
- **130 DUNGEON KEEPER**
- **130 CIVILIZATION II**
- **130 OUTPOST 2**

HARDWARE REVIEWS

- **138 HARDWARE ROUND-UP**
  A grab-bag of goodies

READERS' REVIEWS

- **141 FEEDBACK**
  Your views on the games we reviewed in recent issues of *PC ZONE*

68 YOU'RE FIRED The perils of playing games at work.

132 FLIGHT SIMS SUPERTEST A look at some of the best of the genre.

74 OBSESSED WITH STAR WARS One man's life on the Dark Side.

ON THE CD

FULL DETAILS PAGE 174

That silvery thing on the cover is loaded with great demos, patches and helpful files guaranteed to ensure you get more out of your PC

DON'T MISS DEMOS OF...

MONACO GRAND PRIX SIM 2

RETURN FIRE II

RAINBOW SIX

CAESAR III

SPEED BUSTERS

WING COMMANDER: SECRET OPS (NEW EPISODES)

URBAN ASSAULT

WARGAMES

PLAYER MANAGER 98/99

PLUS

New *Daikatana* screenshots
The latest Compuserve and mIRC software
100 new patches and...
oh, just go to page 174 and see

> "A game that is a ghoulish dream come true for fans of the original"

COVER STORY 84-85

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING Bullfrog will blow you away with their awesome god sim. It's like nothing you've ever seen before.

➔ Oh, joy! Get to grips with our hardware round-up on page 138.
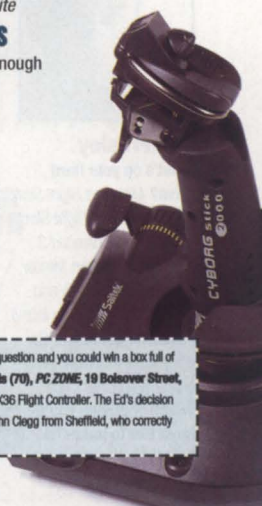
WIN! THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win a box full of PC goodies. Send your entry on the back of a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (70)**, *PC ZONE*, **19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.** The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a Saitek X36 Flight Controller. The Ed's decision is final. Closing date: Wednesday 25 November. The winner of our October cover compo was John Clegg from Sheffield, who correctly named the Klingon home world as Qo'nos, and wins an F-15E Talon Tactical Control Stick.

IT'S A GRIM BUSINESS WE'RE IN

My first words in this issue are an apology. Despite what it says on our cover, we are not reviewing *Grim Fandango*. Let me explain.

Before LucasArts would send us a review copy of *Grim* we were asked to sign a contract which said we couldn't review it unless we gave LucasArts the chance to approve our text and the right for them to pull the review. If we found any problems we had to instruct you that it was not a finished version. We were not prepared to review the game under these circumstances. The silly thing is, from what we've seen so far, *Grim* is a bloody brilliant game and there's no reason to think it would score anything less than a *ZONE* Classic award. But that isn't the point. This is a slippery slope and we're taking a stand against it, not just for our own sakes but for the sake of all PC games magazines. We've already seen, last month, one magazine run a grovelling disclaimer to the effect that their review of *Grim* was based on unfinished code, which, by implication, could change. How long before we're all selling our souls – and selling you short?

I'm not going to get on my high horse – there's little I hate more than self-righteous editors. And hand-on-heart, we're all of us guilty of reviewing the odd game a bit earlier than we'd like in the interests of bringing you a review at the same time as the game goes on sale. But this is different.

Let me tell you about something else that happened this month. One of this issue's major games landed on our doormat and such was its complexity that we promptly spent four days reviewing it. Because of a problem with the game it looked like we wouldn't be able to run the review. We asked the PR person concerned if other magazines would be reviewing it and we were assured they would. When we asked why they'd not experienced the same problem, we were told that we're "the only magazine to play games properly". We're not about to level such a criticism at any of our competitors. We're sure the PR person got it wrong and that they play their games as thoroughly as us. However, it's a sad testament to the state of this business that such opinions are rife but perhaps understandable given that magazines have to fight hard to maintain their integrity these days.

We may have lost sales because we're not reviewing *Grim*, but there's a wider truth to be fought for here. I hope you agree and that we have your support.

All the best,
Mark Higham, Editor-in-Chief

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 a reviewer who's a fan of the genre

Jeremy Wells
What's on your hard drive? *CM 97/98, SiN* demo, *Actua Tennis, Age Of Empires*
Best games ever: *Championship Manager 2, Age Of Empires* and *Gran Turismo* (PSX)
Favourite genres: Sports and racing
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: Wherever David Beckham is

Chris Anderson
What's on your hard drive? *Commandos, The Sentinel Returns, Age Of Empires* expansion pack
Best games ever: *X-COM Apocalypse, Final Fantasy VII* (PSX), *Ultima VII* and *Midwinter*
Favourite genres: RPGs, strategy and adventure
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: France

Paul Mallinson
What's on your hard drive? *Quake II: Ground Zero, Acid* (techno maker), *SiN, Half-Life* demo
Best games ever: *Resident Evil II, Super Tennis* (SNES) and *Quake II*
Favourite genres: Real-time 3D action adventures
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: None. Nukes are for wankers

Richie Shoemaker
What's on your hard drive? *Quake II: Ground Zero, Commandos, CM 97/98* (again)
Best games ever: *Elite* (BBC) and *Doom*
Favourite genres: Real-time strategy and 3D shoot 'em ups
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: Burnt Oak, the armpit of North London

Steve Hill
What's on your hard drive? *SiN, Caesar III, N2O* (PlayStation)
Best games ever: *Sensible World Of Soccer, ISS 98* (N64) and *Manic Miner* (Spectrum)
Favourite genres: Football, driving and 3D shoot 'em ups
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: Camden

Charlie Brooker
What's on your hard drive? *Populous 3, Carma II* demo and clip art collection for secret project
Best games ever: *Quake II, Puzzle Bobble* and *Tekken 3* (PSX)
Favourite genres: Action, strategy and point-and-click adventures
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: The English

Paul Presley
What's on your hard drive? *Microsoft Flight Sim 98, MS Combat Flight Sim* (beta), *Flight Unlimited 2*
Best games ever: *Minder* (Spectrum), *Ultima IV* and *The Secret Of Monkey Island*
Favourite genres: RPGs, adventures and flight sims – and anything that's good
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: Tsk, tsk. Nuclear annihilation is no laughing matter

Keith Pullin
What's on your hard drive? *Hardwar, Need for Speed III*
Best games ever: *Sensible World Of Soccer, Starquake* (Spectrum), *ISS64* (N64)
Favourite genres: Strategy and footie games
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: The Falkland Islands – utter waste of space and full of in-breds.

Adam Phillips
What's on your hard drive? *Commandos, Quake II* and *GTA*
Best games ever: *Little Big Adventure 1 & 2, Syndicate Wars, GoldenEye* (N64) and *Mario 64*
Favourite genres: *Quake* clones, driving games (with a twist), RTS and adventures
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: Macclesfield

David McCandless
What's on your hard drive? *Half-Life* demo
Best games ever: *Ultima Underworld, Doom* (first episode) and *Resident Evil II*
Favourite genres: 3D shooters
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: None. I don't agree with nuclear war

Warren Chrismas
What's on your hard drive? *Ground Zero, Grand Prix Legends, Monaco GP, Sonic Foundry Acid*
Best games ever: *Tetris* (Gameboy), *CM2* and *ISS 98* (N64)
Favourite genres: Football and other sports titles, driving sims and real-time strategy games
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: Leyton (or Leyton Orient supporters)

Craig Vaughan
What's on your hard drive? It's full of emulators – I can't escape the 8-bit era
Best games ever: *Chuckie Egg* (Spectrum), *Hypersports* (C64) and anything by Rare
Favourite genres: Sports games and anything that involves killing
Which populous you'd most like to nuke: Birmingham City Centre (but leave the sacred St Andrews turf untouched)

Sneak
THROUGH THE SHADOWS

Steal
THE LOOT

Stalk
YOUR PREY

Get Out
ALIVE

LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS

PC CD
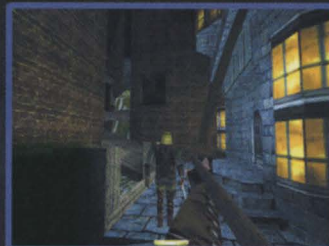
In a dark and dangerous world,
your best weapon isn't a rocket launcher,
but your mind.

THIEF

THE DARK PROJECT

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

MAILBOX

The future of gaming, a novel idea for original game ideas and a study of computer desks. It's all happening in the *PC ZONE* postbag this month

⭐ ANSWERED BY The *ZONE* Crew

REALITY CHECK

Although I'm a proud owner of *Quake II*, I've yet to obtain the same level of satisfaction I get from blasting a well-aimed shot into an oncoming Russian forehead as I do in that Nintendo mammoth, *GoldenEye*. The point is, however clever or frightening a bounding, flesh-eating monster is, it will never be as satisfying to kill as something you can relate to. It's the same in *C&C: Red Alert* – you care much more for a convoy of tanks careering bravely into an enemy base than you do for the futuristic robots which feature in recent strategy games.

John Patterson

⭐ **Which is exactly why we're all so keen to see pedestrians rather than zombies in *Carmageddon II* – and that's also exactly why the BBFC are so keen to keep them out. They believe that killing realistic people in a computer game will turn us all into homicidal maniacs. Bomb the bastards, we say.**

TOO MUCH QUAKE

Please make some attempt to cut down on the relentless *Quake* articles. *Quake* (and its pretenders) all get dull after a while: enter room, kill everything, enter next room, kill everything again and so it goes on. It requires no long-term strategy – just good reactions and a bloody big gun. Also many of us don't have a Net connection and those who do can't afford to play online constantly like the members of your team clearly do. Come on, please cut down the *Quake* stuff.

James Wilson

⭐ **You're not alone in thinking that *Quake* lacks a strategy element, which is why Eidos are about to unleash *Thief: The Dark Project* (see page 46) which involves an element of stealth (in theory, at least). As regards our *Quake* coverage, you're talking shit. Don't forget it's the best-selling PC game ever and that most PC games players have cut their teeth on it at some time or another. However, we'll see what we can do. Next!**

AND SOME MORE

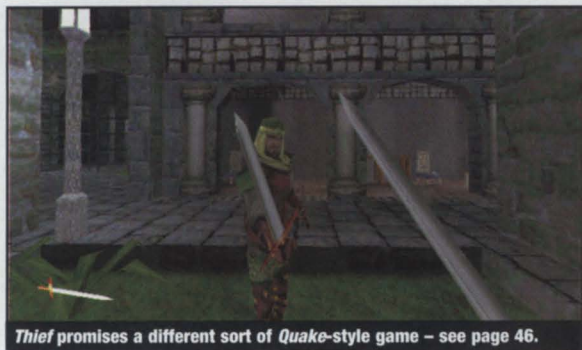I don't think *Quake* is all that amazing. I've got the *Malice* add-on, and I reckon it's the same as *Quake II* – having seen the demo of it I wondered what all the fuss was about. *Malice* has a feature that *Quake II* hasn't: accessories like hoverboards, mini-subs, parachutes and diving suits. As for the AI, well it's nothing special – the bad guys don't dodge, they just stand and shoot. The only thing *Quake II* has over *Malice* is superior graphics.

Dylan McGrath

⭐ **We're not talking about *Quake* anymore – blame it on James Wilson. Next!**

GREY MATTER

I'm writing in response to Geoff's letter regarding women gamers (*PCZ* #66, August 98). The reason most women don't play *Quake* is not because it's too complex,

Thief promises a different sort of *Quake*-style game – see page 46.

FROM THE WEBSITE

Point your Web browser to the *PC ZONE* website at www.pczone.co.uk and have your say

If anyone ever wanted proof that a primitive old classic can go through a technological tarting up and emerge as a shiny, latter-day gem capable of shaming most modern games, the proof can be found in *The Sentinel Returns*. Now let's see what a 3Dfx version of *Tetris* looks like.

Woody03

First-person shooters are at the pinnacle of the computer games because their perspective is the same as real life. The graphics, AI and level design will get better until the games are as realistic as possible. Imagine a game like *Quake II* in virtual reality – it would shit you up big-time.

Robbo6

I loved *Carmageddon*, especially multiplayer. It did have its problems though: network connection seemed a little temperamental, dodging out whenever it couldn't take the heat. But *Carma II* seems too much of the same thing. The engine hasn't been greatly enhanced – sure the car folds now, but that isn't a reason to publish it again. I have to admit the people die nicely, but this isn't what we all expected! Maybe when it's finally released I'll think differently, but Stainless could have done better.

Mental

LETTER OF THE MONTH

PREMATURE RELEASES

I am writing in response to the letters in Watchdog, *PCZ* #68, complaining about poor software support for many games. This seems applicable not just to one or two companies but to many. You recommend using a driver found on the CD, but this should be made more obvious, because when you buy the software you expect to be able to use it immediately. And downloading drivers from the Web is an easy get-out clause – they are assuming we have access to the Internet.

Publishers should be more accountable to the customer and, at the very least, send a copy of the updated driver required to play the game. To add insult to injury, many retailers promote a non-returns policy. Bug fixes, although an obvious necessity in today's age, should not be required. The distribution companies are obviously allowing unfinished software to hit the market. More beta testing and a more specific guide to compatibility should reduce this alarming trend. If a hard copy of the readme file was distributed with the boxed copies we could have access to it prior to a purchase, reducing the chance of incompatibility or other problems.

Wil

⭐ **The inherent problem with PCs is that they're all different. There are a zillion different combinations of chipsets, graphics cards, sound cards and drivers. As a result, it simply isn't possible for publishers to test all the various options and it's not until a game hits the shelves that problems can be realised. Games could be mass beta-tested, but that would mean giving out many, many copies which would open up the possibilities for piracy, cut down potential sales and thereby push up prices. Of course some games are released too early, often because marketing departments want the release to coincide with pre-planned advertising campaigns. This is a travesty, no doubt about it. But travesties happen and if we at *ZONE* think that's what's going on then we'll be the first to tell you. However, either way, you should confirm before buying that you can return a game if it doesn't work with your set-up. And if you think you've been ripped off, get in touch with Watchdog, page 166, because that's exactly what it's there for.**

---

but because it doesn't challenge the brain in any way. At least *Tetris* requires brainpower, even if only a bit, which is obviously why this gentleman doesn't play it. Most women like their games to be a bit taxing. Personally I prefer games such as *StarCraft*, *Dungeon Keeper* and *Settlers*. Maybe if his testosterone level was lower he could expand his mind a bit and realise that it doesn't matter what game you play, as long as you enjoy it.

Julia Knight

⭐ **Tetris is brilliant, and so is *Quake*. There's room for both action games and cerebral affairs and you're right, it's up to the individual to decide which ones they find most enjoyable. Does that** ➜

In the Creative dimension, you don't play games, you live them

Imagine a place where games are so lifelike that it's hard to tell fantasy from reality.

Imagine a place where the very latest graphics card technology delivers a visual experience so rich and involving, it stays with you long after the game has ended.

Stop imagining. Enter the Creative dimension whenever you see the Creative name.

Your PC will never be the same again.

Visit our web site or call 01245 265 265 for more information.

3D Blaster Voodoo2™

- Features 3DFX Voodoo2 graphics for the fastest gameplay ever
- Delivers 180 million texels per second
- Up to 50 billion operations and 3 million triangles per second

3D Blaster Banshee™

- A complete 2D/3D graphics solution based on the new Voodoo Banshee chipset from 3Dfx Interactive
- Features include 16MB of high-performance SDRAM, a 250MHz DAC and a full 128-bit graphics engine

CREATIVE

Your PC's key to another dimension

WWW.SOUNDBLASTER.COM

| Sound Cards | Graphics Cards | Speakers | PC-DVD | Video |

give you the right to question Geoff's male hormone count though? A tad harsh, we think.

BONKERS

I am currently doing a Design Technology Project on computer desks. I would be overjoyed to receive information about any computer desks you may have come across during the life of your fantastic mag.

Alex Wood

✪ Erm, sounds like an interesting course you're on. What's next? Studying the design of street signs?

✪ Hey Alex, how's this?

DARWIN'S GAMES

Am I the only one who's noticed how out of date and moth-eaten most sims look when compared to the host of *C&C* clones? *C&C* games are often criticised for their lack of innovation, but the sheer number produced seems to have started a form of digital natural selection: good ideas from previous games being blended with new ones. The few sim games released seem to be in a time warp – look at the graphics on *Holiday Island*, *Lula* and even *Sim Safari*. Eye candy may not be everything, but even the gameplay is lacking on some of the recent releases.

R Sullivan

✪ We're still trying to work out why you call *Lula* (*PCZ 68*, 32%) a 'sim' when it's obviously a graphic adventure, albeit a crap one. And if eye candy isn't everything, why are you complaining about the graphics in simulations? It sounds to me like sims just aren't your thing, but hey don't worry – there are literally hundreds of *C&C* clones out there to keep you happy.

KILLING IN 3D

I bought *Carmageddon* the other day. I was horrified – not by the excessive violence, but by the poor visuals. It became clear why after a quick glance through the readme file: the publishers have taken out the native hi-res mode, replacing it with 3Dfx support. Why? How many PC owners have a 3D card? Not many, I'll wager. Anyone without 3D hardware has to put up with a reduced frame rate, blocky textures and crap graphics. Technology is the way forward, but depriving us of great titles like *Carmageddon*, just for the sake of a piece of plastic, is ignorant.

Matthew Farrington Smith

✪ This bothers you, doesn't it? We can tell. In our last readership survey we found that 58% of *ZONE*'s readers already own a 3D card, and a further 26% were intending to buy one in the near future, so the number isn't quite as small as you might imagine. We suggest you hang around King's Cross on a Saturday night and earn yourself enough dosh to upgrade – tell Big John we sent you.

IT'S THE FUTURE

The thing that gets on my nerves about first-person shooters is the fact that every time a new one comes out you almost always need to upgrade your PC to play it. All the software developers who have this type of game in development at the time of a new engine release add to the problem. They immediately port the work they've done to the new engine, thus upping the hardware requirement to run the game at a decent frame rate. This can be seen with most games ported to the *Quake II* or *Unreal* engines at the moment. I don't want to buy a new PC every six months just to play the latest shooter. Why don't the developers keep a couple of average machines to play-test their new masterpieces on? I'm sure they'd sell more games if they developed them with average PCs in mind.

Kris

✪ If developers followed your suggestion we'd never see games improve, and we'd all still be using 486s with 8Mb of RAM. None of us relish splashing out on upgrades, but it's worth it in the end. Why not keep an eye out for budget releases – they tend to make fewer hardware demands – see page 129.

THE BLUE PETER APPROACH

Who cares when *Half-Life* will be out? Who really gives a toss about *Quake III*? Look at *Doom* – a good game in its time, then *Quake* added true 3D and better graphics. Since *Quake* we've had *Quake II*, *Unreal* and a load of others that don't deserve a mention. None have offered anything new, except for coloured lighting, higher resolutions and better enemy AI. We also have loads of people saying they can't play the new games because their machines aren't fast enough. So, instead of buying *SiN* I'm going put some textures into *Quake*, download a few new levels and save myself £30.

Steve

✪ Fair enough. Perhaps you could phone round all the software publishers and ask them to pack up and go home. We're the first to admit that good original ideas are few and far between, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't play anything else. You'll be missing out on some bloody awesome titles if you take that view. **PCZ**

DIRTY ROTTEN CHEAT

I've just read with great interest your article about cheating. I play *Quake II* every day. It's become apparent that some players' ability to aim and fire seems inhumanly fast and accurate. In the general chatting, there's been mention of 'aiming' bots – ie bits of code that take over control of aiming and firing. Is this true? Are there such things? I realise that a lot may be down to pings and frame rates, but even though I've optimised my machine and connection to a respectable degree there seems to be more to it. Of course some players are just bloody good and really fast and can hit their choice of eyeball at 500 yards, and everyone has lucky shots, including me. Am I paranoid? Burning with secret jealously at superior players? Or do I just have a crap connection and pants frame rate? I've come across some excellent bot programs on the Internet, but can find nothing fitting the description. Then again, if I had an aim bot I doubt I'd tell the world either.

Dave

✪ Sorry, even our very own ÜberFragMeister Macca was unable to throw any light on your query about 'aiming' bots. We can't comment on your connection or frame rate because we don't know what equipment you're using, but it's definitely true that some people seem to have an inherent talent for all-things *Quake* (try playing Macca over a network and you won't be the only one who can't believe how quick he is). It goes without saying that the frame rate is helped enormously by a decent 3D card though, so make sure you're tooled up with at least a Voodoo1 card before taking on the world over the Net.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?

I was just looking at the latest issue of *PC ZONE* when it struck me that Richie Shoemaker is a dead ringer for Jonathan Ross. What do you guys think?

Jassen Payen

We can see the likeness – just. We wish he looked more like Caprice, though.

Yes, it's all in there. Reflections and everything.

YOUR VERY FIRST LOOK AT

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Pandemic Studios
PUBLISHER Activision
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Summer '99

IN SUMMARY

Command & Conquer with (big) knobs on, powered by a *Quake*-beating 3D engine.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Pandemic have decided to go full 3D this time, which seems to be working out really well. If they retain the flexibility and complexity of the original, they're sure to have a winner on their hands.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Some people reckon that real-time strategy games are best played from an overhead perspective. But then what do they know?

DARK REIGN II

Activision split-off Pandemic Studios release the first screenshots of their highly anticipated follow-up to *Dark Reign*

★ **REPORT** Paul Mallinson
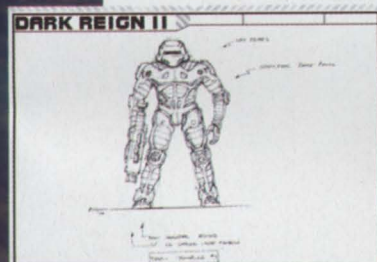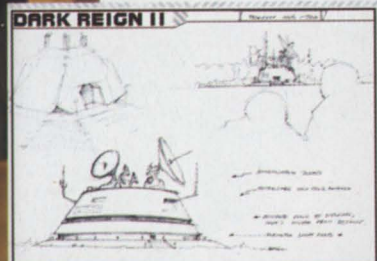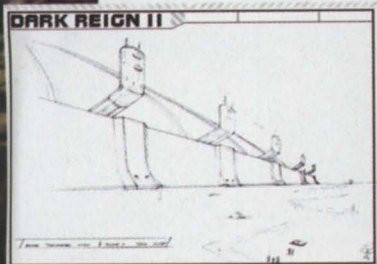
Pandemic are putting a lot of effort into the lighting. Check out the real-time shadowing.

⊕ *Dark Reign II* has been in development for over a year.
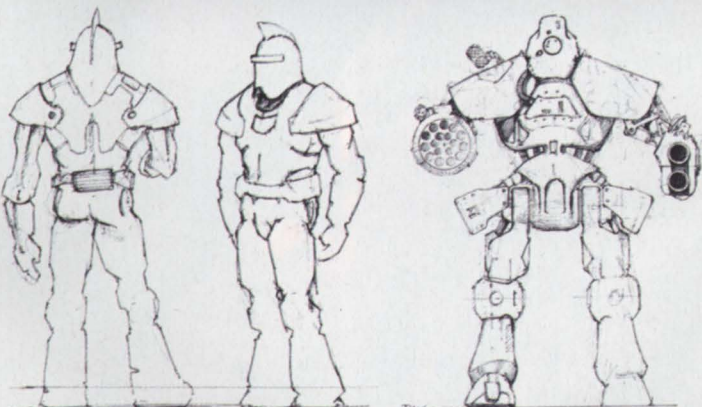
Early conceptuals show a variety of fighting units.
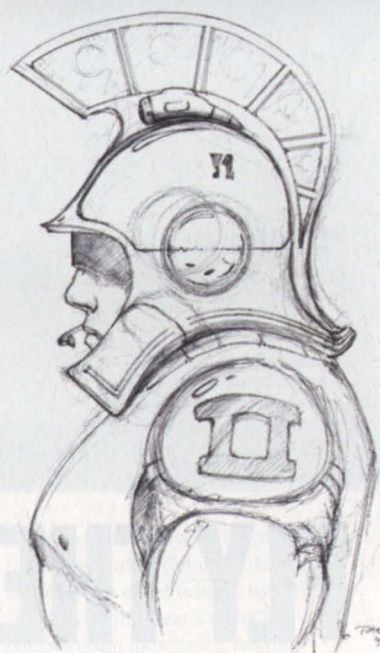
⊕ How much of this detail makes it into the finished game remains to be seen.

As pointed out in our real-time strategy supertest last issue (*PCZ #69*), Activision's *Dark Reign* was – and still is – an excellent example of the genre. "A supremely enjoyable outing," we called it. Nowadays though, it looks a bit dated – the game "lacks the character of its main rivals", was our main criticism. This could possibly be because of the generic nature of the graphics. With this in mind, Activision split-off Pandemic Studios set to work on a sequel that would prove to be as visually stimulating and credible as possible, while keeping the all-important gameplay elements intact. *Dark Reign II*, it seems, is on track to do just that.

Using a proprietary (ie home-grown) accelerator-only 3D engine, Pandemic are attempting to redefine how a game of this sort can be played. Now it will be possible to stand on the front line with your troops, surveying the area from their point of view.

Zooming in to an over-the-shoulder view of your favourite unit as it blasts an enemy tank is as simple as pressing a key on the keyboard. In fact, the viewpoint plays a big part in how the game is played. So much so that Pandemic have still to make a few hard and fast decisions about its flexibility. The landscape itself plays more of a part this time, in that hills and valleys are much more prominent and prove more of an obstacle (and a hiding place) than before.

Josh Resnick, head honcho at Pandemic, points this out: "Working

command of the massive battles that all of us RTS fans crave."

Set on Earth in the 26th century, *Dark Reign II* is actually a prequel to the original title, in that the storyline chronicles the build-up to the Freedom Guard-Imperium War – the basis of *Dark Reign*. You control one of a number of futuristic tribes, fighting for freedom against an iron-fisted ruling elite.

Base-building, resource management and hard-hitting combat remain key gameplay elements, although this time there are interior

❝While *Dark Reign II*'s graphics and gameplay appear complex by design, Pandemic's whizkid programming team have made them simple enough to manipulate❞

with true 3D battlefields, we've proven that 3D can add much more to a real-time strategy game than just great graphics. 3D gives gamers the power to control their viewpoint into the world, plugging them into the frenzy of combat while maintaining

shootout sequences held inside multi-levelled buildings. Outdoor battles are influenced by weather conditions, with Pandemic's 3D engine providing suitably impressive lighting and fogging, including transitional day/night visibility effects. The

graphics engine is also used to create the cut-scenes, so Pandemic certainly have it working overtime.

When released, a highly significant part of the package will be the *Dark Reign II* editor that Activision plan to include with the full retail version of the game. We recently had the chance to check out this cool piece of software for ourselves and saw great potential. While *Dark Reign II*'s graphics and gameplay appear complex by design, Pandemic's whizz-kid programming team have made them simple enough to manipulate in an easy-to-use, drag-and-drop editor – a testament to their obviously highly evolved skills. **PCZ**

LucasArts finally bring the *X-Wing* series into the 3D-accelerated age.

FLY THE MILLENNIUM FALCON IN

X-WING ALLIANCE

Latest episode from the inimitable *X-Wing* series boasts new missions, new craft and lavish 3D graphics

⭐ **REPORT** Phil Obi-Wand

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Totally Games
PUBLISHER LucasArts
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE March '99

IN SUMMARY

3D-accelerated return to *X-Wing* with bigger battles, 50 single-player missions, five multiplayer missions, support for up to four players over the Internet and up to eight players over a LAN.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

Altogether bigger and better than before. Two concurrent storylines, as well as the long-awaited addition of both Han Solo and the Millennium Falcon.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Could end up too similar to previous episodes.

Fly your very own X-Wing through two parallel storylines – 50 single-player missions in all.

"Use 'eject', Luke!"
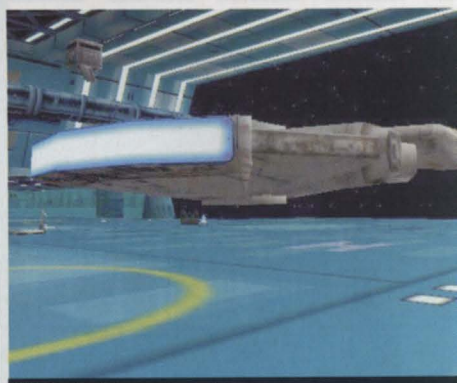
Hit the dashboard to start it up.
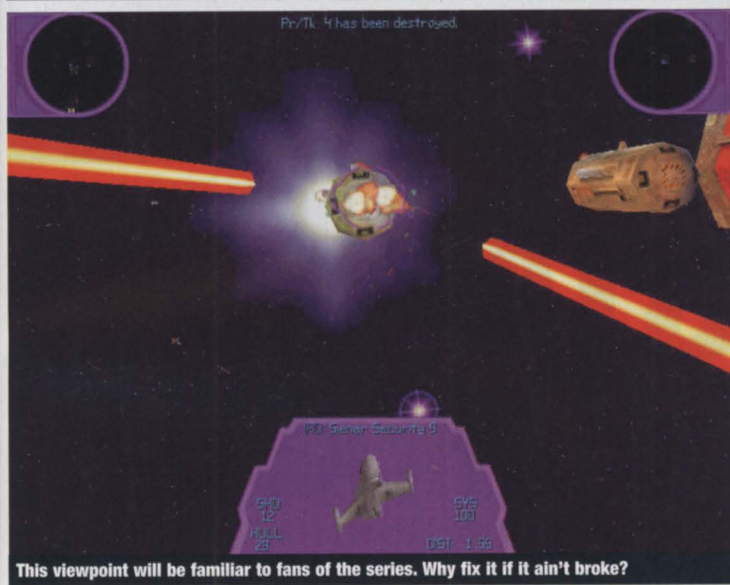
This viewpoint will be familiar to fans of the series. Why fix it if it ain't broke?

Yes, yes, yes, yes! It's been rumoured for ages, and now it's a reality: the Millennium Falcon.

High up on a black metal gantry, Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader are thrashing it out with lightsabers. Vader swings wildly at an overhead locker, and the contents – an old towel, a dog-eared copy of Knave and a pair of Reeboks – drop on to Luke's head. As he falls to the ground, a sinister figure looms over him. "Luke," says Vader, raising his hand, "I know what you are getting for Christmas."

Luke is clearly distraught. "Never!" he howls. "I don't believe you!"

"It is true, my son," Vader replies. "It's a Lenny Kravitz album and a handy A to Z of Mos Eisley."

Of course, what Luke had asked for was a copy of X-Wing Alliance, the latest in the critically acclaimed Star Wars: X-Wing series. Not only was he more of a Kraftwerk fan, but the upcoming LucasArts game had support for 3D accelerator cards, two concurrent storylines, loads of

new options and double the number of craft and objects of previous instalments. Only trouble was that it wasn't due to be released until spring 1999 – and not even the Power of The Force could change that.

"Flying the Falcon is an experience that game fans will be happy to wait

"Flying the Falcon is an experience that game fans will be happy to wait for, I assure you"

LARRY HOLLAND, OF DEVELOPERS TOTALLY GAMES

for, I assure you," says Larry Holland, of developers Totally Games. "They'll also get a big kick out of our technical advancements, richer gameplay and engaging plots. It's the most rewarding X-Wing experience yet."

Okay, so we all knew he was going to say that. But was he fibbing? Early indications are that no, by Jove, he wasn't. X-Wing Alliance has been beefed up beyond all recognition, principally by the addition of addictive new elements and

support for 3D accelerator cards. That might not sound like much these days, but in an instant all the chunky X-Wing and TIE Fighter graphics of yore have been replaced by smoothly rendered things of beauty.

As ever, the evocative Star Wars plot and LucasArts interface form

a cement for the game's many component parts. This time around, though, there are two parallel storylines that bind everything together and hold your interest throughout the 50 single-player missions. The primary tale is of

the Rebel Alliance and its struggle for survival after defeat at the Battle of Hoth; the other follows two rival families battling each other for control of an interstellar trading business. Unlike before, both plots can carry you across entire solar systems, dropping you into battle at various locations throughout the whole galaxy. As a result, player craft have been equipped with hyperdrives to enable travel between the different sectors.

Perhaps most significantly for owners of the previous games, X-Wing Alliance gives you the opportunity to fly the Millennium Falcon and fry some Dark Side butt with those beefy quad laser cannons. This has been billed as the top attraction, but don't let it distract you from the scores of other advances and improvements that the game has to offer – even the aged X-wing, A-wing and B-wing craft have been stripped down, rebuilt and optimised for the new game. If only it was all in time for Christmas.

BULLETIN

LITTLE OR NOTHING

⭐ **REPORT** Paul Mallinson, News Ed

The British Board of Film Classification are at it again. And again it's *Carmageddon* taking the full brunt of their wrath (see story opposite).

In case you didn't already know, the BBFC have been censoring films for over 80 years, and now they are digging their claws into the software industry. Although software publishers in this country are allowed to classify the age range of their titles voluntarily, games that are deemed to 'overstep the mark' often find themselves in the hands of the BBFC. Usually it's the tabloid newspapers that give these games the 'push' they need to overstep this so-called line of 'decency', but then, what the f*** do they know about these games? Nothing. You need only look at their gaming coverage to ascertain that. And the BBFC are reported to be under-equipped to deal with certain technical issues arising from playing these games. Can you imagine these guys sitting at a PC trying to get *Carmageddon II* to work?

So, two extremely influential 'governing' bodies, who know little or nothing about games players and the games they play, are telling us what we can and cannot play. At the end of the day, both the newspapers and the BBFC are wasting their time censoring games such as *Carmageddon II*. Neither will halt the flow of patches and cracks available on the Internet. If anyone wants to play the full 'blood' version of *Carmageddon II* they will find a way to do just that. What the tabloids and censors should do instead is educate people about computer games. It's not just kids who play these games any more; more and more adults are now getting involved – adults who should be well-balanced enough to judge for themselves what they want installed on their hard drive. It's all about attitude – change yours now.

THE PCZONE CHARTS
The games you buy counted
P.24

CITIES
Find out what this guitar-playing geezer has been buying
P.29

In *Star Trek: New Worlds*, *Dark Reign II* may have a competitor.

STAR TREK GOES REAL TIME

Star Trek fans will be pleased to hear that Interplay are moving them into the real-time strategy quadrant

Star Trek: New Worlds puts you in command of a crew of rookies and a planetary base modelled on images from the ubiquitous TV series. Build up your colony from nothing, locate and extract new resources, research the area, and defend the base against many enemy attacks. You can choose to play as a Federation officer, a Romulan centurion or a Klingon warrior, and each race has access to different technologies and weapons. Look out for the game early next year.

So much for the 'softly softly' approach.

What does this game look like?

Visual effects abound.
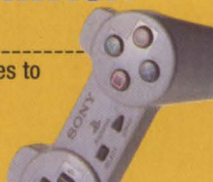
JURY STILL OUT OVER CARMAGEDDON II

With the Friday 6 November release date of *Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse* (*PCZ* #69, 95%) looming, it seems increasingly unlikely that the full 'blood' version of the game will be the one you'll be playing this Christmas. SCi have been frustrated by the British Board of Film Censors' (BBFC) lack of urgency, despite the fact that they paid for the supposedly 'express' service of classification and submitted the demo on September 2. SCi claim that the BBFC have been slow in examining the demo because they were not properly equipped to do so (apparently they didn't have a 3D accelerator card installed in their PC until the last week of September). Further complications also arose from a letter to SCi dated September 29, stating that a decision could not be made because the BBFC were "awaiting psychological evidence about the game's likely effects". Exactly who these "effects" apply to, or who would be conducting this research was not explained.

Regardless, *Carmageddon II* will be released on the date mentioned above whatever the BBFC's decision, most probably in its zombie incarnation.

The BBFC are dragging their heels.

A HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO GAMING

A new *Hitchhiker's Guide* movie *and* a game? Be prepared to wait, though

⭐ **REPORT** Paul Presley

Following the major announcement that Douglas Adams has signed a deal with Disney to produce a film version of his *Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* novels, *PC ZONE* can exclusively reveal that Adams' software company, The Digital Village, have begun work on a new *Hitchhiker's* game.

Although still in the early development stages, sources at TDV, previously responsible for the ground-breaking adventure game *Starship Titanic* (*PCZ* #63, 91%), suggest the game will be a real-time 3D arcade adventure in the style of *Mario64*. It will apparently feature Arthur Dent as the central character, and will be set during the Krikkit Wars period of the third novel, *Life, The Universe And Everything*.

"We've tried to treat the game as a separate product from the film," says lead game designer Adam Shaikh. "One of the things I was very concerned with is the bad impression that games of films usually have. We don't want to get that thing where people see the film and then think they know everything that's going to happen."

He also added: "*The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy* is a beautiful universe for a game. It's an unpredictable system in which there isn't just one single story. I say let's use it to the full."

Both the game and the film are scheduled for release in the summer of 2000 (providing the Earth hasn't been annihilated in a fiery millennial apocalypse by then), although a publisher for the game has yet to be signed.

⬆ **A close shave for Arthur dent.**

CODEMASTERS THROW PUNCHES

A millionaire at 21, 'Prince' Naseem Hamed made his money from hitting people in the face. Now he's wedged himself up even more by signing his name over to Codemasters, who are busy developing a new boxing game around him. Details are very sketchy, but experience of some of their previous titles suggests that Codemasters have another winner, with a game featuring over 100 individual boxers in both Exhibition and Career modes. Now look at these first-ever screenshots...
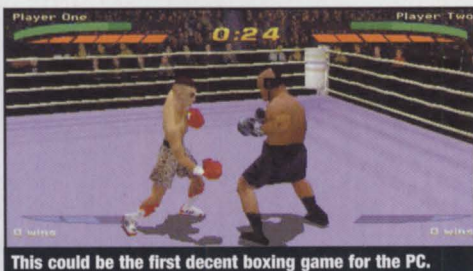
This could be the first decent boxing game for the PC.
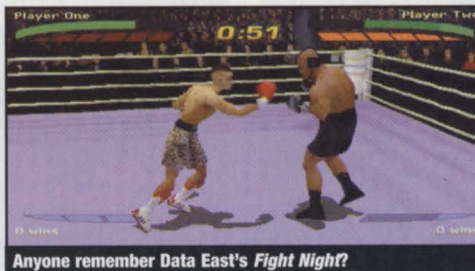
Anyone remember Data East's *Fight Night*?
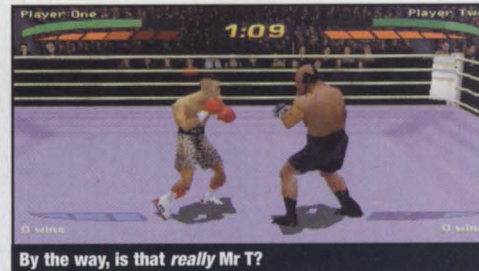
By the way, is that *really* Mr T?
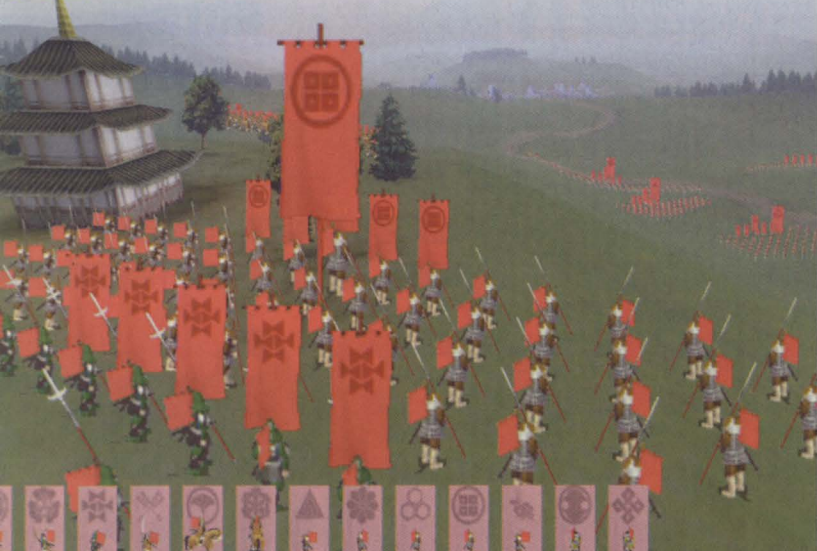
Some of the battle sequences enable your troops to quite literally go Into The Valley.

It's not all fighting. This map of Japan facilitates political skullduggery.

Horses play their part, providing countless gambling opportunities.

Mount Fuji provides a sizeable obstacle to troop deployment.

BIG IN JAPAN

A violent and bloody period of Japanese history is to be recreated in the name of entertainment

⭐ **JAP'S EYE** Steve Hill

The period from 1467 to 1600 was one of almost constant civil war for Japan. The conflict had been going for centuries, but was then intensified by the start of contact with the West and Christianity. The country was divided into a large number of fiefs, ruled by the feudal lords and their Samurai... Why are we telling you this? Because it's the premise behind *Taisho Total War*, an authentically violent 3D Samurai-'em-up from Electronic Arts.

Developed by The Creative Assembly, the game operates on two separate levels: a strategic level involving economics, politics and the raising and moving of armies; and a battle level that deals with the tactics of close and personal combat. At the top level, resource management, army deployment, building, diplomacy, conspiracy, collusion, assassination, natural disasters, peasant revolts, Portuguese landings and so on take place. When two armies meet, the perspective zooms to the 3D battlefield view where you see everything through the eyes of your scout, general or Samurai. *Taisho* can be played in a number of different ways – just the battles, just the strategy level, or the full campaign.

The game is steeped in authenticity, and includes Samurai, Ninjas, cavalry, generals, swordsmen, spies, assassins, emissaries, Dutch and Portuguese merchants, silk traders, barbarians, warrior monks, Geisha and priests. *Taisho* has full-scale armies of up to 10,000 individual troops which are persistent throughout the game, each with their own attributes, honour and experience. Gameplay-wise, the battle section looks a bit like that of *Myth* (*PCZ* #58, 80%), with the new-fangled 3D perspective offering close-up views of the butchery. Stylistically, it looks a bit like *Monkey* without the laughs. Find out come spring 1999. **PCZ**

In war, there are always casualties; although not necessarily with dismembered limbs.

One of them there Pagodas, which must be protected from marauding barbarians.

CHARTS

We track the best-selling PC games in the UK, then proceed to lay out our findings in a particularly pleasing manner

Commandos: the Brian Adams of the PC gaming world.

CHART COMMENT

Aye, aye – *Myst* re-enters the chart at number 20? What is the world coming to? Anyway, *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines* still remains top of the league, so there are some sane people in the world. Where *Encarta 98 Suite* came from is anyone's guess. No one can deny the quality of the title, but didn't 'multimeeeja' die out 50 years ago?

Highest new entry *Ground Zero* proves that *Quake II* is more popular than ever. In fact, look closely at the position of *Quake II* itself: last month in danger of dropping out of the Top 20 altogether, the 'mother of all games' is now climbing again and looks set to overtake *Unreal*.

Golden oldies showing their staying power include *Civ II*, *Red Alert* (almost two years in the chart) and *Flight Sim 98*. In spite of continued pressure from clones, the original 'genre-spawning' titles prevail.

Paul Mallinson

THIS MONTH'S TOP 20

SEP	OCT	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	WEEKS IN CHART	REVIEW SCORE
1	1	COMMANDOS	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	15	87%
–	2	QUAKE II: GROUND ZERO	ID	ACTIVISION	1	88%
–	3	ENCARTA 98 SUITE	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	9	Not reviewed
2	4	PREMIER MANAGER 98	GREMLIN INTERACTIVE	GREMLIN INTERACTIVE	12	55%
–	5	CREATURES 2	MINDSCAPE	THE LEARNING COMPANY	2	90%
5	6	TITANIC: ADVENTURE OUT OF TIME	EUROPRESS SOFTWARE	EUROPRESS SOFTWARE	16	Not reviewed
4	7	WORLD CUP 98	EA SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	19	91%
3	8	X-FILES THE GAME	FOX INTERACTIVE	ELECTRONIC ARTS	9	40%
9	9	C&C: RED ALERT	WESTWOOD STUDIOS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	94	94%
8	10	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	48	90%
18	11	AGE OF EMPIRES	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	49	94%
–	12	TOTAL AIR WAR	OCEAN/DID	INFOGRAMES	1	95%
10	13	UNREAL	EPIC MEGAGAMES	GT INTERACTIVE	16	93%
17	14	QUAKE II	ID	ACTIVISION	42	97%
19	15	CIVILIZATION II	MICROPROSE	MICROPROSE	130	90%
–	16	TOMB RAIDER II	CORE DESIGN	EIDOS INTERACTIVE	44	94%
–	17	GRAND THEFT AUTO	DMA DESIGN	TAKE 2	44	92%
12	18	WORMS 2	TEAM 17	MICROPROSE	44	82%
13	19	MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	53	94%
15	20	MYST	RED ORB	BRODERBUND	78	67%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 1998)

WIN THE TOP 10!

VIRGIN MEGASTORES

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: What is the name of Steven Spielberg's current World War II movie hit?

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?*

Send your answer on a postcard to: *PC ZONE* Chart Compo (70), 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Closing date: Tuesday 17 November

○ *Terms and conditions: Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. Capiche?*
○ *Previous Compo winners:* **Doug Hellinger** *from Nottingham (issue 67) and* **Jackie Hall** *of Pickering (issue 68) both walk away with the Top 10 games. Well done to both of you.*

ChartTrack ELSPA

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"I am amazed by how crap the charts are. The only decent game in the Top 10 is *Championship Manager 97/98*."
Robert Edwards, South Wales

"Well, put it this way: if someone told me I'd won the entire Top 20 I'd tell them not to bother with the postage, cos I wouldn't want a single bloody one of them. Maybe I'm just getting too old for this lark."
Stig, sent to the *PC ZONE* website

"Myst? *Myst*? MYST?!"
Eddie Amphlett, Huddersfield

"I am not surprised *GTA* is still in the charts. It's a great game for when you've returned from the pub."
Marc Drinkwater, Manchester

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...
1 **Flight Sim 98** *Microsoft*
2 **Total Annihilation** *GT*
3 **Dark Reign** *Activision*
4 **Hexen II** *Activision*
5 **Constructors** *Acclaim*

2 YEARS AGO...
1 **Rally Championship** *Europress*
2 **F1GP2** *MicroProse*
3 **Quake** *GT*
4 **Championship Manager 96/97** *Domark*
5 **MechWarrior 2** *MicroProse*

5 YEARS AGO...
1 **Day Of The Tentacle** *US Gold*
2 **The 7th Guest V** *Virgin*
3 **Dune** *Virgin*
4 **Sherlock Holmes** *Mindscape*
5 **King's Quest V** *Sierra*

ARCADE RACER READY TO SHOCK

Psygnosis get set for gratuitous road rage-induced murder and mayhem in their forthcoming racer, *Rollcage*

⭐ **READY ROLLED** Craig Vaughan

Developers Attention To Detail invite you to do battle in one of six anti-gravity combat vehicles, enduring freak weather conditions while racing across hostile alien environments.

In *Rollcage*, your craft are almost indestructible, and capable of performing stunts such as careering through buildings and driving upside-down, as well as surviving horrendous crashes. Strategists will probably prefer to veer off the designated racing routes in search of weapons with which to assault rivals, and playing dirty might just give them the edge.

This outrageously fast, processor-hungry game is launched in March '99 and promises a split-screen battle mode, dedicated multiplayer levels via the Internet, and LAN support.
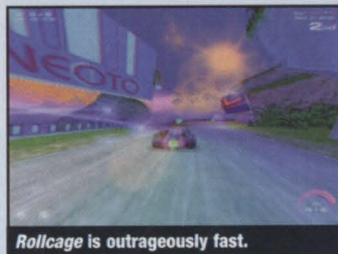
Rollcage is outrageously fast.

You can drive upside-down. Cool.
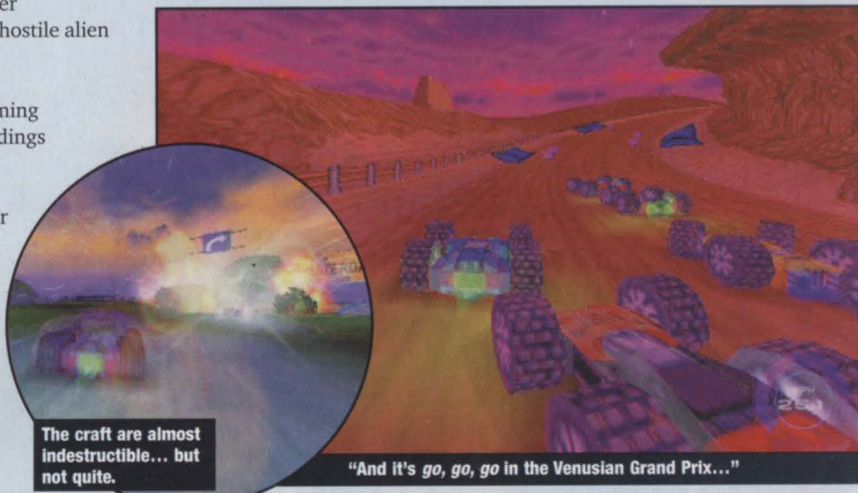
The craft are almost indestructible... but not quite.

"And it's *go, go, go* in the Venusian Grand Prix..."

GOBLIN ALERT!

Developed by Silmarils in France, *Asghan* is an action adventure based around the exploits of the titular character – a warrior prince, no less. If nothing else, it maintains the developers' trend for rubbish names, following on from *Targhan* in 1989 and *Ishar* in 1992. Not exactly prolific, then. But *Asghan* promises all manner of dragon slaying and medieval tomfoolery in both first- and third-person perspectives. With over 30 locations, expect much hacking, slashing and somersaulting. Released by Grolier on Monday 30 October.

Asghan: warrior prince and big bloke.

Skeletons don't scare our hero...

...and nor do horny blokes in blue tights.

BLUFFER'S Guide to...

PING

⭐ **What is it?**
Packet Internet Groper (ping for short) verifies a particular IP address by sending it a 'packet' of data and waiting for a response. In game circles, the ping process is identical, and refers to the time delay between two machines connected to the Internet – the higher the ping, the slower the link.

⭐ **Why was it created?**
Ping is a small UNIX program developed for network testing and performance measurement. It forms a fundamental part of every UNIX system on the planet. Interestingly, its author denies that the name is a rather contrived acronym, and says it is instead a simple reference to a submariner's term for a sonar pulse.

⭐ **How is it done?**
A small ICMP ECHO network message is sent to elicit a response from a remote host. A return message indicates the presence of the remote machine; the time between send and reply indicates the connection speed.

⭐ **Where can I find out more about it?**
The best place to go is http://whatis.com/ping.htm

LEGO Racers should prove popular with us 'grown ups'.

PEDAL TO THE PLASTIC

Developed by High Voltage Software and due next summer, *LEGO Racers* is a 3D multiple-view racing game with accelerated 3D graphics, 12 LEGO tracks, four different themes and split-screen multiplayer antics. You customise and construct your LEGO brick cars prior to each race, then race against five computer-controlled opponents. Each track features power-ups, obstacles and hazards. Winners are rewarded with a LEGO champ car and all its associated pieces so they can modify their existing vehicle.
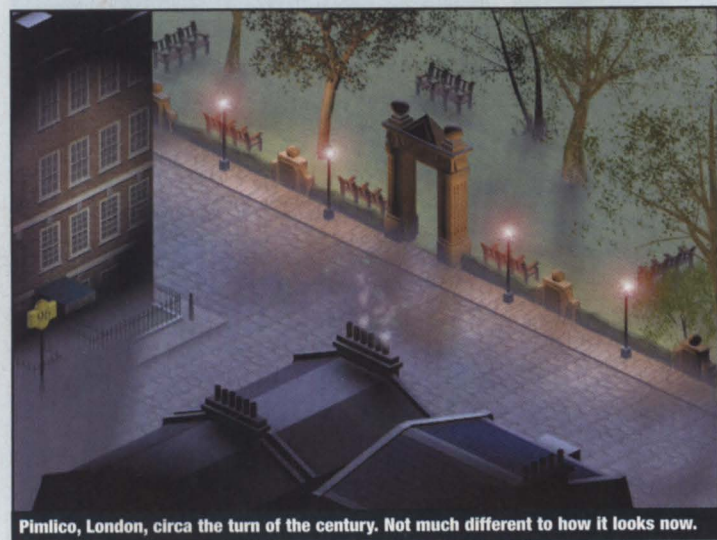
Pimlico, London, circa the turn of the century. Not much different to how it looks now.

THESE MURDERS...

Victorian London is the setting for Cryo Interactive's latest folly, *Scotland Yard*, apparently based on the classic board game. A manhunt is launched to find a brutal criminal who is terrorising the city, and to add to the mix it turns out that the beast in question could be you. Alternatively, and somewhat perversely, it could also be Dracula, Frankenstein, Mata-Hari or Houdini. So expect plenty of pea soupers, ludicrous cockney accents, cackling wenches and open prostitution come the game's release in December.
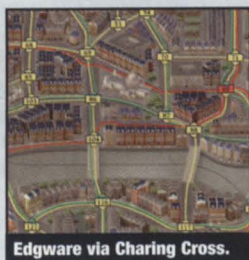
Edgware via Charing Cross.

SHORTS

F1GP2 ADD-ON
Add-on pack specialists Instant Access are hoping to catch the attention of Grand Prix fans with end-of-season blues by releasing a new 'track pack' for Geoff Crammond's classic *F1GP2*. *Track Pack 98*, out in November priced £14.99, features a 1998 car set, 20 new tracks, an updated editor, plus tons of other stuff.

LOCK STOCKS & BARREL
Wall Street Trader '99 is launched by Monte Cristo in the UK at the end of this month. This Stock Exchange simulation puts you in the role of a Hong Kong bank manager, and the aim is to "make mountains of cash" and one day oust your boss and take over his job.

TORMENTED PLANESCAPE
Prolific Black Isle Studios are to develop *Planescape Torment*, the epic tale of a dead man searching for his past life, and the first computer RPG set in the AD&D Planescape universe. *Torment* will feature stunning environments and background animations courtesy of the Bioware Infinity engine from *Baldur's Gate* (see page 56). Produced by *Realms Of Arkania* veteran Guido Henkel, *Torment* is due in spring '99.

LEGO CHESS
Wednesday 11 November will be a day to remember for LEGO-obsessed chess fans with PCs, for it will herald the release of Lego Media's latest and greatest new game, *LEGO Chess*. Using real-time 3D technology, *Lego Chess* features "friendly" battle sequences and various themed boards and backgrounds. *LEGO Chess* will cost £34.99.

GOD BOX
Cryo Interactive are throwing their beret into the 'god sim' ring with their forthcoming *Déo Gratias*. Your quest is for adoration, and you can modify the kind of god you want to be, and thus how worshippers will perceive you. You can be benevolent and promise them the riches of heaven or, alternatively, give them a slap and send them to hell. Out November.

ET FIGHTS BACK

Enemy Infestation thrusts you into a real-time strategy environment with the task of protecting a vulnerable human settlement as they attempt to colonise a hostile alien world. Controlling the colonist's resources, you are responsible for collecting weapons, maintaining defences, training soldiers and planning the genocide of the aliens. The co-operative multiplayer mode, which may well set *Enemy Infestation* apart from its rivals, promises to let players join forces to outwit their adversaries. Developers Micro Forte anticipate a Christmas release.

Enemy Infestation: out by Christmas from Funsoft.

DESERT ISLAND CDS

If Richard 'Levelord' Gray, lead designer of Ritual Entertainment's superlative *SiN* (see page 90), was stuck on a desert island with nothing but a PC, an unlimited power supply and five games of his choice, which would those games be?

- **Doom*** (iD)
- **Red Baron** (Sierra)
- **Age Of Empires** (Microsoft)
- **Warcraft II** (Blizzard)
- **Tetris** (Mirrorsoft)

* Choice if allowed only one

Comment
"Definitely *Doom*, because no other game has captured me so completely. Quite frankly, it turned me into a games addict. I have a taste for WWI and WWII flight sims, so that's why I chose *Red Baron*. It had everything needed, and nothing got in the way of the dogfighting. *Age Of Empires* has a certain charm because it relates to history, and *Warcraft II* was just plain fun. Lastly, *Tetris*. I'm not sure why this game is so addictive. I started playing it in 1988 and have never lost the passion."

PIG IN A POPPY FIELD

The obscenity of war is to be cheerfully parodied in a skirmish action game from Gremlin

⭐ **PIG IN A WIG** Steve Hill

Based loosely around the time of World War I, *Hogs Of War* retains the basic elements of warfare, but crucially substitutes hollow-eyed, fear-stricken soldiers with comedy pigs. Six armies are available, each representing a different nation from Pig World, and each clad in its own distinctive livery, the inspiration for which is taken from genuine First World War uniforms. Orwellian satire, or porcine farce? You'll get to find out come spring '99.

A big house in the country.

Looking very strange indeed. Hogs Of War *has a unique visual style.*

FIGHTER DUEL SEQUEL

A follow-up to the middling *Fighter Duel* (*PCZ #34*, 65%) is almost upon us and, by Jove, it's looking mighty spiffing.

Fighter Duel 2 enables you to choose from over 40 different WWII aircraft, and offers a near biblical selection of bowel-loosening missions. Real-life scenarios can also be re-enacted, so those of you who want to relive your grandfather's flight over Dusseldorf can go right ahead and do just that. Apparently Infogrames have come up with a new, ultra-realistic 3D terrain engine which they claim is "topographically perfect", whatever that means. Look out for it in December.

For more info head to **www.fighterduel.com**.
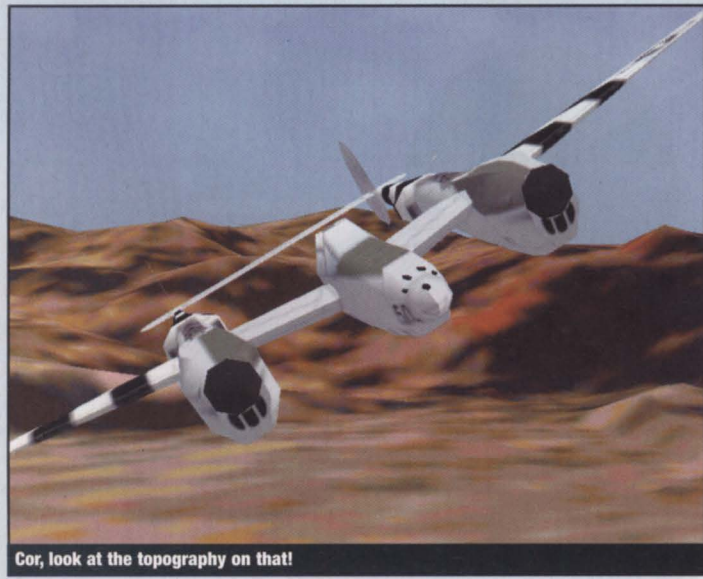
Cor, look at the topography on that!

SHORTS

PACT WITH SHADOWS
Developed by Murder Of Crows, *Shadowpact* is the latest game to be dedicated to pioneering '60s guitar choreographers The Shadows. Of course it isn't, although the truth could be even stranger, with influences cited from such disparate sources as Umberto Eco, the controversial book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, and the music of Portishead. *Shadowpact* will be a combination of real-time strategy and role-playing.

NEW CLANCY GAME
Combining role-playing, deceit, blackmail, bribery and theft, *Tom Clancy's Ruthless.com* is a strategy contest set in the unethical corporate world. The game focuses on your company's actions as it strives to dominate the global market. Forget morality, success in this game means muggers, hackers and bent lawyers. Multiplayer elements will feature heavily. Out November.

FOR THE RECORD

❝ **"Playing games is like solving problems, and I have real problems in my life so I don't need games."**
Sir Clive Sinclair, interviewed recently by our very own Macca for the *Daily Telegraph*.

"The Internet is like a herd of performing elephants with diarrhoea – massive, difficult to redirect, awe-inspiring, entertaining, and a source of mind-boggling amounts of excrement when you least expect it."
Eugene H Spafford – Internet guru, author of *Practical UNIX & Internet Security* (O'Reilly & Associates, 1996) and part-time elephant trainer.

"The game is so absorbing that I suspect our Russian comrades implanted subliminal messages into the program."
Ritual Entertainment's Richard 'Levelord' Gray reading between the blocks in *Tetris*.

"I was very impressed by how well AMD-K6-2 PCs performed. All *Quaker*s should be on the lookout, because the new K6-2 processors with optimised drivers can compete with the best of them."
How many AMD chips has Thresh (aka Dennis Fong, see Wireplay, *PCZ #66*), maybe the greatest *Quaker* got at home?

"Mark Rein, Epic's VP of Marketing, dropped by our stand at the European Computer Trade Show and joked that if we decided not to ship *Half-Life* until after Christmas, that would be fine with him."
Valve Managing Director Gabe Newell lets slip just how much better *Half-Life* is than *Unreal*. ❞

LIVERPOOL

The PC gaming scene in Liverpool obviously needs a pan of scouse down its neck

⭐ **WIRRAL WONDER** Andrew Martin

"Jokers to the left of me, clowns to the right – here I am…"

Come on down, Tony Porter.

WHO LIVES IN A CITY LIKE THIS?

NIGEL BLACKWELL
35, musician

Are you here buying software?
"No, just getting the price of a PlayStation for a mate."
Do you own a PC?
"Yeah, with *Cakewalk* and *Soundforge* on it – when I'm not wedging the bathroom door open with the hard drive."
No games?
"Nah, just a Super Nintendo emulator, but I've only ever played *Super Mario World*. Once Bowser was defeated, I found I was no longer interested in the game, so I just played it again blindfold and completed it by listening to the noises."

LIFE GOES ON DAY AFTER DAY…

T for Toxteth, T for Tennessee. T for Tranmere, L for Liverpool. Home of some famous band or other, and a commendably relaxed city centre atmosphere.

Tony Porter, 33, manager of Game, started his career at Microbyte, Manchester. Tony owns a P166 with 32Mb (he felt the need to apologise) and plays *Carmageddon*, though little else. "I did see *Carmageddon II* at ECTS but it looked a bit samey."

Game resides in Clayton Square Shopping Centre, tucked away in a corner between JD Sports and one of its three main rivals: Virgin Megastore. "We have no real PC competition really – Virgin, HMV and Electronics Boutique push the consoles far more than the PC," reported Tony.

We've heard that somewhere before…

So, what's selling well on the PC at the moment? "*Commandos*, as you'd expect, but *StarCraft* and *Theme Hospital* have come from nowhere and have done very well again. *HardWar* looks promising sales-wise, but it's console money that counts these days."

So did anything else interest him at ECTS? "I liked the look of *Grand Prix Legends*, but nothing else on the PC really caught my eye. We need something a bit different, something to catch the imagination, even if it just means dirtying the 3D graphics a bit à la *Resident Evil*. But it's 3D and it's new and it's the thing to own, so you can count on one hand what will sell this Christmas."

ONLINE ZONE

Internet for everyone becomes a reality after Dixons announce FreeServe, the ISP that won't ever charge you for getting online

🔴 **NET-HEAD** Phil Wand

Dixons have teamed up with ISP giant Energis to launch a free Internet service. Called FreeServe, the new dial-up provides unlimited Internet access with no registration, no hourly charges and no monthly subscription – all you pay is the cost of a local call. To get online, just pick up a CD-ROM from your local Dixons branch.

The prime concern for customers, of course, is how long it will last. The idea of a free ISP is not new, and several companies in the US have tried and failed. Nevertheless, Dixons say they have monitored the UK market for almost two years and have considered all consequences of the FreeServe idea.

"Put simply, FreeServe users won't pay a penny for their online access other than the call they make," says John Clare, Dixons CEO. "It will encourage more people to try out the Internet and should revolutionise the ISP market."

We at ZONE reckon it's certainly worth a try. Firstly, FreeServe can't start charging you without changing their name (although watch out for the £1 per minute charge for calling their help desk). Secondly, it is without doubt one of the most important moments in the history of UK Internet, and Dixons will not have skimped on the new system's capacity – don't be too worried about slow connections (well, not yet).

But before you all dash out to the high street, remember that BT are soon to launch Click, their new pay-as-you-go Internet provider. Essentially it's the same as FreeServe, but with a 1p per minute charge over and above the cost of the local call.

Check out FreeServe at **www.freeserve.net**, and Click at **www.btclick.com**.
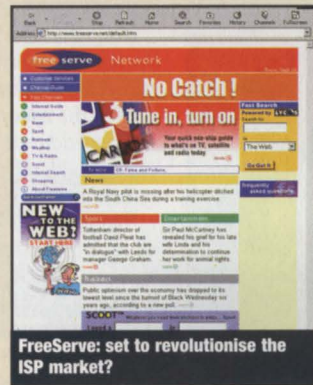
FreeServe: set to revolutionise the ISP market?

NOW PLAYING

This month: the best online flight sims

Chocks away this month with seven online flight sims. First kite up into the big blue is the classic *Air Warrior*, now living at **www.gamestorm.com**. The game features historic aircraft such as the Spitfire, P-51 Mustang, Focke Wulf 190 and Sopwith Camel, and jets such as the MiG-15 and Me 262. If you dig the sound of a Merlin engine and have Windows 95 and an accelerator card stashed inside your PC, check out the 3D-enhanced *Air Warrior III*, also at the Gamestorm site.

Another World War II sim for realism freaks is *WarBirds* at **www.imagiconline.com**. The game features no fewer than 52 aircraft, all modelled on actual test flight data. Staying with WWII, Eidos Interactive and the TEN Network have bashed their heads together and come up with *Confirmed Kill* at **www.ten.net**. Choose from both historic and hypothetical battles, or join in the deathmatch arenas where the sole objective is to be the last one not doing a stumpy Bader impression. And if that sounds cool, try *Fighter Ace* at **www.vr1.com**. It's another frantic WWII combat game, with 16 accurately modelled aircraft from the US, UK, Russia and Germany.

Move forward in time to *Plane Crazy* at **www. segasoft.com**, which is essentially a modern-day race game where you have to cross the finish line before everyone else. The graphics look top-notch, and the free download comes with nine courses, three modes and three customisable aircraft. On to the future but back to I-Magic is *Raider Wars* at **www.imagiconline.com**. The game is centred around an asteroid belt, where members of two rival companies try to capture each other's fleet carriers and win control of the area. Sounds cool, looks good, so try it.

Clever software makes Sega's *Plane Crazy* plain smooth.

SPESH SITE OF THE MONTH
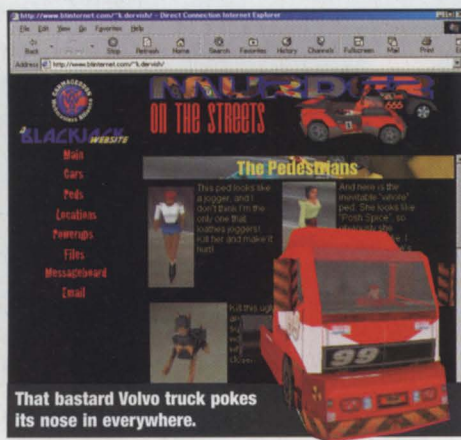
That bastard Volvo truck pokes its nose in everywhere.

MURDER ON THE STREETS

www.btinternet.com/~k.dervish/
As well as being a useful repository of *Carmageddon* odds and sods, Murder On The Streets is further proof that game teasers and demos are now greeted with as much enthusiasm as final releases. On this home-brew website are all the *Carmageddon II* demo's cars, pedestrians and power-ups, as well as a bird's-eye view of the map. Also included are must-have updates to turn the pus-filled zombies back into ordinary members of the public, and a patch to give them a chuffy bot when they get scared. A must-see for those of you too tight to buy the real game.

FREE ONLINE GAME OF THE MONTH
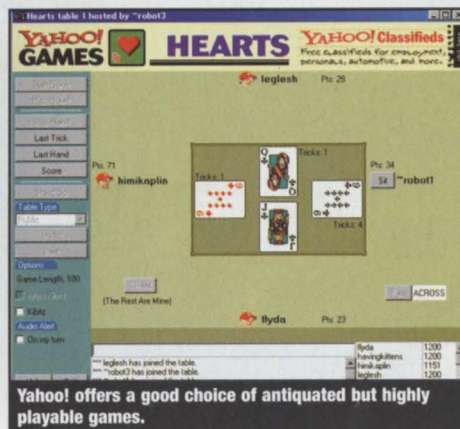
Yahoo! offers a good choice of antiquated but highly playable games.

YAHOO! GAMES

http://play.yahoo.com/games/
If you're in the mood for a multiplayer game of cards, you might start off by browsing through the massive directory at **www.yahoo.com** for a few pointers. What you might not realise is that one of the many other services that Yahoo! offers is free online entertainment, with games currently on offer including backgammon, chess, reversi, blackjack, hearts, bridge and, of course, poker. Each one of the arenas takes the form of a slick *Java* applet together with a chat area, so you can curse your fellow players as they dump the Queen of Spades on you for the ninth successive time.

BETACALL

Why buy when you can beta? Flush that money down the toilet and test these out instead

⭐ *Kozaar* is a team-based multiplayer space strategy game. The goal is to expand your space empire, build a strong economy around it and win the technological race.
Website: www.spacestrategy.com
Email: suggestions@kozaar.com

⭐ *Wulfram* is a highly acclaimed action-strategy simulation: take control of a heavily armed hovertank, protect your base and destroy everything that moves.
Website: http://beta.playlink.com
Email: info@playlink.com

The original game blew us away. Will the sequel?

BLOODSHOT TO THE HEART

Crap Bon Jovi puns aside, Acclaim's new shoot 'em up looks worth telling you all about

⊗ **RED-EYED** Phil Wand

Looking like a mutant clone of *Unreal*, Acclaim's upcoming *Bloodshot* is a colourful, 3D-accelerated, third-person shooter with 20 multi-path levels, interior and exterior locations and a vast collection of outlandish weaponry and vehicles. Each level has multiple missions and objectives, and features diverse play styles as well as distinctive graphics – it's not always about shooting everything that moves. The player character, *Bloodshot*, has been created biochemically, and along with many other game elements is fully upgradeable.

The more the merrier. Acclaim chuck *Bloodshot* onto the 3D shooter pile.

FALLOUT 2 OUT SOON

Fallout 2 takes place over 50 years after but in the same location as the first game, so while none of the characters will be recognisable to fans of the original, the environment will be. Interplay say that *Fallout 2* is twice as large as the prequel, and because of this a number of vehicles are made available to cut down on travel time and give you the option to avoid random encounters. It can also be used to carry following non-player characters. There are loads of new weapons, including M72 Gauss Rifle, M3A1 Grease Gun, and the Solar Scorcher. You can also combine weapons and items to devastating effect. While *Fallout 2* uses the same engine as the original game, extensive improvements have been made to the AI and graphics. The engine now has a greater ability to compress information, so save games will be faster too. Out Nov.

The look hasn't changed much, but the game has.

Bloodshot will be out sometime next year, we're told.

Some sinister 'Nazi-style' imagery yesterday.

FACE THE MACHINE

Machines is the uninspiring and unoriginal name of a forthcoming 3D real-time strategy affair from Acclaim. The story is the usual tired sci-fi bollocks, and goes a little bit like this: In the year 2109, man begins manufacturing a series of so-called workbots, crude mechanoids with a modicum of initiative. Sent to find planets fit for colonisation, they discover four and equip each with a controller. The world goes mad and they turn on each other... You know the rest.

Despite the tired story, *Machines* could be fun.

Spinny Rotatey™ 3D graphics.

Two machines about to do battle.

YOUR**MOST**WANTED

A look at the games you most want to see over the next few months, and when they're expected

1 **Duke Nukem 4 Ever** (GT) – Nov '98
2 **Half-Life** (Cendant) – Oct '98
3 **Quake III Arena** (Activision) – spring '99
4 **Carmageddon II** (SCi) – Nov '98
5 **Driver** (Reflections) – early '99
6 **SiN** (Activision) – Oct '98
7 **Championship Manager 3** (Eidos) – Nov '98
8 **X-Wing Alliance** (LucasArts) – Mar '99
9 **Diablo II** (Blizzard) – Dec '98
10 **Civilization: Call To Power** (Activision) – Mar '99

WIN! Submit your vote and go into the hat for a mystery prize draw. Email us at **letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk** with the subject line '**Most Wanted**' or write to the usual address.

Nightfall: Legacy Of The Watchers: Turkish delight.

NIGHT FALLS ON QUAKE II

New US developers Ward Six promise "a new level of sophistication in interactive entertainment" in *Nightfall: Legacy Of The Watchers*, their forthcoming 3D medieval horror RPG. Set in Turkey during the Crusades, and using their new in-house Renaissance mega-engine, we're sure the game will do for graphics and interaction what cosmetic surgery did for Pamela Anderson.

DI DABBLE WITH MAGIC

DI in strategy shocker.

Developers Link Arts are putting the finishing touches to *Rival Realms*, a real-time strategy game set in a world of magic and mayhem. Offering six campaigns, a comprehensive level editor and in-game tutorials, you are pitted against two other armies in a fraught battle for supremacy. The game is poised for a November release through Digital Integration.

Will it be any good?

VIKING TWATS PEASANT

Delphic Oracle's forthcoming *Valhalla* is great news for those of us whose taste for death, pillage and rape would only have led to embarrassment in supermarkets. Set in the Viking world of Midgard, Kjar must save his land from the impending Ragnarok, fulfil his true destiny, and commit appalling crimes along the way. The bloodshed begins in March.
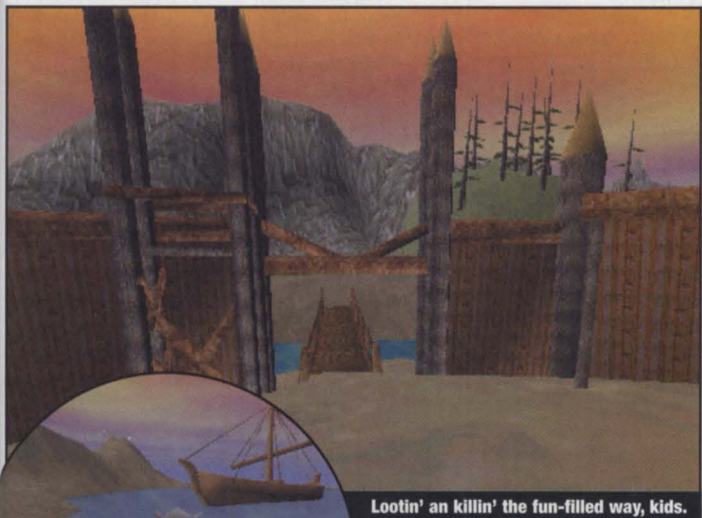
Lootin' an killin' the fun-filled way, kids.

PLAYSTATION ZONE △○✕□

Do not underestimate the power of the PC. It can do the same as a PlayStation without breaking into a sweat

⭐ **STATION MASTER** Paul Mallinson

THE BIG GAME: BEAVIS & BUTT-HEAD DO HOLLYWOOD

History: America's dumbest duo have been 'involved' in a number of half-baked computer games over the years, most of which have appealed to fans of the series but not to hard-core gamers.
Smells like: All the other Beavis & Butt-head games (ie lots of mindless ranting, sub-games involving spitting and the abuse of defenceless animals), but this time it's in 3D.
Storyline: Plonk the duo in a place like Hollywood and the story will pretty much write itself.
Big deal: *Do Hollywood* is Beavis & Butt-head's first outing on the PlayStation. Did we say that it's also their first game in full 3D?
Low point: Only dullards don't 'do' Beavis & Butt-head, so they're the only people who could possibly lose out.
Tech stuff: Who cares about the tech stuff? It's Beavis & Butt-head.

New polygon engine looks like doing the trick though.
Personal impression: A case of that which will not suck.

Beavis & Butt-head Do Hollywood: like, cool.

TWO TO WATCH

RC Stuntcopter: we want it on PC. Now!

Army Men 3D: PlayStation only? That sucks!

RC STUNT COPTER
(Interplay)
Why Shiny Entertainment's latest piece of entertainment software is not planned for release on the PC is anyone's guess. PlayStation-only it is, then, which is a real pity. Taking control of a remote control, the aim of the game is to fly a number of deceptively complex stunts in order to gain as many points as possible. We have this to say: release a PC version, Interplay.

ARMY MEN 3D (3DO)
Let's face it, the original *Army Men* was a nice idea (toy soldiers running around killing each other) but a shit game. *Army Men 3D*, however, features third-person combat in three real-time polygonal environments, and plenty of sadistic animations (flamethrowers melting troops, rifle shots removing arms). Why on earth they are not developing a PC version is a baffling mystery.
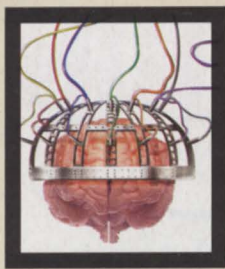
TECHHEAD

The low-down on a controversial new gizmo plus all the latest techie announcements

✪ **WORDS** Warren Chrismas

MP-FREE MUSIC FOR THE MASSES

Diamond unveil the first mass-market portable MP3 player

Y-ou've probably seen MP3-compressed music files – pirated commercial songs or otherwise – being distributed on the Internet. Chances are you've downloaded some and played them on your PC. Well now you can copy them on to, and play them back from, a portable personal stereo-style device. And the music industry is getting a tad nervous.

Diamond Multimedia's Rio PMP300, due in high street stores at the end of November for around £175, is capable of storing up to 60 minutes of digital-quality music copied from a PC via a standard parallel port. The tiny unit, which measures just 92x18x66mm and weighs a mere 70g, offers 24 hours playback from a single AA lithium battery.

The Rio has many of the features – including track programming – that you'd expect to find on a portable CD or MiniDisc player. However, with no moving parts (the data is stored on flash memory cards) it's not susceptible to skipping even when subjected to heavy knocks or vibrations. "It's ideal for sports," Neil McGuinness, Diamond's PR manager told us. "Apart from swimming, of course." Quite.

MP3 (MPEG Layer 3) has rapidly become the distribution format of choice for anyone wishing to transfer music files via the Internet, thanks to the openness of the standard and the small size of the files. Saved using MP3 compression algorithms, a five-minute CD-quality audio track – which would normally take up around 50Mb as raw data – can be reduced to anything from 2.5 to 5Mb (depending on the sample rate), with a relatively small loss in sound quality.

Diamond are keen to stress that the Rio itself is not a recording device or pirating aid. At the time of

writing there's even a question mark as to whether software capable of creating compressed MP3 files from audio CDs via a standard CD-ROM drive will be bundled with the unit in the UK (it will be in the USA). Nevertheless utilities like these – known as 'rippers' – are freely available on the Internet.

MP3 GOES INTERGALACTIC

While sections of the music industry have expressed concerns about the copy protection-free nature of MP3s and the ease at which they can be distributed around the Net, some acts are beginning to embrace the fledgling digital format. The Beastie Boys, for example, have several MP3 tracks recorded live on their current tour, as well as a full-length remix of their recent top-ten hit *Intergalactic*, available to download for free from their website (**www. beastieboys.com**), and there are companies – such as GoodNoise (**www.goodnoise.com**) who are *selling* legitimate MP3 files via the Net.

Although not the first device of its kind on the market (Saehan's costlier MPMan wins that honour), the Rio is set to become the first widely-available portable MP3 player in the UK, sold through retailers such as Dixons and PC World, who currently stock Diamond's PC peripherals. One thing's for sure – it won't be the last. At least a dozen other manufacturers – none of which are currently household names – are known to be working on similar MP3 products, some utilising high capacity storage mediums such as hard drives and Zip disks. Whether larger companies such as Sony and Philips – who, of course, run their own record labels – get in on the act remains to be seen.

The Rio PMP300 includes 32Mb of on-board flash memory and is supplied with headphones, a 15-pin connecting cable and Jukebox file-organising software, plus CDs from MP3.com and GoodNoise containing over 100 free MP3 songs. Oh, and you get a battery. Additional 16Mb and 32Mb storage cards will be available for around £45 and £90 respectively.

✪ *Diamond 01189 444401 • www.diamond.co.uk*
✪ *For more details on everything MP3 take a look at* **www.mp3.com**

➲ **Diamond's Rio looks tiny. Mind you, that hand could be *very* big.**

FACTCANNON

✪ VideoLogic (01923 260511) have unveiled a 100watt active speaker system aimed at computer users which the company claims out-performs any PC speakers currently available. The Sirocco speaker system features a 6.5inch sub woofer and two satellite units, each with a 4inch bass/mid-range speaker and separate tweeters. Available now, the set-up costs around £230. Expect a review soon.

- -

✪ Also from VideoLogic comes a new low-cost PCI-based audio board based on the new Maestro-2E audio signal processor from ESS. The £50 SonicStorm Pro offers DirectSound and DirectSound3D acceleration, 64-channel audio stream capability and a 64-voice hardware accelerated MIDI wavetable synthesiser, and features an S/P-DIF digital output socket.

- -

✪ Still with VideoLogic… Sega have confirmed that they'll be using PowerVR Series2 graphic processors in their new arcade system boards – dubbed "Naomi" – which are apparently capable of shifting a mind-boggling three million polygons a second. Chips from the same family of VideoLogic/NEC processors are being used in Sega's Dreamcast console, out in Japan next month, and will eventually find their way into PCs.

- -

✪ Another month, another new joystick. Two in fact. Gravis are set to launch an all-new digital version of their Blackhawk joystick, complete with 13 programmable functions. The Blackhawk Digital is expected to cost around £40. Call Acco on 0800 252359 for details on stockists. Quickshot (0181 365 1993), meanwhile, have launched the weird-looking GenX700 – a blue joystick with a "3D handle" *(Eh? – Ed)*, "full-size Bio throttle" *(A what? – Ed, again)*, rudder control and eight fire buttons. It costs around £45.

➲ **Quickshot's GenX700: It's blue. It's weird. It's yours for 45 quid.**

- -

✪ Do you have two or more PCs in your house? Want to link them without having messy cables strewn all over the place? Diamond (01189 444401) may have just the answer with HomeFree – a cordless radio network which allows multi-player gaming, joint access to the Internet and printer/file sharing between machines up to 50 metres apart. The interface cards, which are capable of transferring 1Mb per second, are available in ISA, PCI and PCMCIA flavours and cost from around £70 each.

In the future
there are no rules.

The rules of Death Racing are simple, there are none. Rip it around 24 menacing tracks in four futuristic circuits (including the South Pole and Mars). Do whatever it takes to win. Drop bombs to stop tailgating. Ram cars off the track. Fire torpedo missiles to destroy your opponents. Lose and you're history. Win and you're on the road to mega-stardom. ✴ Stunning 3D graphics 🚗 Choice of 12 futuristic racing cars

DETHKARZ

Melbourne House

INFOGRAMES
UNITED KINGDOM
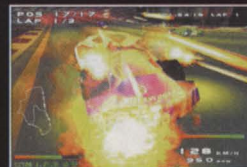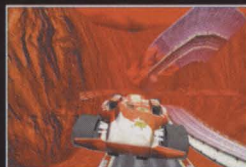
The Man who KNOWS

MURDER, DEATH, MAYHEM AND MORONS

John Romero is dead. No, not the Ion Storm supremo and mastermind behind *Quake*, but some other bloke with the same name. Nevertheless, confusion reigned supreme on the Internet, with several sites mistakenly reporting his murder, the matter complicated by the circulation of a fake autopsy photo of the ex-iD Software man with a bullet shot to the head.

The following day the man himself felt obliged to offer the following message: "Reports of my death are greatly exaggerated. I take full responsibility for last night's confusion – maybe I shouldn't have taken that morbid picture for *Texas Monthly* magazine."

More grimness comes with suspicions that **Vladimir Pokhilko**, the former business partner of *Tetris* inventor **Alexey Pajitnov**, savagely beat and stabbed his wife and 12-year-old son to death before killing himself by slitting his throat with a long hunting knife. Following the discovery of the bodies, Pajitnov commented: "This makes absolutely no sense whatsoever. Everyone who knew him really loved him, not least people in the software community."

On a lighter note, controversial Hungerford 'em up **Postal** is to receive an expansion pack, cleverly entitled **Postal: Special Delivery**. The new levels include a unique shopping spree, a homeless buffet, an earthquake survivalist camp and an unfeasibly dangerous golf course. Desperately – and succesfully – attempting to drum up publicity for what is actually a dire game, **Vince Desi** of developers **Running With Scissors** beamed: "Get it while you can, before they take it off the shelves." No.

Less substantited news suggests that **Ion Storm's Doppelganger** has been cancelled. Rumour has it that following the pitiful sales of *Dominion: Storm Over Gift 3* (*PCZ* #67, 43%), designer **Todd Porter** has pulled the plug on his next project. The word is that many of the team have been laid off and Porter has taken up a job in marketing, never to design again. Which, if *Dominion* is anything to go by, could well be for the best.

Some dickheads are attempting to ressurect the **Commodore 64**. The latest incarnation of the ancient machine is called **Web-It** and comes from **Web Computers International**, in **Belgium** of all places. An aforementioned dickhead spouted: "If you think the C64 has died a long time ago, you couldn't be more wrong." As Stuart Hall might have said: "Those Belgians."

And finally, **Lara Croft** has got some new kecks. The forthcoming *Tomb Raider III* features the perennial column-filler sporting the traditional shorts and bikini top, as well as an orange jacket with long pants, and a dark blue camouflage affair. Pathetic.

This tank is not hovering.

Twenty-first century warfare looks quite a bit like its 20th century counterpart.

Cross bridges in style in Red Storm's *Force 21*.

USE THE FORCE

One example of what could happen if the Chinese ever invent the hovertank

⭐ **REPORT** Steve Hill

The Chinese have invaded Russia to capture its vital resources! Of course they haven't. But this is the unlikely scenario behind *Force 21* from Red Storm Entertainment. Another addition to the growing band of 3D real-time war games, 21st century conflict is the order of the day, encompassing helicopters and tanks. 'Digital warfare' also plays its part, with jamming and eavesdropping on enemy communications proving crucial. *Force 21* is due next summer.

DID YOU WIN A PRIZE?

PC ZONE competition winners: stand up and take a bow

ACE OF GAMES N Gunawardena of Letchworth walks away with a limited edition Motorhead Scaletrix set.

LET'S GET NAKED The ten people who win a copy of the Lara Croft single are: Alex Burrel, Norfolk; Alan R Dempster, Co. Durham; J Taggart, Middlesbrough; Steve Lee, Huntingdon; R Jibson, Stockport; N Lindsay, Whittlesey; Jo Phillips, Swansea; R. Botts, Sheffield; Martin Elland, Wakefield; Tim Greer, Hornsey. Hope you like it.

FREESPACE It was Brendon Leydon of Redditch who won the fabulous home entertainment system. Fucky lucker. Runner-up prize winners are: Mrs Helen Vincent, Jersey; Nicholas Brus, Selkirkshire; J Fox-Warren, Ilfracombe; John Hardy, Wallingford; Niko Gafos, Liverpool; Miss K Fairey, Stevenage; Omar Gregory, Ickenham; RG Todd, Co. Antrim; Robert Smith, Edgebaston; Matthew Paul, Bangor.

F1 SIM COMPACT Both P Mountain of Doncaster and Allen Darling of Surrey win a Digital Edge steering wheel apiece.

IT'S WASN'T THE PRODIGY Did you enter our compo to win a copy of Rave E-Jay? Is your name here? Matthew Morrissey, Devon; Phil Shaw, Nottingham; Peter Walsh, Abingdon; Carl Chandler, Birmingham; C Wright, London; Anthony Hetty, London; Chris Dale, Poole; Angela Cooke, Leeds; Roger Pusey, Farnborough. If so, you've won yourself a copy.

HEAD LIKE A CORNISH PASTY JA Tarason walked away with the fantastic home entertainment system. Runner-up prize winners include: Bernie Mackin, Glasgow; Steve Darcey, Collingham; Derek Matthews, Luton; Matthew Hawkins, Neston; Philip Hare, Devon; Hassni Malik, Surrey; Mark Round, Bristol; Mick Toland, Derby; Graham Egan, Norfolk; Simon Rutter, Hartlepool.

TICKERTAPE

STARTS++ A recent merger deal between Mindscape's parent, The Learning Company, and Brøderbund has prompted changes on the Red Orb label. *The Journeyman Project 4* has reverted back to developers Presto Studios, while *Extreme Warfare* and *Baja 2000* have both been put on "indefinite hold" (ie canned) **++STOP++** Activision have signed a 10-year deal with Paramount Pictures which will give the games company exclusive licence to produce games based on the *Star Trek* brand name. Their first title is expected to be based on the new movie *Star Trek: Insurrection* **++STOP++** *Quake III Arena* has been officially announced by iD Software, although there's still no word of a release date. "*Quake III Arena* will amaze fans all over the world with visual features such as moody, atmospheric use of fog and spectacular lighting," says big chief Tom Hollinshead **++STOP++** *PC ZONE* can reveal that Ritual Entertainment's *SiN* (see review on page 90) is to be made into a Japanese-style animé movie. Big names are apparently involved (although our intrepid reporter Steve Hill couldn't remember their names. Idiot). We'll have the full lowdown soon **++ENDS**

PCZONE
READER AWARDS

Don't be a bystander – make your vote count. It's your last chance

A s anticipated, the response we have received so far to the *PC ZONE* Reader Awards has been overwhelming, and we now have a good idea of which games are leading the way. There is still time to vote though, so if you haven't done so, do it now!

The votes have already started to be compiled, and as expected there are a bunch of games proving to be your most popular choices. *Quake II*, *Final Fantasy VII* and *World Cup 98* are doing very well, but there are also some unexpected leaders. We can't reveal too much now though – you'll have to wait for the Awards night itself.

Remember that only PC games released after September 1997 are eligible, and you can vote for only one game in each category. To vote, fill in either the voting form on this page or our interactive voting form on the *PC ZONE* website at **www.pczone.co.uk**. Alternatively, you can email us your votes by writing to paulm.pcz@dial.pipex.com with the subject line 'Awards 98'. Remember: if you email your votes, you need to indicate the categories as well as the game names, and also give your name, address and daytime telephone number, otherwise your entry cannot be accepted.

WIN!

By submitting your vote you will be automatically entered into our competition to win one of five VideoLogic SonicStorm audio accelerator cards.

SPONSORED BY

VideoLogic

Wireplay
The games network from BT

ALL VOTING FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY WEDNESDAY 11 NOVEMBER – SO HURRY!

✪ There will also be four special awards presented at the ceremony. Our sponsors, VideoLogic and Wireplay, will both be presenting their own special awards; our sister publication, PC ZONE Benelux, will also have their own award voted for by their readers; and finally there will be a special PC ZONE Award voted for internally by the editorial team, because otherwise we'll feel a bit left out.

PCZONE AWARDS 98 VOTING FORM

BEST ACTION GAME _____

BEST ADVENTURE/RPG GAME _____

BEST DRIVING GAME _____

BEST FLIGHT SIMULATION GAME _____

BEST SPORTS GAME _____

BEST STRATEGY GAME _____

GAME OF THE YEAR _____

DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR _____

PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR _____

Name _____

Job title _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Daytime telephone _____

☐ Please tick if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies.

☐ Please tick if under 18 years of age (we need to ask this question so we don't send inappropriate material to minors).

TERMS AND CONDITIONS: Postal entries with all nominations filled out correctly will be entered into the prize draw and winners will be selected at random after the closing date. The Editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into and all winners will be notified by post. This competition is not open to employees of Dennis Publishing or any other companies associated with the Awards. Only one entry per reader. No cash alternatives will be offered. Submission of entry will be taken as acceptance of these rules.

✪ SEND YOUR VOTES TO: Reader Awards 98 Votes, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. All nominations must reach us by Wednesday 11 November 1998, so get thinking right away. A photocopy or postcard will do if you don't want to cut up your copy of PC ZONE. Remember: you can also register your votes online at www.pczone.co.uk, or by email as detailed above.

He's **Suave!**

He's **Debonair!**

HE'S **DEAD!**

GRIM FANDANGO™

FROM THE CREATOR OF **FULL THROTTLE**™ AND **DAY OF THE TENTACLE**™ COMES AN EPIC TALE OF CRIME AND CORRUPTION IN THE LAND OF THE DEAD. FEATURING MANUEL CALAVERA AS YOUR TRAVEL AGENT OF DEATH IN THE MOST EXTRAORDINARY 3D ADVENTURE EVER MADE. SET YOUR TRAVEL PLANS FOR THIS WINTER. FOR WINDOWS 95 CD-ROM.

Download the amazing playable demo at www.lucasarts.com/products/grim

HOTLINE

Christmas is coming and the goose is getting fat, please stick some money up the chimney. And all that

THU 5TH

Bonfire Night – Remember, remember, the 5th of November: guns, pow-wows, er, Guy Fawkes and, ah… bonfires and fireworks. Be careful out there!

FRI 6TH

Games released today include: **North V South** (Interactive Magic) – As we all know, the American Civil War was fought between the North and South over who had the biggest and most erotically shaped states. This turn-based strategy thing from the developers of the *Great Battles* series will help to decide once and for all.

Blackstone Chronicles (Mindscape) – An adventure based upon a supposedly popular serialised novel by writer John Saul. The game focuses upon a sudden rash of mysterious and violent deaths in a small New England town. A resolution of the 'Miss Scarlett in the drawing room with the lead pipe' nature is highly unlikely.
Tender Loving Care (*PCZ* #65, 79%) (Take 2 Interactive) – The Digital Versatile Disc edition of the smutty interactive adventure-cum-psychological thriller.

SUN 8TH

Remembrance Sunday – Don't forget to wear your poppy.

Age Of Empires: The Rise Of Rome Expansion Pack (Microsoft) – Should just about keep you occupied until the much-delayed *Age Of Empires 2* is born next year.
Heavy Gear II (Activision) – In the future, science fiction writers tell us, tanks will have legs instead of tracks. That is the most stupid idea of all time. Fools.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

FRI 13TH

Games released today include: **Wild Metal Country** (DMA Design) – Apparently, this is '*Quake* with tanks'. The whole thing is perhaps even more fun than that brief description, with distinct arcade leanings and some over-the-top gameplay. (See preview on page 62.)
Biosys (Take 2 Interactive) – 'Biosys' is short for 'biological systems', you see, and this is a game about cyborgs having a fight, we believe.
Baldur's Gate (Interplay) – The world needs victims, which is why God created role-players. (See preview on page 56.)
Liath (Black Friar) – In the fairy tale city of Azeretus, time has fractured, stranding three friends in separate time zones. Naturally, you've got to put things to rights. Throughout the game, time slows down and speeds up without warning, making for some fairly unique gameplay.

Warhammer Chaos Gate (Mindscape) – Role-players, people who paint little lead figures, serial killers… they're all tarred with the same brush, if you ask us.
Stratosphere (Ripcord Games) – *SimCity* meets *C&C* – literally! Build and equip a huge, flying city, and send it into real-time battle with other huge, flying cities. Tonight's big match: Leeds versus Manchester. Literally!
Lula Virtual Babe (Take 2 Interactive) – Potentially offensive, and undoubtedly nowhere near pornographic enough pretend-girlfriend wank.
Combat Flight Sim (Microsoft) – Supposedly, this combat version of the long-running flight sim is backwardly compatible with previous, non-combat incarnations. The lure of shooting down perfectly innocent 747s could prove too strong to resist.

Ultrafighters (Interactive Magic) – A "fast-paced, futuristic air combat simulation", apparently. The concept behind the game is "World War II-style dogfighting with hi-tech weaponry", hence your aircraft are launched from hovering aircraft carriers.

Civilization: Call To Power (Activision) – You can never have too much 'Civ', as its devotees like to call it. This all-new *Civilization* title offers a whole bucketful of new features, a 7000-year time span and a range of technology.
Asteroids (Activision) – Another classic arcade game reinterpreted by Activision. Polygons and 360-degree, light-sourced 3D asteroid fields replace the original's flickering, black-and-white, fit-inducing vectors. Also, 'Asteroids' sounds a bit like 'haemorrhoids'. Or even better, 'ass-teroids'.

FRI 4TH

Games released today include: **TOCA 2** (Codemasters) – The Codies know how to do a good racer, and *TOCA 2* looks like it's going to be a phenomenal racer. Possibly the best straight PC racing game ever, in fact. But why so soon after *Colin McRae*?
Interstate '82 (Activision) – The follow-up to the sublimely witty *Interstate '76*, and we take a jump into the 1980s, with *Miami Vice*-style fashions replacing the flares and afros, and a whole bunch of atrociously styled vehicles to shoot up and get shot up in. Lovely.

1	2	3	4	5	6						12	13	14	15

MON 7TH

Nowt.

FRI 11TH

Nothing.

FRI 18TH

Nada.

FRI 20TH

Games released today include: **Fallout 2** (Interplay) – Our recent brief look suggested more of the same, but the original *Fallout* (PCZ #61, 91%) was about as good as post-apocalyptic role-playing gets, so we're not complaining. Less linear and a more involving storyline are just some of the promises Interplay have to live up to.

Roborumble (check out the demo on this month's CD) (Interactive Magic) – Ooh, real-time wargaming once again, only this time it's a load of robots having a fight. Some truly bizarre units and maze-like battlefields, plus some gorgeous 3D-accelerated effects set this apart from the crowd.

Railroad Tycoon 2 (Take 2 Interactive) – 'Long-awaited' is not the word…

Tunguska (Black Friar) – Any game that begins with you strapped into an electric chair must be worth a look. Black Friar are billing this as a cross between a 3D beat 'em up and a 3D real-time adventure game. We reckon it's neither.

ACM 1918 (Black Friar) – *Aerial Combat Manoeuvres 1918* is an arcade-style World War I dogfighting sim full of bi-planes, Red Barons, and… clouds. (There must be a joke in there about bi-planes being homosexual aircraft.)

Savage Arena (Rage) – A futuristic, fast-paced, violent sports game set in the middle of the 21st century. The aggressive cross between American football and football hooliganism takes place across 16 diverse geosphere stadiums. *Rollerblade* has a lot to answer for.

Fighter Squadron: Screamin' Demons Over Europe (Activision) – What is it with World War I and II dogfighting games this month?

Heretic II (Activision) – *Heretic? Hexen? Hexen II? Heretic II?* What goes on here? They're all games set within the same fantasy world, apparently, but *Heretic II* is the first to adopt a *Tomb Raider II*-esque third-person-perspective camera angle.

Nothing wrong with that. **SiN** (see review on page 90) (Activision) – Like *Heretic II*, *SiN* uses the *Quake II* engine, but in this instance we're in fully familiar first-person territory. There's a crime epidemic sweeping the future city of Freeport, and you're the sorry swine who must get to the bottom of matters. Suffice to say 'good-looking' is not the word for the game. In fact, it's two words.

FRI 27TH

Games released today include: **Tomb Raider III** (Eidos Interactive) – This time around, the annual appearance of 'la Croft' is backed up with appearances on *Newsnight*, and even a book written by cult *Microserfs* author Douglas Coupland. A return to the more puzzle-based gameplay of the first *Tomb Raider, TRIII* certainly looks the part, in a sort of giving-the-people-exactly-what-they-want-and-expect sort of way. We've got a demo next issue, out Tuesday 17 November.

Luftwaffe Commander (Mindscape) – See: more vintage aerial antics. What is the world coming to?

Enemy Infestation (Funsoft) – Inspired by *Aliens*, this is an *X-COM*-esque strategy game in which you take full control of a remote mining colony, and put resources to full use to combat a swarm of alien foes. Medics, soldiers and robots are all at your disposal should you wish to tackle the nasties head-on, or research a more thoughtful resolution.

GP 500 (Funsoft) – As the name suggests, this isn't a World War II combat flight sim, but a state-of-the-art motorcycle race 'em up. As is becoming increasingly the norm, a 3D card is a prerequisite.

MON 30TH

St Andrews Day – If you think the Scots will get drunk tonight, you just wait until the end of next month.

The Secret of Wearing a Kilt
By Mark Cantwell & Ron Cameron

THU 24TH
CHRISTMAS EVE

Christmas tip: When your dad makes his annual remark about hoping to find a sexy lady in his Christmas stocking this year, stab him in the eye with a pen.

SAT 26TH
BOXING DAY

Christmas tip: Sick of your auntie saying "how you've grown" since she saw you last Christmas? Embarrass her by claiming you have terminal elephantitis of the legs.

FRI 25TH
CHRISTMAS DAY

Christmas tip: Before dinner, replace the rum with white spirit, and just watch everyone's face light up (burn off) when mum ignites the Christmas pudding!
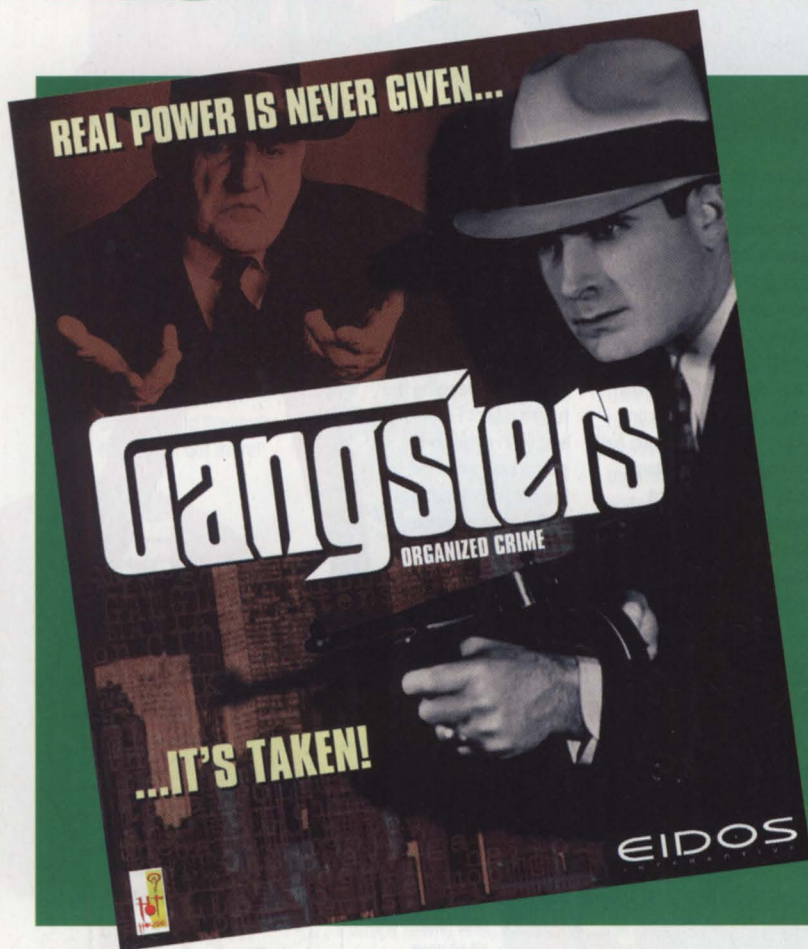
TUE 31TH
NEW YEARS EVE

New Years Eve tip: Worried you might get too drunk and choke on your own vomit in your sleep tonight? Don't be! Simply ensure you empty the entire contents of your stomach before you go to sleep. Do this by ramming a wooden ruler or similar down the back of your throat.

If you're out to catch the UK's most wante
new software titles...

REAL POWER IS NEVER GIVEN...

Gangsters
ORGANIZED CRIME

...IT'S TAKEN!

EIDOS

Henry
"Thin Lips"
Abbot

Pontoon Soper
Buy premises
Dressmakers
Buy for $1123

Pay a visit to PC World.

Hiding out amongst the latest software at PC World is a title that could turn you into the most success gangster since Al Capone.

The place is a big city in the USA. time, the 1920's. You're new on the b You see a business opportunity. A fe the local stores need a security servi right? You know the muscle to provic So the cops call it a Protection Racke But hey, everyone's happy. You expa a few more blocks. Other opportunit present themselves. And you always support the local good causes. After one day you're going to be Mayor. O you? If you don't pay PC World a visi you'll never know.

£34.9 INC. V

THE F.A. PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL MANAGER 99

THE F.A. PREMIER LEAGUE

FA Premier League Manager
Guide your team to Premier League glory in the official management simulation.

£34.99 INC. VAT

Grand Prix Legends
Graphically stunning racing featuring the classic 1967 Grand Prix season.

£34.99 INC. VAT

Sin
Overthrow Alexis Sinclaire and her genetically engineered mutant army.

£34.99 INC. VAT

We have Britain's biggest software choice, including hobbie education and business titles. The expert staff at PC World will be pleased to help you choose.

SMALL SOLDIERS
SQUAD COMMANDER

COLIN McRAE RALLY

COMMANDOS

HALF-LIFE

APACHE

Small Soldiers Squad Commander **£29.99** INC. VAT
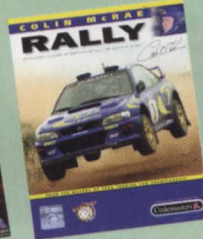
Colin McRae Rally **£34.99** INC. VAT

Commandos Behind Enemy Lines **£34.99** INC. VAT
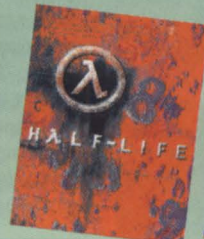
Half Life **£34.99** INC. VAT

Apache Havoc **£34**

KLINGON HONOR GUARD

HARDWAR

MONACO GRAND PRIX racing simulation 2

DUNE 2000

Star Trek: Klingon Honor Guard **£34.99** INC. VAT

Hard War **£34.99** INC. VAT

Monaco Grand Prix **£34.99** INC. VAT

Dune 2000 **£34.99** INC. VAT

The X-Files **£39**

it would be a crime not to get the
best out of them

2D / 3D Graphics Card

MAXI GAMER PHOENIX

Voodoo Banshee™

Featuring

Reincarnate your PC with the Power of Phoenix !

- WORLDS FASTEST 2D PERFORMANCE WITH A 128-BIT 100 MHZ VOODOO BANSHEE™ ENGINE
- FEROCIOUS VOODOO™ - COMPATIBLE 3D PROCESSOR. SCORCHES UP TO 4 MILLION TRIANGLES/SEC AND 100 M PIXELS/SEC
- ACCELERATES GLIDE™, DIRECT3D™ AND OPENGL® GAMES

16MB

Guillemot

3D GAME PLAY

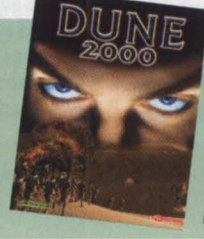The latest 3D accelerator cards add the speed, graphics and extra dimension which take your game playing right to the edge.

Phoenix Voodoo Banshee 2D/3D Graphics Card

Equipped with the latest Voodoo Banshee chipset for awesome 2D and 3D graphics. This card will not only provide mind blowing graphics and speed for gamers, but also a truly enhanced desktop for the discerning user.
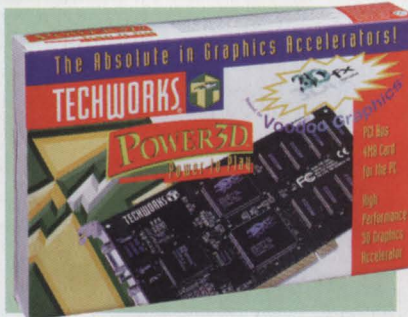
£99.99 INC. VAT
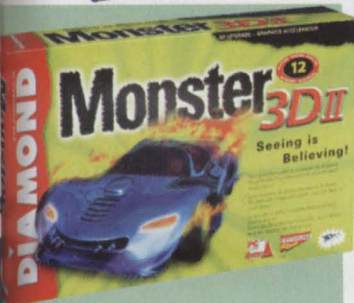
Diamond Monster II 12Mb Voodoo² PCI Graphics Card

This is a fully equipped 3Dfx card with the Voodoo² chipset and 12Mb RAM for incredible acceleration, astounding realism and unique 3D special effects.

£149 INC. VAT

Monster 3D II

Seeing is Believing!

DIAMOND

Techworks Power 3D 3Dfx Graphics Card

The power of the 3Dfx graphics cards has to be seen to be believed. What better way to do this than with the Power 3D from Techworks at an extremely affordable price.

£49.99 INC. VAT

The Absolute in Graphics Accelerators!

TECHWORKS POWER3D

IMPROVE YOUR CONTROL

Put yourself in the cockpit with the latest steering wheel and joystick technology, adding more feedback and realism than ever before.

Microsoft® SideWinder™ Freestyle Pro

Perfect for arcade-style driving, flying and combat games. Tilt from side to side to control your games like never before.

£49.99 INC. VAT

Thrustmaster Formula Force Steering Wheel and Pedals

Feel the adrenaline of real racing when you fight to control your [car] as you get bumped by your [op]ponents, drive into barriers, over [cur]bs and into [the] gravel trap.

£129 INC. VAT

Microsoft® SideWinder® Forcefeedback Pro

Feel true-to-life feedback, from subtle sensations to raw power, as you take total control of your games.

£119 INC. VAT

IMPROVE YOUR SOUND

Surround yourself with sound and you'll really feel the drama. These new kits really exploit the CD quality sound tracks of the latest games.

CREATIVE

BLASTER Live!

Sound

Creative Labs SoundBlaster Live

A new dimension in audio with features and performance surpassing professional quality equipment. Sound so good it must be live!

£149 INC. VAT

BLASTER 16

Sound

Creative Labs SB16 Sound Card

Creative Labs are currently THE name in sound cards, this is a fabulous opportunity to obtain one of their boards at a crazy price.

£24.99 INC. VAT

Yamaha YST-M20 Speakers

Immerse yourself in the world of sound with these high quality speakers from the world renowned makers of audio equipment.

£59.99 INC. VAT

PC WORLD
THE COMPUTER SUPERSTORE

HOTSHOTS

In which *PC ZONE* takes a look at hot new games that will be coming your way soon. This month we've got brand new screenshots from Eidos' *Daikatana* and T*HQ's *Excession*
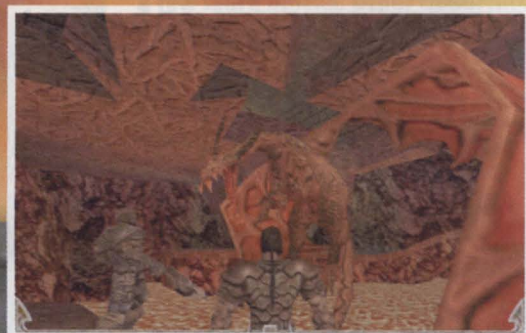
DAIKATANA

⭐ Eidos Interactive • Out March '99

It's happened again: *Daikatana* has slipped. "Why is this?" you may ask. Is it because of technical difficulties? Is it because of over-ambitious game design? Is it because Ion Storm forgot to buy a key for the leccy meter? As it turns out, the real reason is far less romantic. Eidos, the game's publishers, have chosen to hold back *Daikatana* for "marketing strategy" reasons. Sigh. Anyway, the new official line is that *Daikatana* will go to gold master on February 15, and readied for release at the beginning of March. Still, having played the game at the recent ECTS we can attest that it still looks like being well worth the wait.

EXCESSION

⭐ T*HQ • Out March '99

When T*HQ acquired US development outfit GameFX, *Excession* (formerly known as *Out Of The Void*) was in a reasonably advanced state of being. Now, some three to four months away from final release, it's looking quite stunning. As space combat games go, *Excession* looks like being something of a cross between *Privateer II: The Darkening* (PCZ #44, 94%) and Argonaut's Nintendo classic *Star Wing* – except with incredible accelerator-only graphics and eerily sinister organic monsters. Twenty-four single-player levels (plus five bonus levels) are on the cards, with end-of-level baddies and a full complementary 'alien invasion' storyline. Great.

Burgle, steal, nick, swipe, pinch, half-inch... Do it all in

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

We asked *Charlie Brooker* to look at a virtual reality computer game about a thief, and then describe it using a selection of words of his choosing. And he came up with this load of rubbish

THE DETAILS

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive
DEVELOPER Looking Glass Studios
WEBSITE www.eidos.com
OUT TBC

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Unique emphasis on stealth and cunning rather than mindless combat
- Great graphics and advanced AI
- Looking Glass have a superb track record; *Thief* is unlikely to disappoint
- Complex missions, excellent visuals

CV

LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS

A brief history of time (at LGS, from '92 to the present)

1992 Release *Ultima Underworld* to much acclaim.

1993 *Ultima Underworld II* (*PCZ* #01, 94%) arrives. As does more acclaim.

1994 *System Shock* (*PCZ* #20, 95%). Acclaim city.

1995 *Flight Unlimited* (*PCZ* #25, 96%). Acclaim from people with fancy PCs.

1996 *Terra Nova* (*PCZ* #39, 90%). Slightly less acclaim.

1997 *Flight Unlimited II* (*PCZ* #60, 84%). More acclaim again.

1998 *Thief: The Dark Project* almost ready to go. Perhaps they should change their name to "Acclaim". (*That's been done – Ed.*)

Two men dancing about and looking stupid. With swords.

The locations are pretty stunning, really. Look at that. Lovely. Ahhh.

Realism. Games developers are always banging on about realism. They're obsessed. Picture the scene: It's an average afternoon at Dennis Publishing. Everyone in the building is busy forging ahead with an exciting career in the cut-'n'-thrust, cut-'n'-paste world of magazine production. Every desk is an epicentre of efficiency, every floor a hive of industry. Except for the basement, that is, where the feckless slackers on *PC ZONE* are lounging in chairs, eating pies and having a new game demonstrated to them.

Yes, demonstrated. These days an increasing number of software houses aren't content to simply bung a pair of CDs in a jiffy bag and mail it our way. Oh no. They have to come in and personally test drive the game before our very eyes, as if we were children. Or simpletons. Or just too damn lazy to play it for ourselves. They know us too well.

Occasionally the program under scrutiny is glaringly rubbish, and an embarrassing and awkward ceremony ensues wherein the games company PR droid asks uncomfortable questions like "What do you think of it?", and the *ZONE* slacker tries to answer with some kind of vaguely positive, non-committal statement; because if he spoke the truth right there and then the droid would try to stab himself to death with a biro. Better to bottle it up and let it all flow out in the finished article. The droid can biro his lungs out on his own sodding time.

Anyway, the only reason a company sends in one of their glassy-eyed henchmen to demonstrate the code in the first place is so they can sit there and point out all the details. And this is where the obsession with realism starts to kick in.

"Look at that flaming torch on the wall," they'll say, pointing at a clutch of pixels. "Look, see – the shadows actually flicker." On-screen, they approach the torch for a closer look at the dancing shadows, and in the real world turn to check you're paying attention. "See? See how they flicker?" And they stare at you until you nod.

Realism, realism, realism. Trouble is, while the visuals may be realistic, the action itself is absolute toon time; the authenticity fetish suddenly evaporates, and instead we're left with screenfuls of absurd gung-ho conflict, with severed arms and legs and heads and bullets and blood and laser rifles and hordes of slavering octopoid invaders from the planet Zaglon B. But hey, those shadows flicker.

What's this got to do with *Thief*? Everything. The makers of *Thief* are trying to create a 3D first-person perspective action-adventure game with realistic gameplay. Do they have a hope in hell? Probably not. But if anyone can pull it off, the guys from Looking Glass Studios can.

WATCH OUT, THERE'S A THIEF ABOUT

Looking Glass' track record is impressive (see CV panel, left): *Ultima Underworld* (PCZ #01, 94%), *System Shock* (PCZ #20, 95%), and *Terra Nova* (PCZ #39, 90%) – unconventional envelope-pushers, the lot of 'em. While many developers are content to hurl the player into a 3D environment stuffed with bad guys, chainguns and ceaseless mayhem, Looking Glass have always done things differently, concentrating instead on storyline, atmospherics and pacing.

Thief carries on that tradition. The concept is simple: when all's said and done, it's a game in which you play a slippery little bastard. You take the role of Garrett, a seedy ne'er-do-well who makes a living offering his services in exchange for money. Our hero is well versed in the art of petty criminal behaviour – sneaking around, skulking in the shadows, smacking people on the back of the head, pinching stuff then legging it – and therein lurks the bulk of the gameplay.

A typical level requires you to break into an opulent mansion and pilfer a precious artefact. Easy peasy. Except the place is a) quite big, and b) regularly patrolled by guards. So what do you do? You've got some weapons – a sword, a blackjack and a bow and arrow – but there's lots of guards and only one of you, and this isn't *Duke Nukem*; run in the front door waving a sword around and they'll be all over you like fat men in a cake shop.
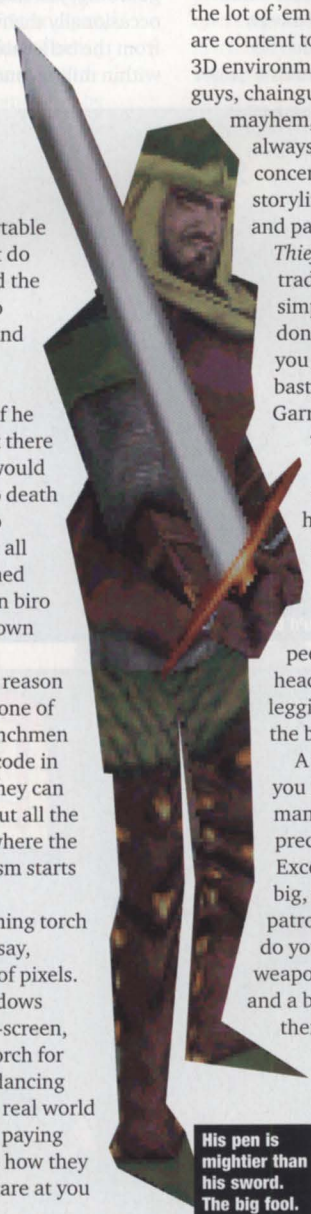
His pen is mightier than his sword. The big fool.
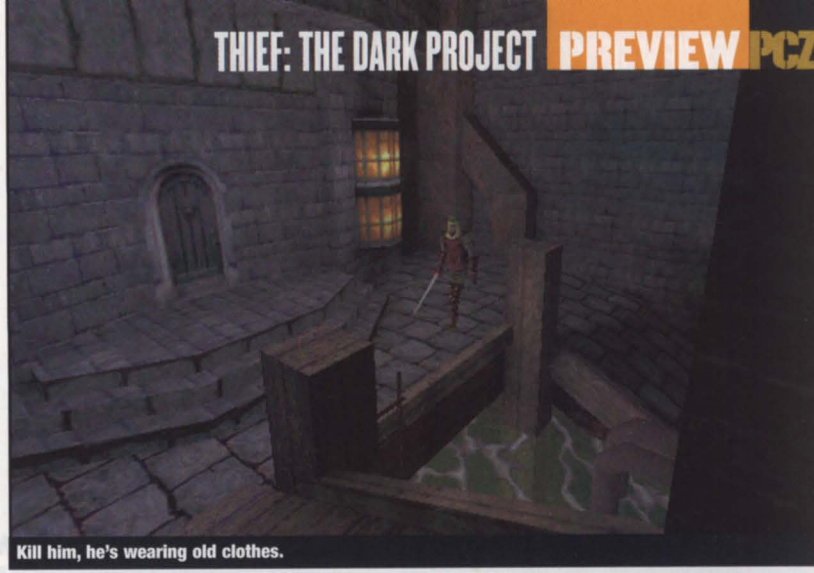
Kill him, he's wearing old clothes.
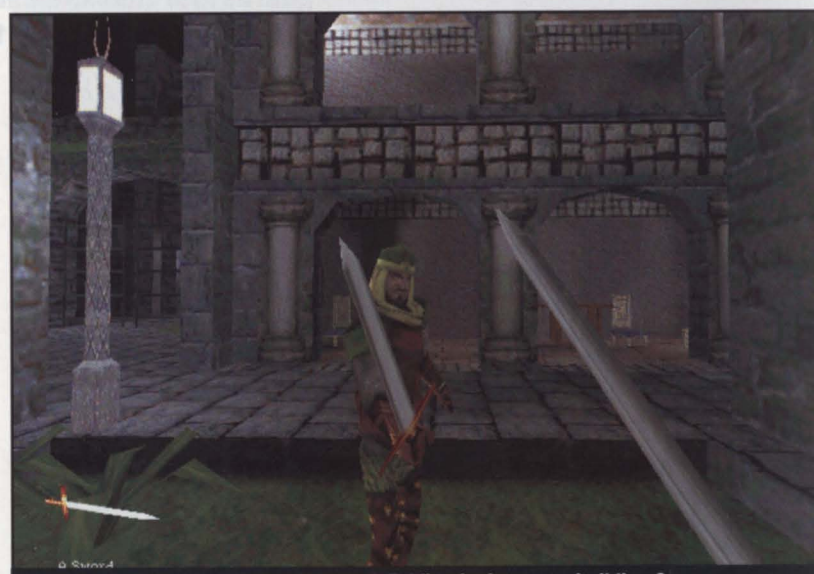
Using the sword should really be a last resort. But there's always one, isn't there?
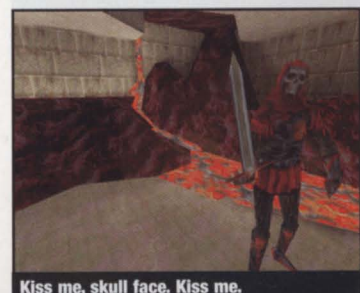
Kiss me, skull face. Kiss me.

The situation looks grave. Ha ha! Grave! Geddit?!
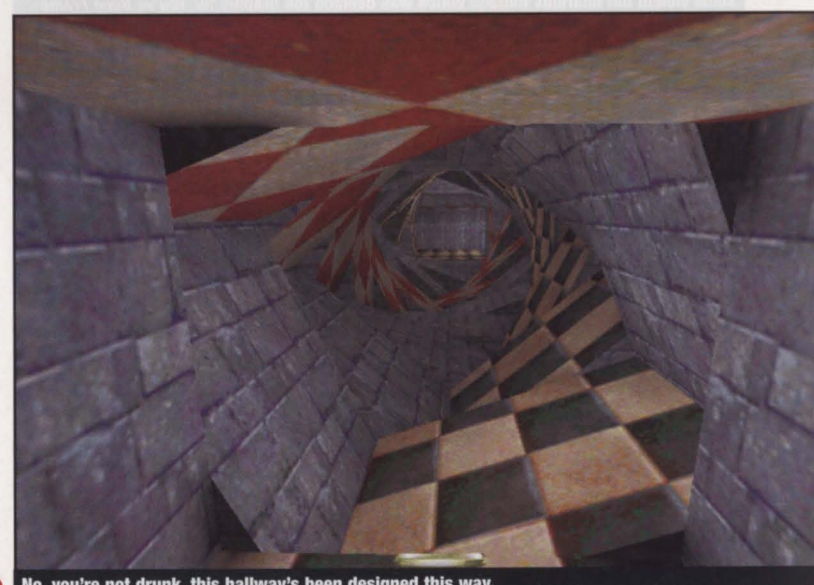
No, you're not drunk, this hallway's been designed this way.

So rather than cantering headlong into each location, weapon drawn, you are encouraged to walk on tiptoes, preferably in the dark and on a soft surface; slip in the back way; keep in the shadows. Should you encounter a guard, the best course of action is to sneak past or take him out quietly by whopping him on the back of the skull with a blackjack. You can whip out your sword and attempt to carve him into chunks small enough to stir fry in a spider's wok, but that's the last resort. Aside from the hideous brutality of such action, it's also noisy; someone might hear the struggle and come looking for you. An altogether classier – and quieter – option is to use your bow and arrow to eliminate him from a distance.

SHOOT THAT POISON ARROW

Once he's laid out on the floor, sling his body over your shoulder and dump it somewhere inconspicuous to prevent anyone from coming across his sprawling corpse and subsequently raising the alarm. And so on and so forth.

The game starts slowly, but once you're in the thick of things *Thief* is genuinely nerve-jangling. If you're clumsy, death comes quickly – a few quick hacks from a rival sword and it's curtains. Knowing your life hangs in the balance each time you tread on a creaky floorboard helps keep the mind surprisingly keen. Sound effects are an all-important staple of the gameplay – all the characters can hear. Not only does a careless footfall alert the bad guys to your presence, it also alerts you to theirs. Often you have to rely on your sense of hearing

> 66 **You can whip out your sword and try to carve the guards into chunks small enough to stir fry in a spider's wok, but that's the last resort** 99

to work out the whereabouts of the guards as they pad about – make sure your speakers are wired up the right way round.

One particularly neat feature is the 'peer round the corner' key, which does exactly what it says on the tin. Being able to poke your head round and have a quick butcher's down the corridor can save your life on countless occasions; although there's nothing more unnerving than finding

yourself staring eyeball to eyeball at an equally surprised guard.

So there you go. It's all shaping up to be an exhilarating experience, if nothing else.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN, 'BUT'?

Now. Let's go back to that whole 'realism' thing. It's all very well having ultra-realism when it enhances the gameplay and makes it more believable and therefore involving -- but if the entire thing

were naught but an exercise in everyday life emulation, Thief would be... well, dog-piss dull.

Thankfully, it isn't. While on the whole it presents a far more believable environment than, say, *Duke Nukem*, there are also occasions where it feels about as true to life as *Ivor The Engine*. Example: for some reason, Garrett is equipped with special 'magic' arrows which do special 'magic' things. There's a 'water

arrow' which is used for dousing lanterns (thereby enabling you to pass by in total darkness), and a 'moss arrow' which muffles the sound of your footsteps. Now, at the risk of sounding like a gaggle of pedantic, sneering shitcakes, wouldn't a kind of 'water balloon' thing make more sense than an arrow? And if you wanted to walk around silently for a moment, wouldn't you simply slip off your shoes? Still, as long as they don't feel contrived and out of place, like they're plugging a hole in the game design, we'll let it go. Besides, shooting arrows into an enemy's lughole is... well... fun. Remember fun? Thought so.

Speaking of fun, the behaviour of the enemy guards is hilarious. In most respects, they're scarily true-to-life. While on duty, they behave impeccably: they stand around whistling or muttering to themselves, fidgeting and pacing around in a faintly bored manner, and generally doing little in the way of actual guarding, just like the real thing. But occasionally their behaviour veers from the believable to the ridiculous within milliseconds, in a manner so

Some violent but hilarious footage which was deemed too graphic for *You've Been Framed*.

Not sure what this is, but you'd best kill it anyway.
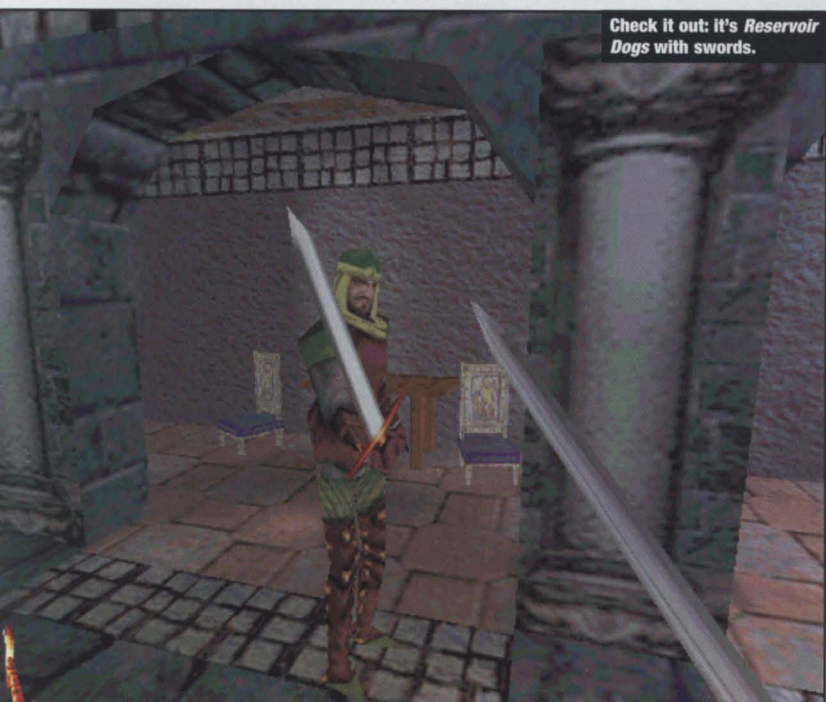
Check it out: it's *Reservoir Dogs* with swords.

Oh, did we mention that the game's got zombies in it? Sorry.
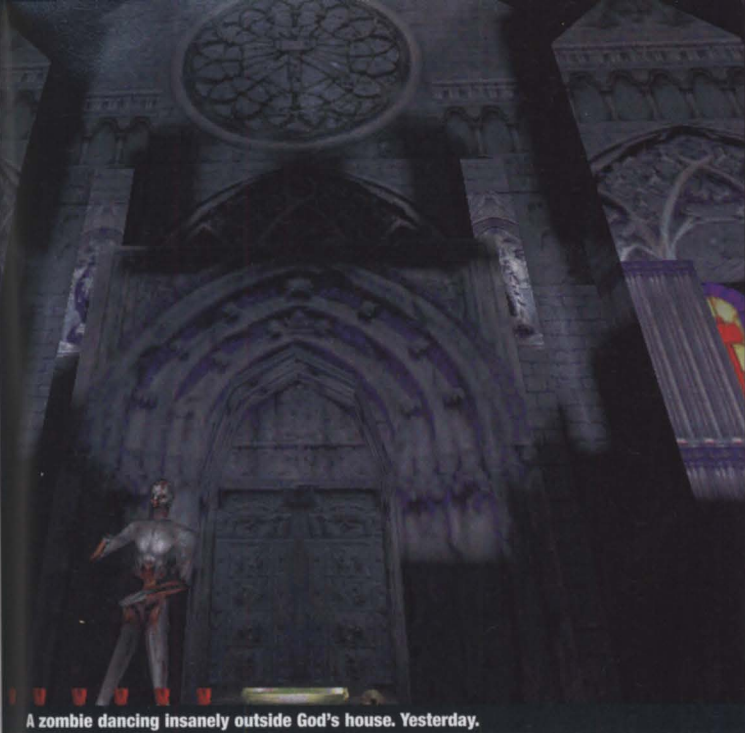
A zombie dancing insanely outside God's house. Yesterday.

The burglaries largely take place in fairly up-scale homes. This is one in Islington. Circa 1567.

disconcertingly schizophrenic that you start to question their sanity.

Let's say you accidentally make a sound, at which point a nearby guard might shout: "Who goes there?" – which is nerve-jangling and pant-plopping and all of that. Then moments later the same guard lightens the mood somewhat by saying aloud, in the hammiest manner imaginable: "Oh, I must be imagining things." What is this? Pantomime? You half expect to turn around 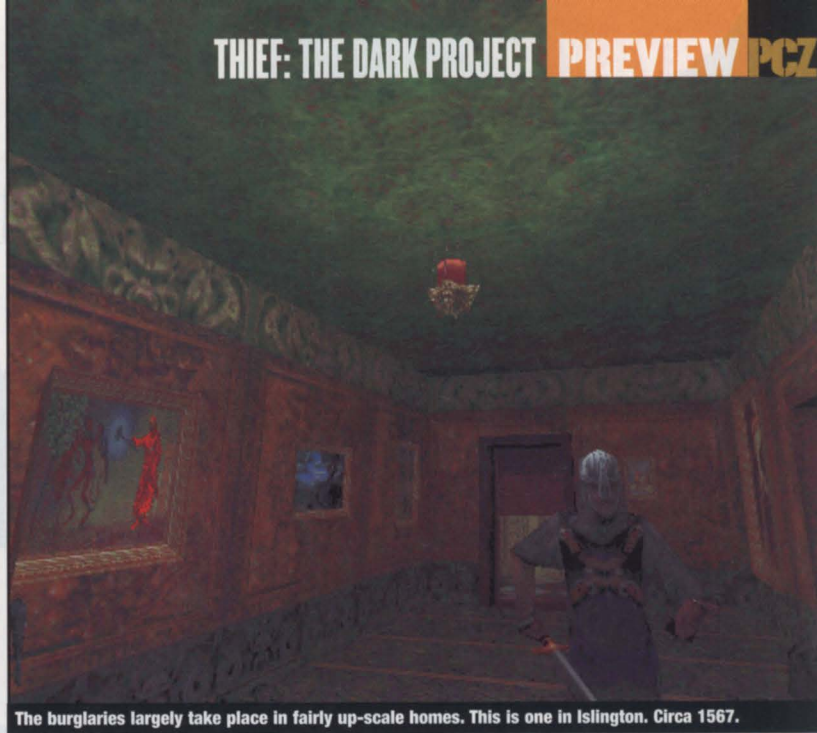and see Jim Davidson, dressed as Buttons, performing a comic turn. Perhaps you might even ready your sword in anticipation, dribbling at the prospect of hacking his legs off below the knee, then stamping up and down on his arrogant little face until his eyeballs burst all over your shoes. Pantomime or not, it's a laugh and a half when they catch you.

Funnier still is the way they all speak with a bizarre approximation of the English accent, reminiscent of Dick Van Dyke's infamous star turn in *Mary Poppins* and equally hilarious. Mind you, Van Dyke never started cussing, the way the Thief guards start hurling insults at you once it all kicks off. Not content to be simply amusing, the guards absolute devils to hide from. Skulking around in the darkness while an unaware guard stomps by, absent-mindedly mumbling to himself is a uniquely tense gaming experience that you won't find anywhere else.

DRUNK AND DISORDERLY

So. All in all, it's an intriguing prospect. We can't wait to get our hands on the finished version – especially since the preview

version has a weird control setup. As *Thief*'s gameplay relies on careful, precise manoeuvring, it was oddly frustrating to discover that the preview version came with a bizarre, unchangeable control system. Here at *ZONE* we're fussy. We like our Y axis reversed when we're mouseketeering through a *Quake*-alike. But since there was no option to do this, we spent most of our time in the world of *Thief* staring at our shoes, or the ceiling, or the wall, or basically just about anywhere other than where we intended to. In fact, it was a bit like that walk you do when you're tired and you've had far too much to drink, and you alternate between trying to loll your head back to rest on your shoulders, and leaning forward to vomit all over the floor. Not the ideal state for cat burglary, basically. Unless you're a scouser, in which case you're probably: a) a genuine burglar, and b) perpetually drunk anyway, in which case congratulations – this is your life.

Anyway, since you'll be able to fully customise the controls in the full version, until they fit you like a glove, that last bit was irrelevant. Oh, and we apologise if you are a scouser (even though you probably stole this mag to read it – assuming you can read). Sorry. We were ranting. *Thief: The Dark Project* is out later this year, and it will probably rock bells. Just don't go pinching our copy, okay? PCZ
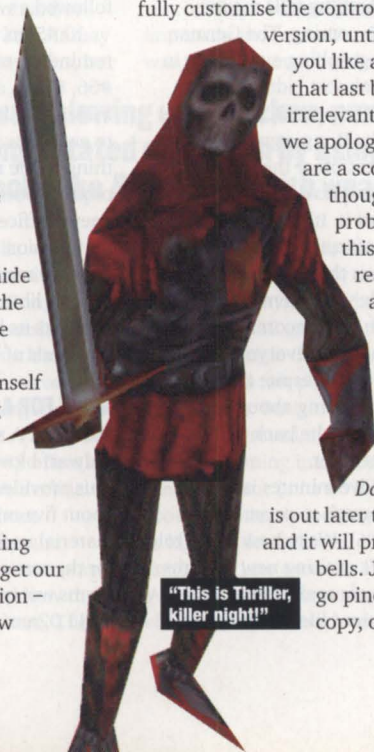
"This is Thriller, killer night!"

A man about to get an arrow right in his left ear. Now that's unpleasant.

DON'T HAVE NIGHTMARES

How *Thief* could have been a gritty documentary of a game.

It's all well and good creating a game about stealth and evasion and sneaking around on tippy-toes putting other people's property in your pockets, but here at *ZONE* we can't help thinking that the makers of *Thief* have missed out on a golden opportunity.

The problem is this: *Thief* is set in a sort of quasi-historic fantasy environment in which 19th century technology mingles with medieval imagery – a world of chainmail and brass pipes, cobblestones and wooden beams. Fine if you like that sort of thing. But it could have been set in the suburbs of any average British city. Truro, say, or perhaps Nottingham or Derby. Why would that be any better? Because the game features loads of burglary, dumbo, and, let's face it, a suburban burglary simulator would be one big fat laugh.

Instead of calling it *Thief*, they could call it *The Criminal Adventures Of Darren Piss: The Nihilistic Teenage Crackhead Who Doesn't Give A Flying F*** About Anyone Or Anything, Especially Your Sodding Property*, and replace the existing missions with a series of everyday yet equally nerve-racking burglaries: breaking and entering; hiding inside cupboards; pilfering videos; accidentally smashing treasured family heirlooms; turning drawers inside out in search of petty cash; taking a crap in the centre of the carpet… The list goes on and on. Fantastic entertainment. They could even scan in the faces of the cast of *The Bill* and have them turning up as polygonal policemen to arrest you if you mess up. Although doing Bob Cryer's nose justice might prove tricky. Anyway, they should scrap the entire game and redo it like what we says, bastards, bastards, bastards.

Fear and Loathing in Chicago with...
MYTH II: SOULBLIGHTER

A press trip, a gaggle of European journalists, not enough sleep, and *Paul Presley*

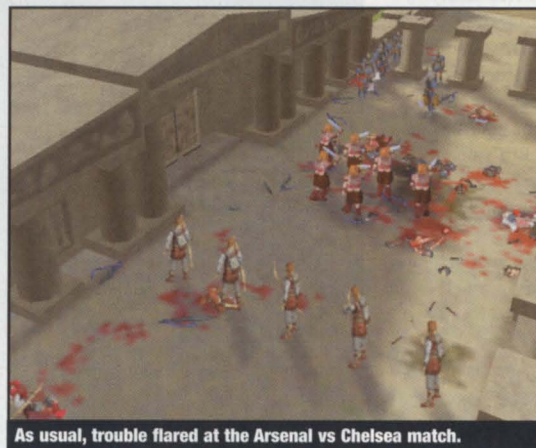## THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Bungie Software
**PUBLISHER** GT Interactive
WEBSITE www.bungie.com
OUT End of December

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Two new units including fireball-toting wizards
- Improved graphics, with multiple combat animations for each unit
- Ambient life – birds, chickens, peasants, leaves falling from the trees…
- Blood. Gallons of it. Like it was going out of fashion

As usual, trouble flared at the Arsenal vs Chelsea match.
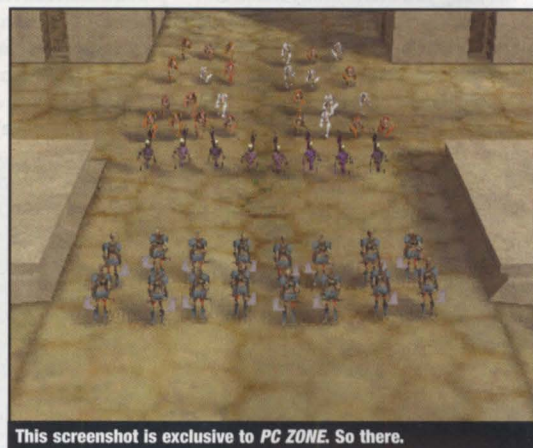
This screenshot is exclusive to *PC ZONE*. So there.

BUNGIE SOFTWARE

From Macs to PCs, the 'elastic' career of Bungie so far...

1991 Company forms and publishes the timely *Operation Desert Storm*. "One best forgotten," say Bungie of it today.

1992 *Minotaur: The Labyrinths Of Crete*. A Macintosh game. The world is forever changed.

1993 The first texture-mapped game on a Macintosh, *Pathways Into Darkness* is released.

1994 The boys finally hit the big time with *Marathon*, the Mac's answer to *Doom*.

1996 *Marathon 2* is ported to the PC and the team realise what they've been missing all these years.

1997 *Myth: The Fallen Lords (PCZ #58, 80%)* is released on both PC and Mac. Award after award after award follows. A sequel becomes a good idea.

It's 10.00am. Chicago. We have invaded Bungie Software. No other word can really describe it. Around 20 journalists from across Europe have been invited to swarm into their offices to have a look at *Myth II: Soulblighter*, the sequel to Bungie's hit strategy game of last year. I say 'swarm'; 'stumble' is a more appropriate word. We're zombies. Getting us all here to Chicago has involved long flights from most of the countries in Western Europe. The Dutch girl from *PC ZONE* Benelux has been sitting next to a crying baby for nine hours. The red rims around her eyes tell more of a story than her words ever could. The Spanish, Italian and Swedish contingent are furiously puffing on cigarettes by the elevators, the only smoking area in the building. The French are huddled quietly in a corner keeping to themselves.

Someone in a baseball cap – we suspect he's American, and therefore our guide – suggests a tour of the office. We dutifully stagger off after him. Thankfully he starts with the kitchen area, and 20 pairs of hands are instantly scrambling for the coffee and doughnuts lying on the table. We move on, taking in such wonders as the marketing manager's desk (empty), the tech support department (empty) and the press officer's cubicle (empty). Something tells me they knew we were coming. The German trio are photographing everything in sight with an almost giddy fervour.

10.30am. The presentation proper begins with the Bungie guys giving us a demonstration of the first *Myth* game for those who don't know anything about it. It's obvious that they're uncomfortable with us. It's equally obvious that we're just as uncomfortable with them. The journalists are also uncomfortable with each other. But everyone's trying to be professional, despite the average age in the room being about 23. I position myself at the back and switch on my tape recorder.

10.35am. Five minutes is apparently enough to cover *Myth I* (*PCZ #58*, 80%). We're now being told about *Myth II*'s exciting new features: new units, magic spells, improved graphics, ambient life, realistic fire,

interior locations. Every tiny little option is being scrutinised, prodded and poked by an enthusiastic German guy and a French woman.

10.43am. The *very* confusing storyline is being explained. I haven't followed a word.

10.45am. The game has started reminding me of *Commandos* (*PCZ #66*, 87%), at least in terms of the mission structure. There's now more to each new level than just killing things. One mission, for example, requires your troops to capture an enemy officer before he escapes from his mansion through a secret tunnel. Another sees you defending an ancient library while your shaman ransacks its books. Thankfully there's still loads of blood.

GAME FOR A LAUGH

10.55am. A moment of great hilarity. A dwarf blows up a chicken on-screen. This provides the Bungie guys with about five minutes of stand-up material and becomes a running joke for the rest of the day. French Woman seems worryingly obsessed with it.

11.02am. "Do *that* in *Diablo*!"

Oh, the humanity. Won't somebody think of the poor children?

Like the windmills of my mind... pieces of which are over there... and there...

Fire is now a dynamic, living, breathing, er, thing. It spreads, it burns, it hurts.

"I know I parked around here somewhere..."

Myth II running in software mode.

Bungie Guy #1 is showing off the impressive new interior locations – something that was lacking in *Myth I*. The improved formation handling is also being shown, along with the units' improved pathfinding ability. A line of soldiers is being rotated on-screen by using the cursor keys. It may look like *Riverdance* with weapons, but

is talk of setting up individual online 'rooms' for different countries. I look at French Woman and German Guy and can't help but feel it'll lead to war.

11.27am. German Guy suddenly makes a good point. Bungie Guy #2 was talking a lot earlier about how important the formation handling was, yet whenever he's been showing

another one goes up in flames. From nowhere, German Guy insults the developers by claiming all Americans are fixated with hunting deer. Bungie Guy #1 just smiles politely and moves on. Plainly this isn't the way he wanted to spend his day.

11.35am. French Woman and German Guy are arguing about 3D cards again. French Woman insists that the Voodoo phenomenon is all but over. This has incensed German Guy. Order is clearly breaking down.

Bungie Guy #2 is talking about the two development tools, Fear and Loathing. Both are being included with the game enabling techhead players to pretty much create the entire game themselves. Fear deals with all the small details in the game, such as unit appearance, stats and so on. Loathing takes care of the maps and AI scripting. Suddenly the front row starts applauding. No idea why, since French Woman's head is blocking the monitor as she continues to go at it with German Guy.

11.53am. Weather effects. Someone asks about snow, and

Bungie Guy #1 tries to find some. He loads a distinctly snowless desert level by mistake. French Woman exclaims with all seriousness that the snow looks great. She is clearly mad.

11.58am. Lunch approaches, so the presentation ends and the Q&A begins. As always there is an uncomfortable silence, as no one wants to go first. I try to help out by asking about the AI and whether units have any degree of self-preservation. Apparently they do indeed try to avoid enemy fire without prompting..

We discuss Bungie's continuing support for the Macintosh, their faith in their new partnership with GT Interactive, the pressures of getting the game out by Christmas, and how Eidos' *Braveheart* isn't really much of a competitor. French Woman has obviously cracked under the pressure and asks if you can smoke in Chicago. Bungie Guy #1 ignores her and calmly announces that it's time to eat. We all slowly file out, agreeing that on the whole it looks pretty damn good. Except for the Swede, who is complaining about his arse. PCZ

> **❝First we see a dwarf blowing up a chicken; next a line of soldiers is being rotated on-screen by using the cursor keys. It looks like *Riverdance* with weapons❞**

it seems to work pretty well.

11.12am. The context-sensitive music demo isn't working. Bungie Guy #2 is under the desk messing with wires, but it proves fruitless. In the meantime, French Woman and German Guy have started arguing about 3D accelerator cards. Things are looking grim. Bungie Guy #1 offers to hum along to the demo. We decline.

11.20am. Lots of talk about Bungie.net. The Bungie Guys are discussing how popular Internet play proved in the first game and how they want to retain that appeal here. There

the levels to us he hasn't bothered using them, preferring the more traditional playground bundle tactic. Bungie Guy #3 explains that this is because Bungie Guy #2 is rubbish. Seems like a fair point.

11.30am. Bungie Guys explain how they've improved the combat AI to take positioning into account, meaning your units no longer wander around aimlessly looking for someone to kill, but do their best to take the landscape into account. French Woman is still obsessed with killing chickens, and whoops with delight as

They think it's all over. And it is: the final

FIFA 99

After *FIFA: RTWC* and the phenomenal *World Cup 98* comes *FIFA 99* – aka *After The World Cup*. Jeremy Wells looks at what's new with EA Sports' latest 'sakher' game

CV EA SPORTS

Semi-automatic goalkeepers with advanced AI mean there's less to worry about in the box.

THE DETAILS
DEVELOPER EA Sports Canada
PUBLISHER EA Sports
WEBSITE www.easports.com
OUT November '98

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?
- It's faster and smoother than ever before
- There's a host of useful new moves and improved player AI, plus semi-automatic goalkeepers
- At last you can set up your own leagues and Cup tournaments with over 240 different club sides

It seems like only a few months since EA Sports released *World Cup 98*. Er, hang on a minute, it *was* just a few months ago. What are they playing at over there in Canada? Three football games in just 12 months just doesn't seem possible. Have they been taking some kind of machine coder's Viagra? Ah, but apparently this game's different. Well, okay then. But exactly how different can it be?

Associate producer Nic Malaperiman has the answers: "We actually started work on *FIFA 99* when we finished *Road To World Cup* at the end of last year. Whereas *World Cup 98* was designed specifically for this year's tournament, *FIFA 99* features over 240 European and American club sides. As well as playing in up to 12 different leagues and three new Cup games, for the first time you can set up and take part in your own leagues and tournaments. We've even come up with our very own European Super League (see panel on opposite page) for a bit of fun.

Okay, so no national sides. What else is new? "Everything, really," says Matt Brown, the man in charge of the artificial intelligence test bed,

> **It's still a bit of a battle in midfield – more like an Arsenal versus Chelsea game than, say, Liverpool versus Ajax**

"though you might not realise exactly what until you've played it a few times. With football games it's always a case of realism versus reality – should it be a real simulation or should it just be fun? The thing is, 'real' isn't always fun. It's fine for

NIC MALAPERIMAN

Despite the surname, wild man Nic 'Bat Wings' Malaperiman is in fact as English as the Queen Mum and has been helping out with the development of FIFA 99. He supports Man United, but is actually quite a nice bloke

PCZ What was the first game you ever bought?
BAT WINGS It was something called *Pyramids* on the now ancient Philips G7000 system. You had to run around and stuff.

The ball no longer flies off the pitch when you run up to retrieve it from the edge.

That's all I can remember, really.
PCZ What's the best game you've ever played?
BAT WINGS *F1* on the Nintendo 64, or *Tomb Raider 2* on the PC.
PCZ What was the last game you paid money for?
BAT WINGS *F1* on the N64.
PCZ What are you playing at the moment?
BAT WINGS Er… *FIFA 99,* obviously – but the Q&A guys still whip my arse all the time – *NBA 99*, which looks amazing, and *F1* on the N64.

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight?
BAT WINGS Yep, loads!
PCZ Tell us about the most recent bout.
BAT WINGS Well, me and the lads were out on the lash and started picking on this guy at the bar – throwing peanuts, verbal abuse, the usual. Anyway, as we were leaving, I went up to him and said sorry and bought him a pint, and he just smacked it on the floor. I just couldn't believe it! So I headbutted him and told him not to be so bloody rude. He had to go to the hospital and had 18 stitches. I feel pretty bad about it now. Maybe you shouldn't print that.

Overall it plays better than *WC98*, though the fact that it's still so easy to make successful tackles makes the game a bit of a battle in midfield and leaves you very little time on the ball.

Should you buy it if you already own *World Cup 98*? Find out next month.
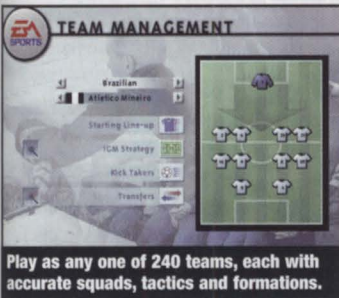
Play as any one of 240 teams, each with accurate squads, tactics and formations.

There's more commentary than before, plus the promise of TV-style presentation.

The new directional chest-downs make the game play a lot quicker and smoother.

THE EA SPORTS EUROPEAN SUPER LEAGUE

Just a minute… A league that features the cream teams from Europe – what a good idea. It's just so amazing no one thought of it before! Think of the money the TV companies could make out of showing these games live. And wouldn't it be great seeing your teams in action against the likes of AC Milan, Juventus, Barcelona and Bayern Munich throughout the season – as long as you support either Liverpool, Man United or Arsenal, that is.

Hang on a minute, it sounds just like the Champions League; except that it looks set to destroy domestic European League football in one deft stroke. Oh dear. Who said it wasn't about the money?

Whether you like the idea or not, EA Sports have sort of pre-empted the idea of a European Super League and included it in *FIFA 99*. Maybe they know something that the rest of us don't, but they're just not saying. At the end of the day, it's just another tournament that you can enter if you can't be bothered to make up your own. Now isn't that a nice idea?

EA Sports would like to apologise to all Chelsea, Leeds, Blackburn and Newcastle fans. Sorry, your teams just ain't good enough.

flight sims and stuff like that – though you wouldn't catch me playing them. You have to exaggerate or adapt things to suit your requirements. We always start with 'real' and then take it from there, and that's why I think we're better at it than other people. We look at the stats, how fast a player can move, how hard and how far he can hit the ball etc, and then alter or adapt it accordingly. In most football games, the amount of ground a player can cover is quite amazing, but it's also totally unrealistic. We actually timed how long it takes a real player to run down the wing with a football, and it's a lot longer than you might think. If it took that long in our game, people would just get frustrated."

So what are the most significant changes? "Well, we've played around with the camera a lot and have been

trying to get the frame rate as high as possible – that was the main criticism we had from you guys and the public last time round," states Matt. "It just wasn't quick enough."

IT'S NOT 'SOCCER'!

So how have you gone about this? "Again, it's always a compromise. Soccer… Sorry, can I call it soccer? Will you guys get upset if I don't call it football? Okay, *football* is all about movement and making the right pass. When you zoom in on the players, they may look nice, but it limits how you can play. When you zoom out there's more strategy involved, because you can see more of your players and more of the pitch. This is why we try and keep the camera out – the further back the better – because it makes the game a lot more

strategic. However, pull back too much and the frame rate really starts to suffer. We said to ourselves before we started work on *FIFA 99* that the most important thing was the frame rate. It just had to be better. Consequently, we've been tweaking everything to make sure it stays much higher than before."

GAME ON

Sipping from a massive 24-ounce cup of diet Coke, I sit down and play *FIFA 99* under the watchful eye of Eric, one of EA Sports Canada's technical guys.

After about two minutes into a game, I'm convinced. It at least *appears* to be better than *World Cup 98*. It's certainly a lot faster and a lot more fluid (you can still alter the speed). The fact that you can chest the ball down means that →

New interruptable animations mean you've got more control than before.

The CPU-player AI is improved.

Real-time lighting effects give the stadiums and players a more realistic look.

FIFA 99: YOUR IN-A-NUTSHELL GUIDE TO WHAT'S NEW

EA Sports say *FIFA 99* is better in every way, and we tend to agree with them. So what exactly have they been doing over the past few months to make the game play even better?

FASTER FRAME RATE

The primary target of this year's AI improvements was to improve the frame rate. By modifying the AI code, removing some unnecessary code, optimising existing code and adding new, more efficient code, the net result is a much faster, smoother, more playable game. Which is nice.

IMPROVED CPU TACTICS AND AI

You can keep ya fancy graphics – a football game is only as good as the artificial intelligence that runs it. The AI in *WC98* was impressive, but it's been improved no end for *FIFA 99*.

"There are two elements to the CPU tactics in *FIFA 99*: the opponent AI and team-mate AI," explains AI guru Matt Brown. "The opponent AI has now been improved in many areas, and we've spent a lot of time improving the marking model. Defenders now play more dynamically depending on the attacker's position. For example, near the attacker's goal the defenders mark loosely. At the other end of the field, defenders mark tightly, 'drawing a line in the sand' and defending it strongly. We've made improvements to the team-mate AI too. CPU-controlled team-mates now support their colleagues all over the pitch. For example, when a player is attacking the wing, the last thing he wants to do is cross the ball into the box and not have any team-mates ready and waiting."

SEMI-AUTOMATIC GOALKEEPERS

The goalkeepers in *WC98* were completely CPU-controlled and therefore prone to standing still when they should have been making a challenge. Thankfully, in *FIFA 99* you now have some limited control over their actions. Pressing the right shoulder button now activates a 'panic mode' that causes the keeper to come screaming off his line to retrieve the ball. It doesn't always work out, but it does put the willies up strikers in one-on-one situations, and therefore doesn't leave you feeling totally helpless. Keepers can now also trap the ball and pick it up (as long as it's legal).

NEW MOVES

WC98 gave you more control over your players than ever before, but it was still a little on the slow side. In *FIFA 99* you can now perform directional chest traps, slide hooks (for one time shots) and dummy moves. It may not sound like much, but the fact that you can now receive the ball a lot quicker seriously improves the speed at which you can pass and run it. If there's one single improvement that makes *FIFA 99* worth buying, it's this.

INTERRUPTABLE ANIMATIONS

New 'interruptable animations' enable you to execute directional changes in the middle of turns (previously, if you started a 180-degree turn, you had to complete it before you changed direction). Like the new moves, this makes the on-pitch action much tighter and a lot more fluid.

NEW BOUNDING LOGIC

Ball control improvements were another key target for the developers. Matt Brown explains: "Given that digital controllers offer less precision than analogue controllers, controlling the ball along the pitch boundaries was often difficult and frustrating. New 'bounding logic' helps the player keep the ball inbound and aids the retrieval of balls that end up near the sideline. We've implemented a much quicker 'stop' which also facilitates better ball control. Players can stop almost instantaneously now.

"In real life, a soccer player has an acceleration curve to his sprint," explains Matt. "Previous *FIFA* games had this model. For *FIFA 99* we've stepped this up and made the acceleration curve a lot steeper. The result is a much quicker feel to the players' movement on the pitch."

REAL-LIFE PLAYER HEIGHTS & OTHER GRAPHICAL STUFF

To increase the realistic look of the game, each player is now a different height depending on the stats held in their database. There are now 60 per cent more animations, rather cool on-pitch incident 'cut-scenes', real-time lighting effects, more detailed players, a comprehensive player creation facility and 19 accurately modelled stadiums. There's also a new Quick Start feature – just two clicks and you're in.

you can control it a lot quicker, which speeds up the game immeasurably. You're no longer forced to wait those extra nano-seconds that seem like years and leave you so vulnerable to tackles. Also, thanks to new 'interruptable animations' you're no longer banging the control pad in frustration waiting for your player to change direction when he's in the middle of a 360-degree Rocastle.

Altogether, it plays a lot smoother and is less frustrating than before. That said, the fact that it's so easy to make a successful tackle means that it's still a bit of a battle in midfield – more like an Arsenal versus Chelsea game than, say, Liverpool versus Ajax. You still don't get much time on the ball and are forced to pass it almost as soon as you get possession; either that or risk pegging it down the wing and hoofing it into the box. When you're in possession you should have an advantage over your opponent. You should be able to shield the ball from him and sell him dummies before you decide what to do...

YOU GOTTA PRACTICE

Eric immediately scribbles something down on a piece of paper and then takes hold of the other controller.

We play a six-minute game and he runs rings around me, executing little fakes and jukes (well that's what *he* calls them) almost at will. The game ends seven-nil. Like every other *FIFA* game before it, it's pretty obvious that if you want to get good at *FIFA 99* and get the most out of it, then you're gonna have to practice.

The burning question as far as gamers are concerned is obviously: 'Should I buy it?' Well, we'll leave that to the review, which will hopefully appear in next month's issue (on sale Tuesday 17 November). Suffice to say that *FIFA 99* appears to be better than its five-month-old predecessor. But then those of you who have only just shelled out 40-odd quid for *World Cup 98* a few months ago might feel more than just a little bit cheated. It *is* a different game, but then it's also very similar. Personally, I can't wait to get hold of a copy. **PCZ**

Does your pc plod?

Tired of hold ups? Then get on the BT Highway. Because this simple box converts your existing phone line into two high speed digital lines. You can use your phone and run your PC at 64Kb per second. Or you can use both lines together and get 128Kb per second. Don't wait any longer.

Get on the *BT* **Highway** Free*fone* *0800* **800 845**

or www.highway.bt.com
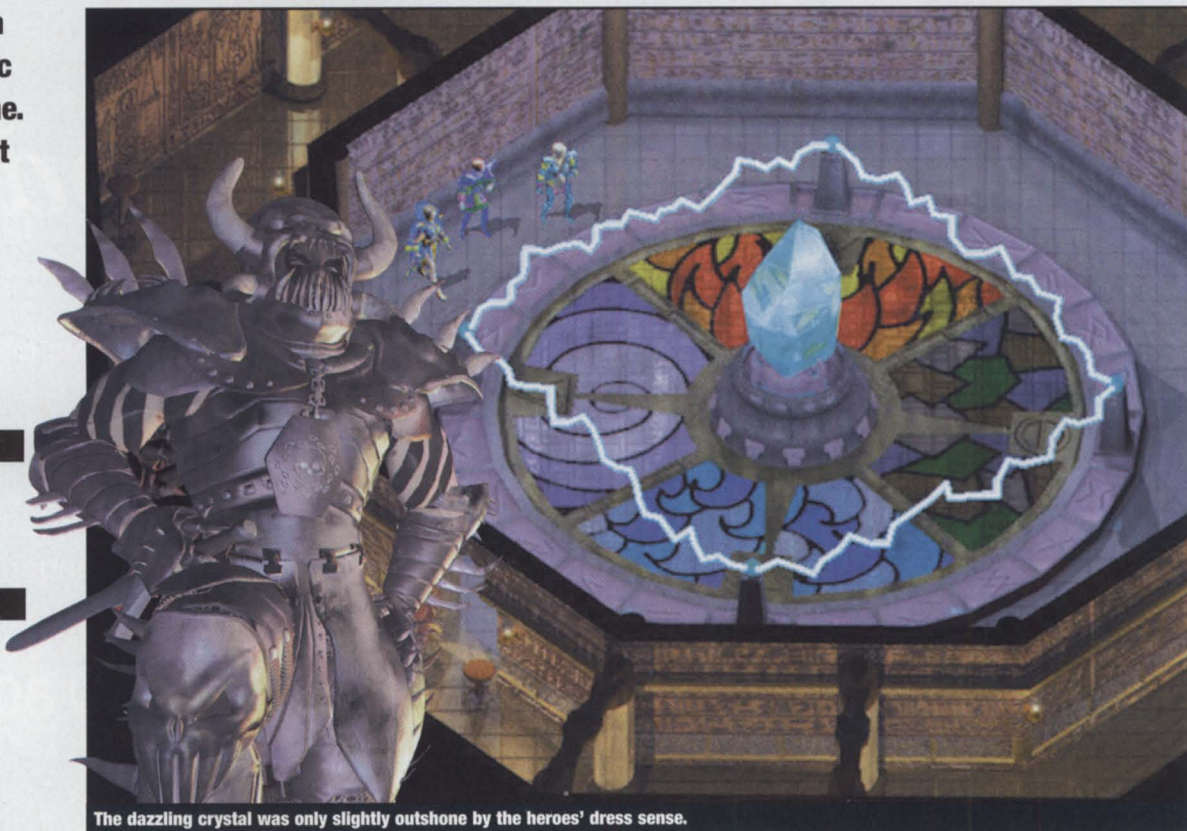
Let the dice decide in
BALDUR'S GATE

Baldur's Gate relies on one of the most classic RPG systems of all time. *Paul Presley* can't wait to find out more

The dazzling crystal was only slightly outshone by the heroes' dress sense.

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Bioware Corp
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.interplay.com
OUT End of '98

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ✪ Faithful to the tried and tested AD&D rules
- ✪ Fully animated – every spell, strike and splutter
- ✪ Intricately plotted storyline with dozens of sub-plots and smaller quests
- ✪ Transparent AI routines for detailed control over your party of adventurers

BIOWARE

In between the rectal examinations and drug prescriptions, they've managed to turn out a few games…

1993 Dr Muzyka and two partners create an Acid-Base tutorial program for the medical community.

1994 The trio have their first real 'hit' – a gastrointestinal ailment simulator. They promise the sequel will support 3Dfx.

1995 Muzyka and co found Bioware in order to create medical education software.

1995 *(Later that day)* Quickly discover games are more fun (and tend to feature more blood). Create *Blasteroids 3D*. Receive a four stars out of five rating from "premiere British gaming magazine" *PC ZONE*. Stars? Oh well.

1996 *Shattered Steel* (*PCZ #46, 71%*) launches the company to fame and fortune. Sign deal with Interplay to create *Baldur's Gate*.

W hile much has been made about the death knell tolling for the adventure game (admittedly mostly by us), another genre has been slipping by the wayside. Equally frail, distraught and malnourished, it too has been served by too few titles after having spent years in the spotlight as a dominant gaming form.

Like the precocious and intermittently annoying younger brother that it is, the role-playing game has been mimicking the ailing fortunes of its sibling genre; huge in the late '80s and early '90s, with *Ultimas*, *Wizardries*, *Bard's Tales* and all those gold-boxed *Dungeons & Dragons* titles holding the very finest of courts, strolling the city streets with pride and garnering respect from all quarters.

Then, just as FMV caused adventure games to become too big for their own talent, the vastness of the seventh *Ultima* title caused problems for everyone else in the field. No one could do it like Richard Garriot (creator of *Ultima*), so why bother trying? Besides, there was this *Quake* thing coming along that looked quite good…

> **❝It's very much the start of a new series. We've written a plot outline that will be sustainable for the next few games❞**
>
> DR RAY MUZYKA, PRODUCER

So the role-playing game withered. A few half-hearted attempts to shore it up saw it through the mid-'90s but, as with the adventure game, it was a case of too few titles and too little quality. However, just as the adventure genre now seems to be in the ascendant once more, so too is the RPG picking itself up and trying to make a go of things. *Final Fantasy VII* (*PCZ #66, 93%*) acted as some kind of wonder tonic, an elixir of such potency as to inspire others to sup from the fountain of youth. And nowhere is this more apparent than with *Baldur's Gate*, the first 'proper' *Dungeons & Dragons* title since 1992.

BALDUR'S GAIT

"I think that one problem with computer RPGs is that they are so big," confesses Dr Ray Muzyka, Bioware CEO and producer of *Baldur's Gate*. "It takes a long time and a great deal of effort to make them good. We've spent close to three years now, working with a lot of very talented people making
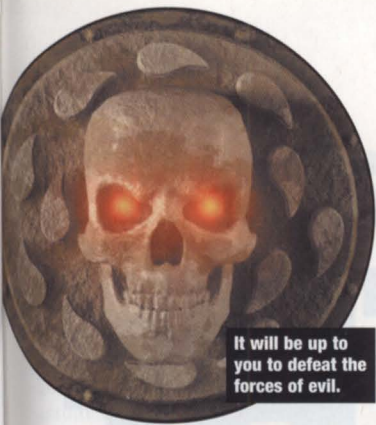
It will be up to you to defeat the forces of evil.

Baldur's Gate. Chris [Parker, co-producer] is busting a hump trying to co-ordinate it all."

Baldur's Gate is set in the AD&D world of *The Forgotten Realms*. It chronicles the exciting story of dwindling iron deposits in the local community, and the economic strife that follows as a result. The stuff of legends, no less. Oh, and there are also prophecies, invasions, murder, conspiracies, one man's destiny to defeat evil... It's all in there – a rich fantasy soup in which *you* are the central crouton.

BALDUR'S GREAT

But that's just what's on the surface, the glossy facade that lies atop the really important elements of the game – the AD&D rules. *Baldur's Gate* adheres to the many complex rule books that make up TSR's fantasy world. Indeed, some would question the decision to use AD&D at all, since in the world of tabletop RPGs there are far more effective and efficient rule systems available.

Muzyka explains: "When we began, we developed a short demo called *Battleground: Infinity* that Greg [Zeschuk, joint CEO] and I pitched to a number of different publishers. We signed with Interplay because we knew, liked and trusted them after working on *Shattered Steel*, and also because they had *The Forgotten Realms* licence from TSR. We thought it would be really cool to develop the game set in that universe. We've been fans of pen-and-paper role-playing for a long time, and AD&D is the grandfather of pen-and-paper RPGs."

Isn't the overly complex nature of AD&D a worry? Aren't they afraid that people unused to the concepts of THAC0 rolls, Armour Classes and Saving Throws will be put off, scared to venture into uncharted waters?

"*Baldur's Gate* has the advantage of being able to do most of the dice-rolling and rule-checking in the background where nobody needs to see it," assures hump-buster Chris Parker. "All the combat rules, spell effects, attribute modifiers, monster statistics and everything else are handled by the computer quickly and painlessly. For the player familiar with AD&D who wants to know what's going on, there are options that enable you to have the various dice rolls displayed in the text box. Various effects and other character actions are similarly displayed. For the player unfamiliar with AD&D, who doesn't want or need to see these things, they're just turned off.

"When there's an instance in which the rules must be used – selecting the class of your character at the beginning of the game, for example – it's accompanied by a text box to explain what you need to know and do. Hopefully there will never be a point in the game where you actually need to know AD&D to be able to play it." Cue sighs of relief from all points around the gaming community.

BALDUR'S LATE

"We're trying to make the kind of game that we would want to play ourselves," says Muzyka. "I think that the two most notable accomplishments we've achieved with the game are the level of immersion, as well as the multiplayer aspect, which is rather different for an RPG – it's true co-operative multiplayer, in which we've tried to emulate the feel of the pen-and-paper role-playing sessions."

What's really being hoped for is that *Baldur's Gate* will prove popular enough to become that most dreaded of words to the artistic community – a franchise. "It's very much the start of a new series," says Muzyka. "We've written a plot outline that will be sustainable for the next few games. We're planning at least three – the first takes you to levels one to seven, the second to levels seven to 12, and the third to levels 12 to 18 – plus mission packs that will enable you to extend the life of your game, plugging right into the original game."

As a schoolboy, the announcement of a new AD&D game was a cue for the sort of excitement a male rabbit would experience upon being told that the mating season is to be brought forward by an extra week – *Pool Of Radiance*, *Curse Of The Azure Bonds*, even the oddly (and somewhat ill-) conceived dragon simulator all made me as giddy – and is one of the things that made those early, innocent days of computer gaming so great. RPGs were games that *lasted*. You could spend months playing them, partly because they were such fun, partly because they were so immersive, but mainly because they were so bloody huge.

With games like *Ultima 9*, *Fallout 2* and *Diablo 2* looking good enough to help resuscitate the genre, and Bioware announcing that the *Baldur's Gate* engine is to be used in another AD&D spin-off game called *Torment*, maybe those days can live again. PCZ

"Hands up who fancies rolling the dice with me..."

Titanic: the alternative ending.

Jake was confused when the waterfall started exploding.

Magic is a powerful weapon, and each spell is gloriously animated.

The customisable AI routines emulate turn-based play.

THE (ARTIFICIAL) LIFE OF THE PARTY

A different AI script for each member

Any good role-player knows three things: one is that dice-rolls can always be fudged to suit your needs; two, that yellow fingernails and excessive bodily odours aren't anything to be ashamed of (really); and three, it's all about teamwork, baby. The classic gold-boxed AD&D games knew this, and gave you full control over every member of your party. Thus, battles were complicated, almost wargame-style encounters and, naturally, turn-based play was the only way to handle it all.

Perhaps the proudest boast Interplay are making regarding *Baldur's Gate* (certainly it's the most frequently mentioned) is the transparent AI. In layman's terms, this means that each member of your party can be issued one of many AI scripts that determine how they behave in combat situations. Charge in screaming for blood, back away lobbing arrows into the melee, or just run away like a girl. All are possible, which means you can spend more time worrying about your own character than about the lives of those who dare to hang with your posse.

He's small, he's shiny, he's really rather tiny.

UPDATE HYPE: THE TIME QUEST

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Ubi Soft Canada
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft
WEBSITE www.ubisoft.com
OUT November '98

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ✪ It's one of the first of a new breed of 3D action/adventure games to feature dialogue as well as hack-and-slash exploration
- ✪ It's the first game to feature Ubi Soft's ground-breaking real-time rope animation
- ✪ There are more than 50 different characters, 14 worlds and 40 different environments for you to interact with
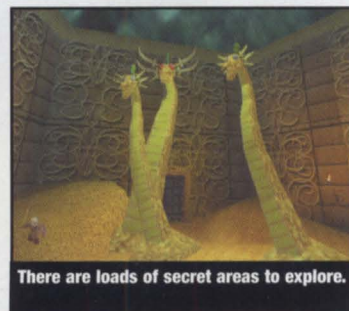- ✪ It uses a revamped *Rayman* 3D engine and looks bloody gorgeous

Ubi Soft say that their new Playmobil 3D action/adventure game is not just for kids. We sent *Jeremy Wells* off to play in search of the truth

Hype hasn't got a willy.

The game is stuffed to the gills with fancy lighting and shadow effects.

There are loads of secret areas to explore.

UBI SOFT CANADA

The Montreal subsidiary of Ubi Soft has actually only been up and running since 1997. At the moment they're working on a number of forthcoming titles including *Speed Busters* (see *PCZ* #66, August) and three Playmobil titles: *Hype: The Time Quest*, *Laura's Happy Adventures* and *Alex Builds His Farm*, the latter two titles being aimed squarely at kiddiwinks. The team have also been working on the N64 version of *Tonic Trouble*.
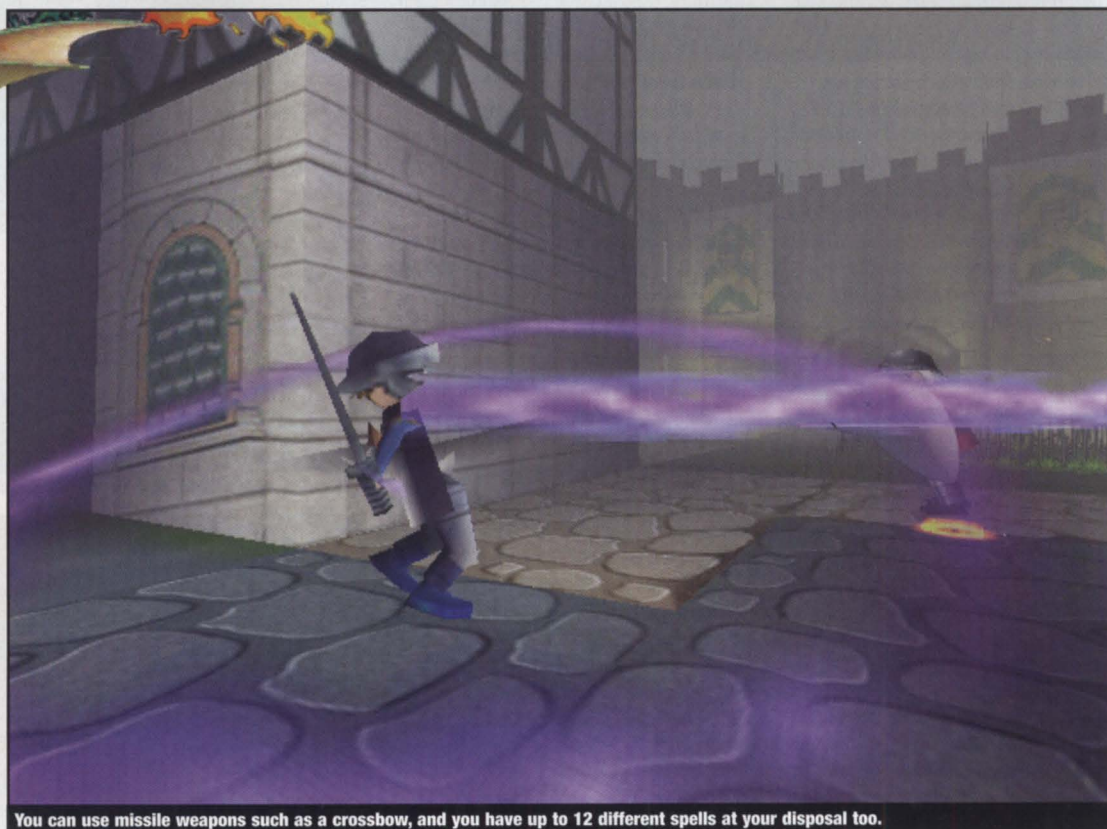
You can use missile weapons such as a crossbow, and you have up to 12 different spells at your disposal too.

When we first saw *Hype: The Time Quest* at the E[3] trade show a few months ago, we were more than pleasantly surprised. We'd heard that Ubi Soft had secured the Playmobil licence but, like everybody else, we'd assumed they'd use it to develop kids' games or some God-awful edutainment software. Okay, they're doing this as well, but as far as *Hype* is concerned, avoid this little number at your peril.

On a recent visit to Ubi Soft's main development base in Montreal, Canada, we caught up with the game's producer, Benoit Galarneau, and asked him what the hell he was playing at developing a game that uses plastic Playmobil characters. "Basically, we all played with Playmobil toys when we were kids," he explains. "Therefore, two years ago, when Ubi Soft planned to develop a brand new range of games for the whole family, the idea of introducing the Playmobil plastic toys into our 3D world developed

> ❝*Time Quest* certainly plays well, and the 3D engine is as good as anything we've seen on the PC❞

naturally. We developed a small demo movie in 3D featuring the Playmobil characters, took it to Playmobil during the Nürnburg toy fair in 1996, and they immediately pulled out of negotiations they were having with another software developer and signed a licence agreement with us."

It's not going to be an easy task convincing people that *Hype* isn't a kid's game, and Ubi Soft are desperate to educate the games-buying public. So how have they

gone about making *Hype* appeal to someone who plays *Tomb Raider*? It's not going to be easy. Who would you rather play with – a busty heroine who grunts suggestively when she bumps into walls, or a shiny little bloke with a thousand-yard stare and a fixed grin?

"Our engine is state of the art," says Benoit, "and we're deliberately not being limited by the image of the toy. In *Time Quest* there are many different and detailed worlds for you to experience, and we've paid special attention to the lighting effects, which play an important role in creating the right atmosphere. It's the first game to use our realistic rope animation technology, and there's real-time dynamic character shading and shadows."

Time Quest certainly looks pretty smart, and the 3D engine that Ubi Soft have developed is as good as anything else we've seen on the PC at the moment. But what else can we look forward to? "There are some very unique puzzles and complex levels to explore," offers Benoit. "*Time Quest* is not just a simple one-way travel through time, but a complex labyrinth across centuries, where the hero travels back and forth. Moreover, the player actually shapes history according to the choices they make. You have to learn how to interact with the many different characters in order to get some important information, and you can trade for better weapons and armour at different stores in the towns. It's not just a question of running around killing things and jumping from platform to platform."

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and come November, you'll be able to see for yourself whether *Hype* is a game you want to keep for yourself or pass on to your kid brother this Christmas. It's difficult to take seriously any game that has a Playmobil character as the hero, but then you don't have to like him – leave that to the Teletubbies fans. **PCZ**
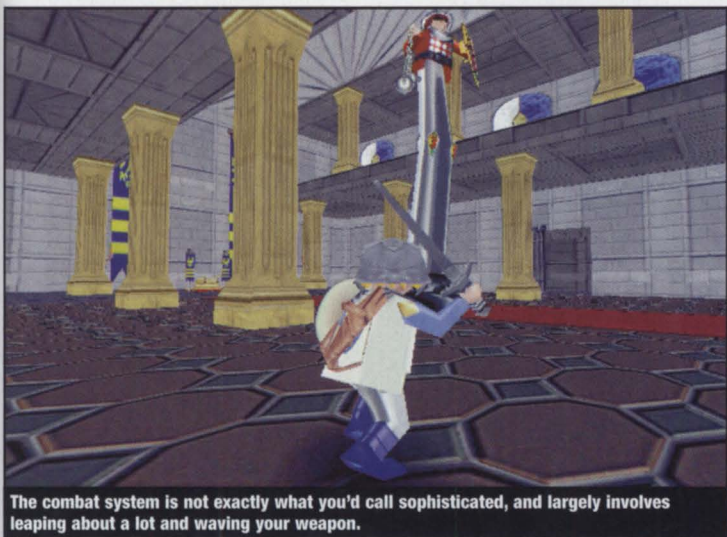
The combat system is not exactly what you'd call sophisticated, and largely involves leaping about a lot and waving your weapon.

Q&A
BENOIT GALARNEAU

Benoit is Project Manager on Hype *– and he's got lots of Playmobil figures on his desk*

PCZ What was the first game you ever bought?
BENOIT *Jumpman* on the Commodore 64. It was one of the greatest games at the time, with loads of levels and a good mix of puzzles and action. Sound, graphics, animation and colour were also great for the time – circa 1984.

PCZ What is the best game you've ever played?
BENOIT *Tomb Raider* on PC with a 3Dfx card. No other game has kept me so immersed and on the edge of my seat. And Lara – well, say no more! I have great respect for the creators of this game. Making a gaming character like Lara a young cultural icon is no easy task.

PCZ You're trying to get a job at Eidos then, eh? Okay, what was the last game you paid money for?
BENOIT I bought *Parasite Eve* [for PlayStation] only two days ago. The funny thing about this game is that the gameplay, the story and the in-game cinematics are all only average, but the overall result is surprisingly good.

PCZ What are you playing at the moment?
BENOIT Er, *Parasite Eve*! I recently started playing deathmatches on *Rainbow Six* (*PCZ* #69, 89%), but my friends have weeks of training and so I have a lot to catch up on. I also play *Mario 64* as it is my girlfriend's favourite. I also play *Hype* a lot!

PCZ Have you ever been in a fight, and if so, when?
BENOIT Well I can't pretend to be like the street fighter kind, but yes, I have had two fights, both of which were in England when I was studying. They were nothing too serious. Pub-crawling has some strange side effects, although I always manage to win!

THE CANADIAN ROPE TRICK

*Hype – The Time Quest* is the first game ever to feature realistically animated rope

Apparently the development team have spent ages working out a realistic physics model for the rough stuff that used to scratch your thighs in gym class, in order that it moves and reacts realistically to the forces that surround it.

That may not sound like a massive breakthrough in gaming technology, but it represents the time and effort the designers are placing on real-time physics as they attempt to recreate a 3D gaming world that is as realistic as possible in terms of the way things move and are affected by unseen forces such as wind and gravity.

In the game, it's used in a variety of guises and incorporated into a few puzzles. One example is where you must guide Hype into the middle of an area that is surrounded by huge swinging pendulums in order to retrieve a magical item. One false move and he's twonked off the screen as the weighted rope knocks seven shades of plastic faeces – not to mention a few hit points – out of his shiny little body. As you'd expect, it also comes in to play whenever Hype has to swing across a ravine or battlements.

The advent of 3D acceleration technology has enabled the developers to concentrate on creating realistic worlds that not only look great, but also behave as you'd expect them to. To be totally honest, you don't really notice it much at first. But just like motion-captured animation, if you take it away it just doesn't seem to look or 'feel' right. By the beginning of next year we should be seeing leaves fluttering down from treetops, and flags billowing in the breeze. Which is nice.

➔ Can you swing it? Yes you can.
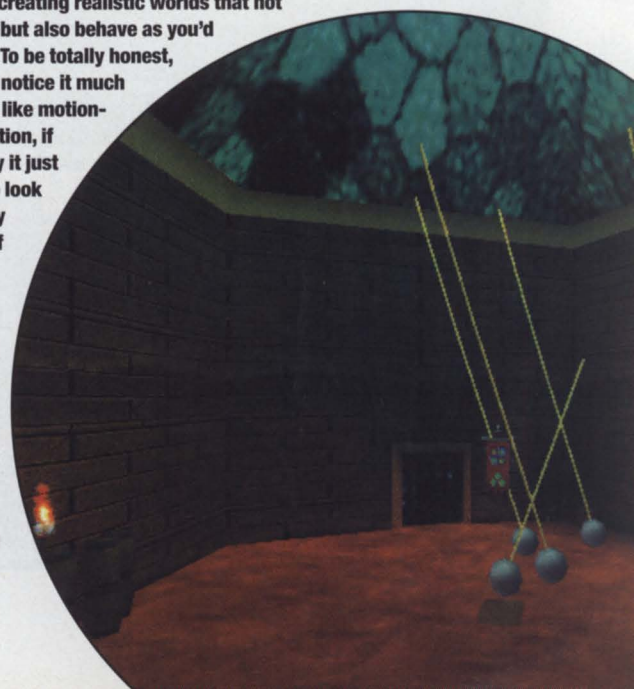
It's only a game. Of two halves. It's
# PLAYER MANAGER: SEASON 98/99

The Anco lads have given 110 per cent to this game, but will they get a result? Your referee, commentator and summariser: *Richie Shoemaker*

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Anco
PUBLISHER Anco
WEBSITE www.anco.co.uk
OUT November '98

On the lookout for budding talent...

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Statto heaven: 14,000 players with 18 'visible' stats and over 20 'operational' stats each
- The depth of training enables you to make your players as flexible or as specialised as you desire
- A 3D game engine that enables you to monitor player performance during the match
- Absolutely no commercial management whatsoever. None. At all
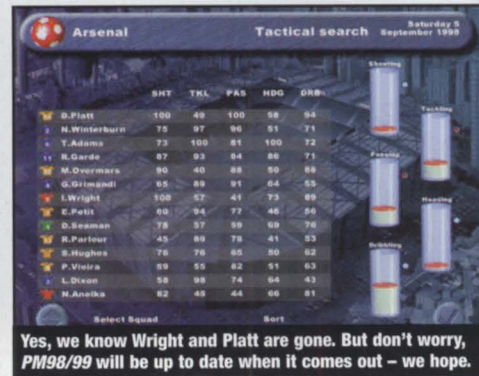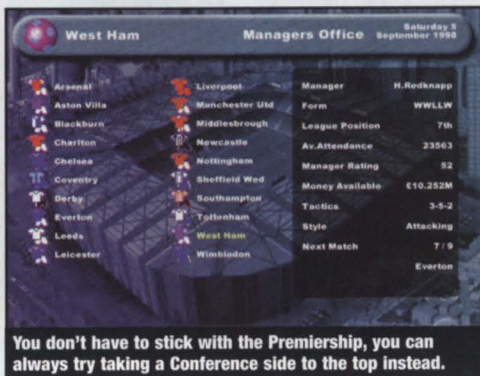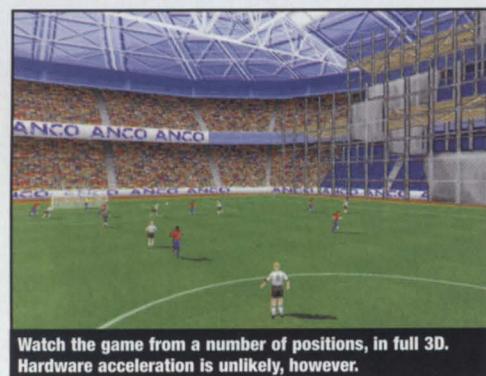
C hampionship Manager 97/98 has made a welcome return to my hard drive, though its reappearance is mainly due to a degree of impatience in waiting for *CM3* to appear. That's the problem with football management games at the moment: the ones currently on offer are either crap – *USM 98* (*PCZ* #64, 60%), *Premier Manager* (*PCZ* #68, 55%) – or out of date. So what else can you do but go back to what you know and love?

But it's not all bad news. EA's *FA Premier League Football Manager 99* is reviewed this issue (see page 111), and just about nearing completion is the latest *Player Manager* title, from a series that is almost as long in the tooth as *Championship Manager*.

The first *PM* game was an excellent hybrid of top-down football action, with fairly deep management options based on the old *Kick Off* engine. It was, as I recall, full of bugs and yet highly playable at the same time. At least it kept us going until *Sensible World Of Soccer* arrived.

Things have changed somewhat for this latest version. The most notable difference is that you can't pick up the gamepad and go running on to the pitch. It might be called *Player Manager*, but that doesn't mean that you can be a player manager; in *PM98/99* your arse is set firmly on the bench, directing the action from the sidelines. But this doesn't mean you

won't be shouting at your players. The fact that you can watch them in action and centre your attentions on certain players means that you actually get a feel for their abilities, rather than having to rely on reams of stats. If someone isn't performing, you can tell at a glance by watching them in action. That's the theory, anyway.

One of the biggest draws of *PM98/99* is the ability to guide your players to fit particular roles by concentrating on tactics and training. You can also sort your squad by five key stats. Let's say, for example, that you want to find the best candidate for the central midfield position. Of the 18 'visible' stats, you can set the importance of vision, passing and control to the exclusion of shooting, thereby sorting your squad to show the best man for the job. The same method applies when you want to bring in new players. Granted, the method is nothing new, but it's the interface that can make or break this type of game, and Anco have put a great deal of thought into it.

Whether this attention to detail will be enough is hard to say. Like the Collyer brothers' up-and-coming *CM3*, the developers of *PM98/99* are certainly football fans with an eye for what works – the emphasis is on training and tactics, so there's no poncing about setting the prices for hats and hot dogs. This is a football management game, pure and simple. Which means that Anco will have got at least one thing right. **PCZ**

The tactics designer enables a wide range of gaming styles and is remarkably easy to use.

Watch the game from a number of positions, in full 3D. Hardware acceleration is unlikely, however.

You don't have to stick with the Premiership, you can always try taking a Conference side to the top instead.

Yes, we know Wright and Platt are gone. But don't worry, *PM98/99* will be up to date when it comes out – we hope.

Tom Clancy's
RAINBOW SIX

Play as if 5.7 Billion Lives Depended on it.

PLAN THE ATTACK

EXECUTE THE MISSION

SAVE THE WORLD

The most revolutionary action/strategy game of its kind. Nothing comes close to offering such an exciting combination of strategy, team-building, realistic, three-dimensional graphics and true-to-life special forces action. **ONE SHOT KILLS.** The ultimate goal is to save yourself and the world from deadly terrorists. You must successfully complete 17 unique missions, and if you die, the game isn't over:

THE WORLD IS.

TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE SOFTWARE

INTERNET GAMING ZONE
PLAY IT ON ZONE.COM

Red Storm ENTERTAINMENT

Web Site:
www.take2games.com

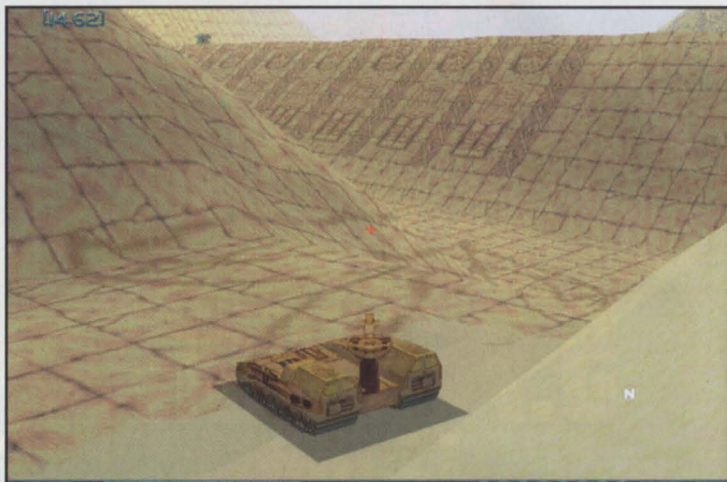Photo © Steven Galloway, Heckler & Koch   ©1998 Red Storm Entertainment Inc
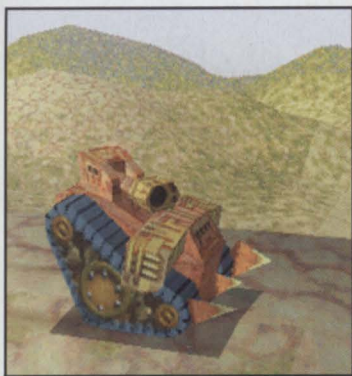
A robot disguised as... er... a rhino.

Watch out down below – some of the tanks are equipped with huge fans, enabling them to hover.

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Realistic human-like AI apparently makes the enemy fun to play.

A trajectory-based gun barrel system enables you to fire over hills and around corners.

WILD METAL COUNTRY

Like animals, but somehow animals in tanks. *Steve Hill* **goes wild in the country**

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER DMA Design
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive
WEBSITE www.gremlin.co.uk
OUT November '98

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Tanks shaped like animals
- Deserts, tundra plains and Martian landscapes
- Vast, open arenas and battlegrounds
- Independent track control enables wide range of movement

T ank games have been done to death, as have third-person shoot 'em ups. *Wild Metal Country* is a combination of both, and of course promises to be a whole new genre. Complete indifference is a natural reaction to this claim, although a few eyebrows may be raised on learning that the developers are none other than DMA, Dundee-based purveyors of the successful *Grand Theft Auto* (PCZ #58, 92%), the undeniably good – but probably not quite as good as everyone made out – joyride 'em up.

Wild Metal Country is a third-person, action-based tank game, allegedly incorporating the best aspects of first-person fighting games, driving games and classic arcade-style tank action. DMA have created their own graphics engine – cunningly entitled 3DMA – and without wishing to dwell on high polygon throughputs or hierarchical models, it looks alright. Huge

environments are possible, complete with real-time lighting, dynamic shadowing and weather effects, and dozens of enemies on-screen. The game also utilises a bespoke physics system, with gravity, traction, shot trajectory, magnetism and inertia all playing their part. Hence tanks react to different

surfaces, and explosions cause them to buck violently. The action takes place in huge, open-air arenas consisting of mountains, hills, valleys, plains, canyons and deserts, which should make a change from the usual corridor-based tomfoolery.

For reasons too dull to go into here, the enemy tanks are bizarre to say the least, based loosely around the characteristics of animals

> **The enemy tanks are bizarre to say the least, based loosely around the characteristics of animals including bulls, vipers, rhinos, ravens, ducks and fireflies**

including bulls, vipers, rhinos, ravens, ducks and fireflies. As for the player, you control both tank tracks and the turret independently, which, depending on your manual dexterity, is either a more versatile or a more difficult system. Shots are fired from the main cannon on a curved trajectory, making for a more strategic game, encompassing long-range shots over the tops of hills, ricocheting shells around corners, and dropping cluster bombs over a group of tanks.

A host of weapons are available, including standard shells, bouncing shells, cluster bombs, guided missiles, magnetic shells and teleport warps. You can also drop passive mines which roll downhill and form minefields, magnetic mines which drag anything metallic into their wake, and jumping jacks which pursue the nearest tank until it's destroyed. Which is nice.

That's your *Wild Metal Country*, then. It sounds alright on paper, so keep 'em peeled. PCZ

The turret can be operated separately from the tracks, enabling you to fire backwards while retreating.
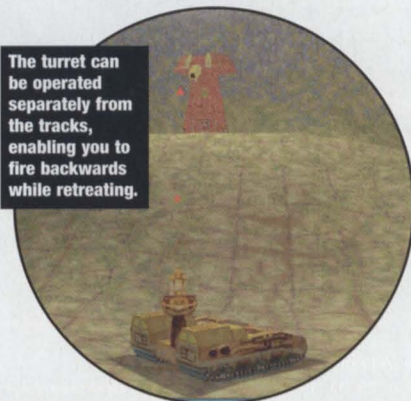
LANDER

Another modern title inspired by retro legends?
Steve Hill attends the New Skool of Old Skool

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Psygnosis
PUBLISHER Psygnosis
WEBSITE www.psygnosis.com
OUT February '99

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Inspired by classic games
- Innovative control system
- Mysterious storyline
- Also released on DVD (Digital Versatile Disc)

Nostalgia may well be a thing of the past, but many of today's game designers have no qualms about doffing a cap to the classics of yesteryear. *Lander* is an example of the fruits of such labours, and the name itself is enough to conjure up memories of feeding chunky ten-pence pieces into a nicotine-stained cabinet before scurrying back to school on an empty stomach.

If the developers are to be believed, *Lander* has an inspired pedigree, recalling old favourites such as *Gravitar*, *Thrust*, *Lunar Lander*, *Virus* and *Elite*. Clearly, you can't get away with that sort of thing any more though, and the game embraces the most up-to-date technology to create a wholly modern experience, hopefully retaining the playability of its spiritual forebears at the same time.

Lofty pretensions indeed. But what exactly is it? Basically, you control a hovering craft – the titular Lander – which is equipped with numerous

> **"The Lander is a dream to fly, different to anything you've seen before"**

thrusters to counter the effects of gravity in the game's subterranean and surface environments. You fly through 40 missions, all of which are melded together with a strong storyline, the action encompassing many of the planets and moons of our own solar system. The treacherous planetary environments are based on authentic land forms, including ice, fire and lava, water, colonies, fortifications, caves, tunnels and deserts. You can amass cash to upgrade your craft, and even uncover some of the mysteries of the universe.

The development team behind *Lander* is largely the same as that responsible for the Psygnosis adventure *Sentient* (*PCZ* #52, 74%). Oli Wright is the lead programmer, and he makes much of *Lander*'s thruster-based control system: "We spent a disproportionate amount of time getting the control system of the ship right. It's a dream to use; we can't think of any way of improving it. It's manoeuvrable, yet very different to any game-based craft you've probably flown in the past ten years. In only a short space of time you'll want to master the unusual craft handling. The physics model is also cool; just taking your Lander up high and letting it bounce down a cliff face is a joy to watch, if a little sad."

Lander will be 3D accelerator only, as well as one of the first games to be released on DVD (Digital Versatile Disc). Interesting. Yes... very interesting indeed. **PCZ**
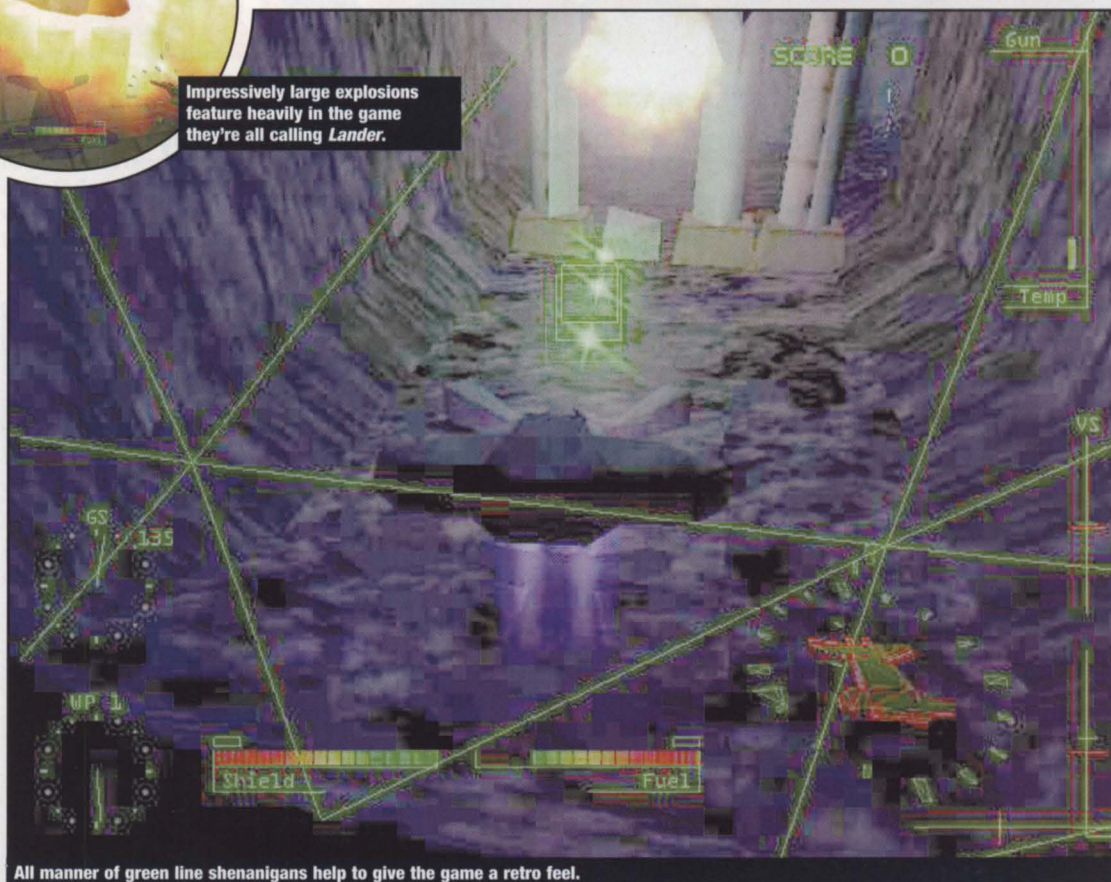
A unique mouse-based system works the thrusters for unparalleled control. Allegedly.

As well as all the retro posturing, there's clearly a nod in the direction of *Descent*.

Visually, *Lander* draws influences from films such as *2001* and *Outland*.

Impressively large explosions feature heavily in the game they're all calling *Lander*.

All manner of green line shenanigans help to give the game a retro feel.

Depending on their skills, the mercenaries can operate a variety of vehicles including helicopters, tanks, motor cycles and jet skis.

Shadow Company is totally 3D and uses a sophisticated 3D engine to create a highly detailed 3D terrain environment.

It's as much about planning and stealth as about speed of movement and firepower.

You can zoom right in on your mercenaries or check out a vehicle or building before deciding what to do next.

The 3D engine enables you to zoom in and rotate the landscape. Unlike *WarGames*, it doesn't appear to suffer from claustrophobic fogging and is still pretty quick.

SHADOW COMPANY

It's not just another *C&C* clone – in fact it's more of a *Commandos* clone. *Jeremy Wells* talks to Sinister Games about their RTS that looks set to change the way we view 3D

FIRST ENCOUNTER

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Sinister Games
PUBLISHER Interactive Magic
WEBSITE www.imagicgames.co.uk
OUT March '99

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ❋ It could well be the next big thing for RTS and *Commandos* fans
- ❋ It uses a nifty 3D engine and free-floating camera that enables you to zoom in on the action
- ❋ It doesn't just look good, there's a real-time physics model for extra realism
- ❋ Your units can jump into tanks, motor bikes and helicopters as well as crawl, climb, swim and creep

Y ou may or may not be pleased to hear that I-Magic's new game isn't another tank/flight sim. In fact, *Shadow Company* is a rather smart real-time strategy game in the mould of the more recent *Commandos* (*PCZ* #66, 87%) that sports a nifty 3D engine that you can rotate and zoom to get right in on the action.

"We actually had the idea for *Shadow Company* some time before *Commandos* came out," argues Sinister Games' Paul Meegan. "We've been working on *Shadow Company* for almost two years and in many ways it represents the next stage in RTS games. Unlike *Commandos*, our game is totally 3D and uses a sophisticated 3D engine to create a highly detailed 3D terrain environment. You can use the free-floating camera to zoom right in on your mercenaries or check out a vehicle or building before deciding what you're going to do next. We've

got a fully working physics model in there too for extra realism. The tanks recoil realistically when they fire, and armoured vehicles gain and lose momentum as they travel over rolling terrain."

> ## 66 Tanks recoil realistically when they fire, and armoured vehicles gain and lose momentum as they travel over rolling terrain 99

To say it looks impressive is a bit of an understatement. However, Meegan is aware of the inherent problems of programming an RTS game in 3D. Electronic Arts' ambitious *WarGames* (*PCZ* #67, 78%) suffered from severe fogging and the terrain and units were far from detailed. From what we've seen, *Shadow Company* manages to overcome these problems

and as Meegan explains, it's a different kind of game. "It's as much about planning and stealth as about speed of movement and firepower. For example, in one of the earlier missions you have to kidnap a General. He's situated in a small base with a landing strip and is moderately guarded. If you send in your units, guns blazing, then you'll probably fail and he'll get away. If, however, you send one of your units to switch off the landing lights, leave two hiding near the plane and send one in to cause an explosion and distract the guards then you're more likely to catch the General as he sneaks out to the plane to make his escape."

It's pretty clear that there's a lot more to *Shadow Company* than meets the eye, and you can rest assured that we'll be tracking its development over the next few months. **PCZ**

THE REAL NEVER ENDING STORY

FIRST ENCOUNTER

Munich, Germany: home of Discreet Monsters and the October beer festival. Aerophobic teetotaller _Craig Vaughan_ investigates

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Discreet Monsters
PUBLISHER TBC
WEBSITE www.discreetmonsters.com
OUT April '99

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Fast but processor-friendly 3D engine
- Wonderful set pieces and special effects
- It's based on the book, not the lousy film
- It promises to be a break from the norm

Located in an obscure Munich back street, the offices of Discreet Monsters currently house a game that could single-handedly bring the adventure genre back into vogue.

Siggi Kogl, managing director, and the creative genius behind _The Real Never Ending Story_, describes it as "a first-person perspective action adventure with strong RPG overtones". Relating the game's history, he adds: "We started writing a game engine purely as a programming tool, but soon became sure we could produce a great game with it ourselves." He smiles when reflecting: "We didn't pay a lot for the licence, which surprised me given the popularity of the book in Germany."

The game takes the setting of Fantasia from the book, but creates a plot of its own. After being imprisoned for stealing a precious medallion, your first task is to escape, after which you set off to recover the amulet and clear your name. There's a strong strategy element apparent in your dealings with the Fantasian inhabitants, and Kogl is keen to encourage players to think their way out of trouble, rather than just reacting with violence: "Fighting may be effective in the short term, but that's how you make enemies. We don't want players to be passive though – they'll have to make tough decisions and accept the consequences."

At the moment, Kogl's team are optimising the 3D engine, which looks set to make _Unreal_ look positively geriatric. Kogl is proud of the fact that despite its obvious power, the engine runs quite happily on a 3Dfx-supported P166. However, even without 3D acceleration, the software renderer depicts the mystical world of Fantasia beautifully – we witnessed some glorious set pieces and the most haunting weather effects seen on any PC, anywhere. The in-game characters are all superbly realised too; their speech has been lip-synched which, combined with the astonishing level of their animation, has really brought them to life.

Desperate to avoid the disappointingly linear nature of adventure games, the Monsters are devising an 'elastic plot device', which means that although everyone will reach the same end, the way in which you get there could be unique, depending on your reactions at numerous critical points in the plot.

Work continues apace, with a rolling demo anticipated by Christmas. Kogl, a reserved but confident man, sums up: "I don't see how the idea could have been done better or differently." And from what we've seen so far, we would be fools to disagree. **PCZ**
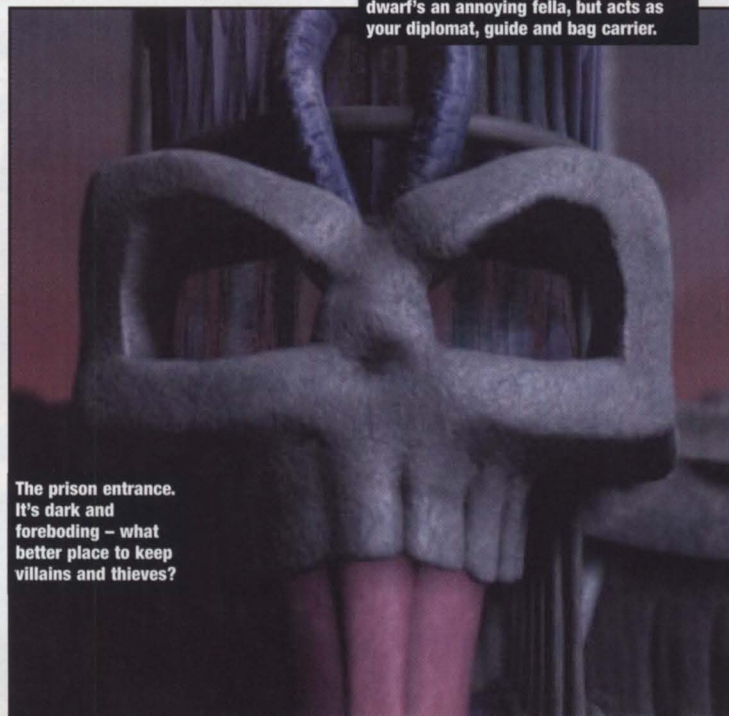
Prison: you have to escape before you can set about clearing your name.

A selection of game characters. The little dwarf's an annoying fella, but acts as your diplomat, guide and bag carrier.

The nothingness spreads across the landscape and is an omnipresent threat. Fantasia is relying on you.

The prison entrance. It's dark and foreboding – what better place to keep villains and thieves?

You navigate through the Fantasian landscape using your dwarf guide, meeting friends and foes as you travel.

MAXIM
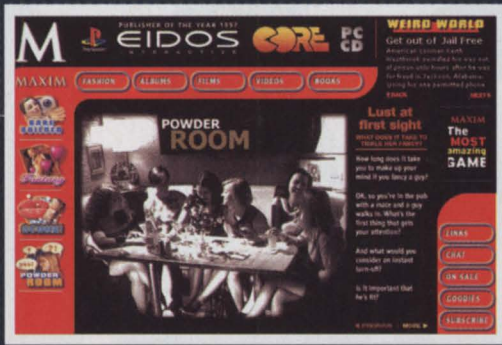
Powder Room
Find out what women really think about men by eavesdropping into our interactive Powder Room.

Score with Lovely Courtney
Can you get to first base with lovely Courtney. Put your chatting up technique to the test in our virtual bar.

magazine for men

Britain's best men's magazine now has the country's biggest and best web site. Check out www.maxim-magazine.co.uk today. You'll find over 2,000 pages of fashion, sport, games, news, movie reviews, albums, daily news, guides to the coolest men's sites and much, much more . . .

Maxim Quiz
Is your girlfriend an easy-going bundle of love and fun? Or is she a closet nutter with psychotic tendencies? Take the test...

A FRAG TOO FAR?

Maiming managers. Carving up colleagues. Butchering bosses. All in office hours? Sounds too good to be true. *Adam Phillips* **investigates**

It's become an official office stereotype. Like the over-enthusiastic colleague who harasses everyone with pictures of their 'cute' two-month-old baby, multiplaying addicts can be found in workplaces all over the world. As long as Bill Gates continues to churn out bloatware requiring increasingly obscene amounts of processor power to run it, corporations are going to need the latest high-spec machines – offering office employees an enviable opportunity to multiplay with the latest games in company time. In other words, why use that kick-ass P400 Super-Mega PC for spreadsheeting and word processing, when you can use it to beat seven shades of productivity out of your workmates across the company network with a game of *Quake II*?

The office multiplaying phenomenon truly began with *Doom*. It floored gamers worldwide with its inspired blend of action and tension, and ignited an insatiable appetite for multiplaying like nothing else before it. Back in those days though, few punters had access to the software and hardware required to frag real human players over a network. The only place that boasted such equipment was the humble office – regarded by most employees as a place already desperately in need of a 500mg shot of adrenalin.

Mulitplayer *Doom* caught on big-time. Stories appeared in newspapers detailing how company networks had been brought to their knees by iD's seminal classic as *Doom*'s coding was chucked between employees' computers, leaving little or no space for those networks to carry on with their mundane but vital tasks.

This outbreak of rabid multiplaying upset bods at the top, as illustrated by the infamous memo Intel sent out to their workers in the early '90s. It stated that network traffic was being congested before work, around lunchtime and towards the end of the day – and all because of *Doom*. Some of the networks were even crashing under the strain. Intel subsequently banned the game from their networks, and anyone caught playing it in the office would face severe disciplinary action.

While programming advancements have made multiplay coding infinitely more efficient, companies

THE QUAKE KILLERS

Someone somewhere wants to spoil your fun

According to the Gartner Group, an American research and consulting firm, online gaming by employees costs US business 26 million man hours a year – an estimated $750 million. Other sources claim that the loss of productivity in the UK is close to £100 million.

It's a factor that has been taken very seriously indeed. So much so that last year the US Senate passed a law banning all games from government computers. It has also created a niche market for software designed specifically to locate and destroy any copies of *Quake* lingering on an employee's hard drive.

Described as "fascistware" by *Wired* magazine, a prime example is *Antigame* from DVD, a package that can search, log and optionally clean games from servers and individual PCs using a "unique signature-recognition method", according to DVD President Myra Falisz. Claiming that the company services some 1000 clients, the package was created by David Hollander after he noticed a high number of people playing games at work. "As a dedicated employee," explains Myra, "he found it unsettling and felt that it was likely others shared his view." At last count, this "unsettling" feeling has been turned into an anti-virus-style program that can detect 6000 individual games. Office offenders beware.

• For more details, browse your way to www.antigame.com.

DVD Software
ANTIGAME™
THE GAMES ELIMINATOR

◀ *Antigame*: endangering *Quake* multiplaying in offices all over the world.

> **"My typical workday consists of 40 per cent playing games"**
>
> OFFICE WORKER WHO HAS GONE TO DEVIOUS LENGTHS SO THAT HE CAN SECRETLY PLAY GAMES AT WORK (SEE 'THE ITALIAN JOB' PANEL ON PAGE 70)

across the world have continued to take stringent action to ensure that games don't appear on their servers, and that workers don't damage productivity by indulging in such bad habits (see The Quake Killers panel, left).

FRIEND OR FOE?

Despite such corporate pressure, gaming in the workplace is still a remarkably popular – if somewhat hazardous – preoccupation, even outside office hours. Londoner

ZONE's Mallo finds a place where he can play games away from prying eyes.

66Some boot-licking arse brought up the subject of gaming at a monthly global conference call. After that, all gaming was banned99
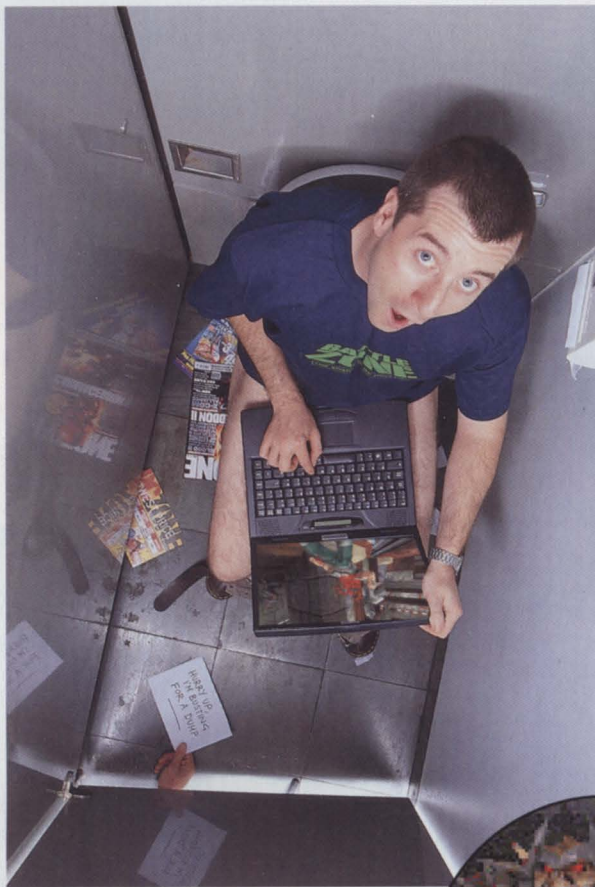
PAUL MIDDLETON, WHO NEARLY GOT THE SACK WHEN A MANAGER CAUGHT HIM MID-FRAG

> **"Employees ignoring [company policy of no gaming at work] persistently could face disciplinary action. We have no record of any such action being required though"**
>
> SPOKESPERSON FOR
> BRITISH TELECOM

Paul Middleton used to play *Quake* against 20-odd people split across the UK and the US at his employer's expense. At the time, his liberal-minded boss agreed to such activity as long as it took place after hours. "It worked well," recalls Paul, "until some boot-licking arse brought up the subject of gaming at a monthly global conference call. After that all gaming was banned."

IF YOU MUST PLAY, DON'T GET CAUGHT

Like alcoholics caught reeking of gin at an AA meeting, Paul and his colleagues took the company policy onboard, but proceeded to take their gaming underground by relocating their Web servers and using IRC chat to arrange
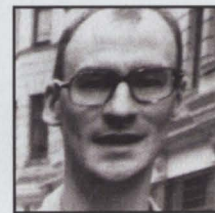
> **"I've had to give myself a stern talking to about *Syndicate Wars* and *Longbow 2*. Quite seriously"**
>
> TIM PONTING, PUBLISHER OF *PC ZONE*

deathmatches. One of his colleagues even went as far as writing a front end to kick out anyone not using the correct entry procedure.

Despite the various safeguards, Paul was eventually caught one evening by a manager who, being a right jobsworth, went straight to Human Resources and reported him. Fortunately, nothing came of it, and the die-hard gaming fan continued undeterred – but only after configuring a key to quit out of *Quake II* the moment he heard the sound of approaching management.

Another office gamer – for the purpose of anonymity we'll call him Bob – had a similar scrape with the powers that be. Enraptured by *Diablo*'s multiplayer options, he decided to install the game on a PC that was safely tucked away in a test room.

While indulging himself in a spot of *Battle.net*, his boss walked in with a group of clients. "I bolted from my chair and hit the power button on my monitor," explains Bob. "Unfortunately, *Diablo*'s distinctively gloomy music could still be heard over the speakers. I just stood there frozen while the general manager coolly walked over and flipped the power switch on the back of the PC. He then asked me

➲ The only problem with bogs is that most of them don't have a network connection – yet.

⬇ *Quake*: fragging isn't just for Christmas, it's for life.

Duke Nukem 3D: how would Duke deal with killjoy office managers? Quite.

THE ITALIAN JOB

PC ZONE received the following eye-opening email from an Italian employee who wishes to remain anonymous. As you'll see, his ludicrously devious behaviour triggered by his obsession for multiplaying could easily get him the boot

"I began playing games in the office during the summer of 1997, multiplaying with *Quake*. As time went on, my gaming addiction got worse and worse – I simply couldn't survive a full work day (at least ten to 12 hours) without playing.

"To make matters worse, I had a PC without a CD-ROM drive or sound card – a situation that needed rectifying. So one day, my hard disk 'mysteriously' formatted itself. I went to my boss and told him that it was unsafe to use, and convinced him to exchange it for one of the secretary's machines – which happened to have a CD-ROM drive.

"Then one of the tech people left and I persuaded him to give me his SoundBlaster card. Because our company forbids us to install any hardware or software on our office PCs, I organised a Net demonstration for my bosses, telling them about

the wonderful savings I could make using the Net instead of the phone. They fell for it, and I installed the SoundBlaster card. And a new pair of speakers.

"Despite my success, it was still almost impossible to play on the computer because I worked in a glass-walled office – everybody could see my monitor as they walked past. Help was at hand though. Here in Italy we have a stringent safety-in-the-workplace law. Realising its potential, I had an ugly confrontation with my Nazi-like manager, and argued that the sunlight reflecting on to my monitor from the glass walls could lead to eye damage. He eventually conceded, but didn't want to spend any money, so I ended up painting the glass walls, therefore blocking the view of any passers-by.

"This still left me with one final hurdle. I shared my office with a colleague who I suspected was an

untrustworthy spy – someone who would snitch on me given the opportunity. I decided to go to the head honcho and tell him that I could no longer work with our manager due to 'differing opinions' – which was actually true. As a result, I was 'allocated' to another manager (who I got on with), and subsequently my colleague was moved to another office downstairs.

"The above process took two years to implement, but I now have a private office and a full multimedia PC with an Internet connection! My typical work day now consists of 40 per cent playing games, 40 per cent maintaining my games-related website, and the remaining time spent working. According to all those official stats and figures, my productivity should have suffered, but surprisingly, my bonus this year was twice that of the previous year, proving that the less you work, the more you'll be rewarded!"

to demonstrate the machine to the clients."

The next day, the company's plant manager pulled him to one side for a chat – 'irresponsible', 'stupid' and 'immature' are just a few of the words Bob remembers being thrown at him. While he didn't receive an official warning, the following week saw tech bods sweeping through the office removing all games, including such 'work-threatening' titles as *Solitaire*, *Mine Sweeper* and *Mahjong*, from the company's PCs.

While Paul and Bob ultimately got away with their gaming misdemeanours, others have been less fortunate. One source, who preferred not to be named, told *PC ZONE* about a worker who was discovered using his employer's Internet connection to run a Multi-User Dungeon (MUD). Not only was he reprimanded, his misconduct also went down on file. "He carried on doing it though," explains our Deep Throat, "and software was used to capture transcripts of him online during work hours. The transcript of his running MUD session was then used as grounds for his dismissal."

KNOW WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE

While the removal of anyone who enjoys MUDs from the proximity of other human beings is always a good thing, being fired isn't as uncommon as you might think – as Travis Jamison found out. While working for a US telecoms company, he and his colleagues used to regularly partake in multiplayer *Duke Nukem 3D* during office hours.

"I reckon a fellow employee – who we trusted – told the management," recalls Travis. As a result, on arriving at work one morning he found his bosses looming over his PC. "I saw them do a search for game titles, but we'd already erased all the *Duke Nukem* files from the computer, so there was no hard evidence." Despite this, Travis and three others were shown the door two hours later.

However, Travis remains nonchalant about the whole incident: "I wasn't really bothered then or now. I was playing because I didn't care about what could happen, and I didn't think they would find out." Today, he monitors servers for another company – an ideal position to be in, by all accounts " We always set some time aside at weekends to kill each other in a nice online game," boasts a now wiser Travis. "I've never made it a secret why I was fired from my last job though!"

While most 'suits' would like to stamp out any kind of

gaming activity, whether it be in or out of office hours, there are employers who believe that official and organised multiplaying events are actually a good thing. Michael Davis, head honcho of Creative Media-Works, initiated his company's multiplaying events himself: "A couple of years ago, I started the tradition of buying a crate of beer and having *Quake* multiplayer games on the office network. That one night has now evolved into a regular Friday afternoon. I do know that all the employees get a real kick out of killing the boss!"

> ❝I didn't care about what could happen – and I didn't think they would find out❞
>
> TRAVIS, FIRED FOR GAMING AT WORK. HE NOW POLICES SERVERS FOR ANOTHER COMPANY

Michael has also slapped up a kill board next to the coffee machine and keeps track of any scores amassed. "I'd say that playing games in the office promotes a team spirit," he explains. "It certainly places the employees and myself on a level playing field – they enjoy it a lot, and I do too. It's a nice way to top off a week of hard work. In that respect, it's like a reward for a job well done."

A healthy and progressive attitude – rewarding workers with crates of beer and deathmatches? Employees and employers mixing it up and actually bonding? In a corporate workplace? Anal-retentive draconian 'suits' of the world please take note: gaming in the office could actually be good for business. PCZ

> **Settings** window:
>
> Tabs: General | Hiding | Magic Wand | Hot Keys
>
> ☐ Start minimized
> ☐ Lock
> ☑ Minimize to system tray
> ☐ Always on top
> ☑ Prompt when exiting
> ☐ Add "Always on top" system menu item to all windows
> ☐ Save desktop component visibility
> ☐ Close hidden windows when exiting
>
> OK | Cancel | Apply | Help
>
> Use packages such as *OuttaSight* to get yourself outta trouble.
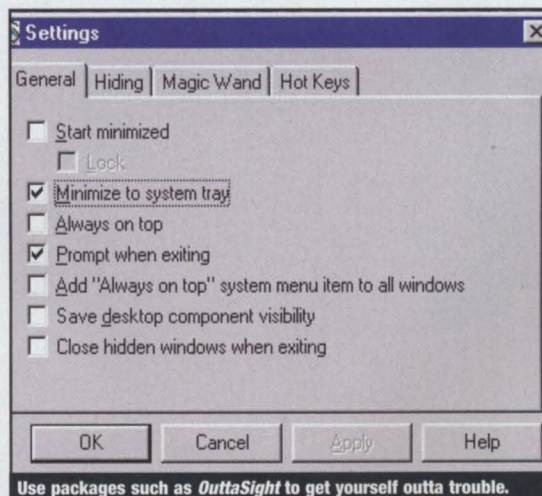
TOEING THE LINE

With many US corporations laying down the law to employees when it comes to gaming in the workplace, *PC ZONE* approached some Europe-based companies to find out their official policies

"Our policy is that company computers are working tools," shot back Mercedes-Benz within an hour of our fax arriving on their chrome-plated desks. "If employees wish to play computer games, they should do it in their own time and on their own computer."

British Petroleum's response was even more abrupt: "Our PCs are for business only and we have experienced no problems in the past."

Fortunately, British Telecom were a tad more verbose: "In office hours, employees are encouraged not to," offered a spokesperson." While we're conscious that BT sells Wireplay, *Doom* multiplaying in particular can take up a lot of space, and we don't want employees to put our servers at risk. It's up to our line managers to police such employee activity and to ensure proper productivity. Employees ignoring [company policy] persistently could face disciplinary action. We have no record

of any such action being required though."

While it's obvious that Europe-based companies have the same zero tolerance attitude towards gaming as many of their US counterparts, what about people who are actually paid to play games?

Writers on games mags such as *PC ZONE* are required to spend hours playing games as part of their job description. So has Tim Ponting, the publisher of this fine tome, ever had to take one of his employees aside for a swift 'dressing down' for playtesting a little too keenly? "Yes, most of the team at some stage or another," fires back Tim. "The games responsible have been *Quake*, *Quake II*, *Championship Manager 2* and *Frontier: Elite II*."

The only thing is, Tim's not exactly Mr Snow White himself either: "I've had to give myself a stern talking to about *Syndicate Wars* and *Longbow 2*. Quite seriously."

Self-flagellation? It's just so *PC ZONE*.

TOP TIPS

While *PC ZONE* wouldn't dream of encouraging career-threatening antics, if you really can't help fragging yourself off behind your desk, these handy tips should come in useful

☢ Make sure you have a monitor that isn't in the view of potentially 'treacherous' colleagues. Preferably get your own office.

☢ Subversive gaming has been around for ages now, and so has the 'boss' key, from Infocom's ancient *Leather Goddesses Of Phobos* (hit ALT+B and a screen of text flashes up, giving the illusion that you're hard at work) to the latest releases. Ask people in the newsgroups about specific game boss keys or download the likes of *OuttaSight* (http://rosa.simplenet.com/oos/) – programs specifically designed to make windows disappear from your desktop with the press of a button.

☢ Choose games that look like work. It is possible to find ones that do. Here's what Richie Shoemaker, *PC ZONE*'s End Zone Editor and armchair bio-terrorist, used to do: "I used to play *Risk* because the map looked like the work I was actually doing (epidemiological presentations on the worldwide HIV epidemic.)."

☢ Rename that Doom.exe file to something like Excel.exe, so when 'office police' inspect your machine on the sly they'll come up empty-handed. But beware of packages such as *Antigame* (see The Quake Killers panel on page 68) – they can allegedly spot such deceptions.

☢ If you do get caught, claim that the game was installed the previous night by someone else and that you've only just come across it. This approach may just work – but only once.

☢ Befriend the network manager by inviting him out for a pint. The sheer novelty of being asked should get him on-side.

☢ Get yourself a job as a network manager – no one but you will ever know whether you're dealing with server traffic or slicing up a virtual victim into small, bite-sized pieces.

☢ If 'illegal playing' really bothers you, why not approach your boss and pitch the idea of an official mulitplayer tournament? Use words like 'synergy', 'proactive', 'team dynamics' and phrases such as 'your wife's a bit of a looker' to win him over.

☢ If multiplaying in the office is an absolute no-no for you, then try going along to venues that specialise in offering multiplayer experiences, such as The Playing Fields in London (0171 383 5850).

☢ Quit and go freelance. The only downside is that you'll be wasting your own money instead of somebody else's.

Jane's WWII Fighters takes you back ... black as night. Then they are on you.

to a time when skill still made a ... Silhouettes shoot past. You race after

difference. When the outcome of a ... one, propeller blades tearing the air,

dogfight was decided by the pilots ... Lead leaping from your guns. Ahead he's

and not by technology. ... dodging, weaving, skimming

spit.

fire.

You are escorting wave ... the treetops to escape.

after wave of bombers through the ... Too late. His fighter blossoms

thickest flak ever seen, turning the ... into flame as, through the shockwave

perfect blue of a frosty, winter morning ... and burning debris, you race clear....

WWII FIGHTERS

Jane's
COMBAT SIMULATIONS

http://www.janes.ea.com

WE BUILD SIMS BY THE BOOK.

OBSESSED WITH STAR WARS

In his day job he's a jolly Jack tar, defending Queen and country. In his spare time he commands six squadrons of TIE pilots, fights for the Dark Side, and is a *Star Wars* addict. Obesssed? You betcha

WORDS Adam Phillips

CASE HISTORY
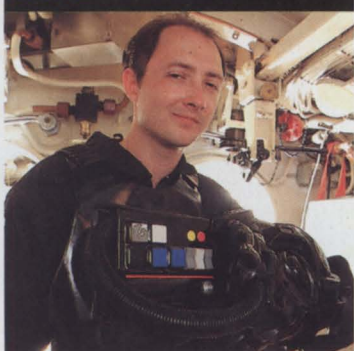
#6 THE TIE FIGHTER PILOT

NAME Paul Charlton, aka Major General Kessler

AGE 28

LOCATION Portsmouth

OCCUPATION Royal Navy, currently serving on HMS Nottingham

OBSESSION Indulging himself in the Dark Side as a TIE Fighter commander.

CONDITION BEGAN When he first saw *Star Wars* as a seven year old in '77. Bless.

HISTORY OF CONDITION Started buying *Star Wars* Marvel comic adaptations, and novels focusing on the adventures of Han Solo. Amassed a mountain of *Star Wars* goodies and has continued to carry a torch for the trilogy ever since. Ultimately turned to the Dark Side by spending some 35 hours every week running a TIE "Wing" online at his obsession's peak.

OUTLOOK With more games and movies on the way, *PC ZONE* believes he has a life-long, incurable condition. And who can blame him?

Fact: everybody loves *Star Wars*. While *Star Trek* may be only one word different from the seminal sci-fi trilogy, its obsessional following (as evidenced by last month's Obsession feature in *PC ZONE*) still seems cultish and geeky in the face of *Star Wars*' universal appeal.

During a chat about films and telly, mumble to someone that you love *Star Trek* and you may as well have dropped your trousers right there and then and emptied your bowels into their pint glass. Say you adore *Star Wars*, on the other hand, and, nine times out of ten, you'll be greeted with a conversation about the up-and-coming sequels and nostalgic musings about the first time you saw it.

Why the trilogy has remained just so damn popular is hard to pin down. Maybe it's the swashbuckling adventure; the more-evil-than-Fred-West-and-Charles-Manson-rolled-into-one Darth Vader; the pert and beautiful heroine (well, Carrie Fisher was a babe back when ear warmers were regarded as sexy and provocative); the heroic but wet-behind-the-ears Luke; the cynical but heart-of-gold-bless-'im Han Solo; the eye-opening special effects; the heart-pumping music... Christ knows. And maybe George Lucas does as well.

TECHNOLOGICAL WARFARE

If you head out onto the Net, there are numerous newsgroups dedicated to *Star Wars*. One disciple spreading the word of Lucas online is Paul Charlton.

From being a fanatic as a kid, buying everything *Star Wars* related under the sun – "at one point, you could have put a piece of shit on a shingle, stamped it with a *Star Wars* logo and I would have bought it," he muses – Paul went through the trauma of emigrating to South Africa in his teens and having to give away all his *SW* merchandising stuff in the process. The arrival of PCs and their therapeutic bevy of *Star Wars* gaming beauties soon helped make up for the loss.

"I remember reading that LucasArts were doing a *Star Wars* space combat simulation based round *X-Wing*," explains Paul, "but they weren't doing it for my current

> **❝At one point, you could have put a piece of shit on a shingle, stamped it with the *Star Wars* logo and I would have bought it❞**
>
> **PAUL CHARLTON**
> **SELF-CONFESSED STAR WARS ADDICT**

machine at the time – the Amiga. When it came out, I still didn't have enough money saved to get a PC but I bought the game anyway."

Such was his dedication to all things *Star Wars* that he ended up installing it on his mate's 486SX black-and-white – and played it using a trackball. Despite this, he managed to complete the first tour of duty

before he "spent £1000 on a PC purely so I could play *X-Wing*."

But his PC has played a further and vastly more important role in feeding his *Star Wars* fetish. On buying a modem, Paul joined the Emperor's Hammer (see Feel The Force panel on page 76), the Internet's biggest online *Star Wars* gaming group. Dedicated to the evil Empire "instead of those pansy rebels", the group has a vast membership who indulge in the Dark Side, and play across most of the *Star Wars* games either single-playing up the kudos-laden ranks or multiplaying against rebel opponents.

Reading through Paul's progress in the group reads like the résumé of a world-class player *(But without the cash bonuses and Jag – Ed)*, ultimately ending up as a Wing Commander – a Wing being made up of six squadrons of TIE pilots.

"At my busiest I was easily putting four to five hours a day into the Emperor's Hammer. I had three websites to look after – Aggressor's Wing, the Wing X Flight Ops Office and the Wing X Challenge Cup tournament site. From updating each with news and events every day and answering email, to marking battle scores of pilots and attending IRC conferences, I was kept very busy but I loved it."

STARS IN THEIR EYES

While his dedication may seem obscene to the rest of the world, Paul reaped one very real world benefit – he happened to stumble into Darkfire, a feisty female

Major General Kessler infiltrates the Royal Navy disguised as Paul Charlton.

"No, mister Solo, I expect you to *die!*"

Kessler is not impressed by the ancient technology of Earth's fighting machines.

The Dark Side have made major advancements in combating passive smoking and mosquitos.

PARTNERS IN INTERGALACTIC CRIME

Let's be frank: we're disappointed. The person Paul is not the raving fascist that any true TIE pilot should be. In fact he's rather a nice bloke. Not to be put off, we contacted a couple of his colleagues at EH to see if they were the wretched oppressors that we all hate to love

Callista D'Om-h, aka Natalie: hardly the evil, Ewok-hating Imperial scum that we were hoping for

REAL NAME Natalie Muehlberger
AGE 18
OCCUPATION German high school student
LOCATION Taunusstein, Germany
IMPERIAL NAME Callista D'Om-h
RANK General; Flight Leader of Typhoon Squadron's Flight 2. Also Squadron's Training Officer
RESPONSIBILITIES "All the fancy duties of an 'ordinary pilot' and taking 'care' of my Flight members, plus creating Squadron training battles."
CLAIM TO FAME "I think I'm an acceptable pilot (for a girl – Paul). I also believe I'm getting quite good at making my own TIE missions."

Why do you love Star Wars?
"It's just the coolest thing ever. The films are so great, and I've still got a major crush on Mark Hamill."

When were you first bitten by the Star Wars bug?
"In January '97. I had to do a report for my English class about my favourite film, and as I had always liked Star Wars I chose it as my topic. Naturally, I wanted an A+ for my report, so I watched each film three times in about five days! Additionally, I read some Star Wars books my brother had, and I started getting obsessed from there."

Why choose the Dark Side?
"I'm a Rebel at heart – don't tell my fellow pilots! – but later I found out that the Rebel equivalent of the Emperor's Hammer is really lame… and the people in the EH are cooler than the Rebels!"

Yacko: only 15 and already a Vice Admiral. Blimey! You can't even *join* the Royal Navy at that age

REAL NAME Paul Rigden
AGE 15
OCCUPATION Soccer referee, and auxiliary staff at a coffee shop
LOCATION Ontario, Canada
IMPERIAL NAME Yacko
RANK Vice Admiral
RESPONSIBILITIES Executive Officer of the Aggressor Wing
CLAIM TO FAME "My many command positions in the club."

Why do you love Star Wars?
"I get a real sense of immortality from the Star Wars universe. It gives me hope for what might be out there – that there's more than just the human race. Space and all its connecting subjects have always intrigued me. And I love a good fight."

When were you first bitten by the Star Wars bug?
"About two years ago. I'd heard lots about the trilogy, but when I actually sat down and watched it I loved it."

Why choose the Dark Side?
"I came across the club when I was looking for technical assistance for TIE Fighter. It snared my interest, so I did what I needed to do to join and have been bugging the others in the EH ever since!"

"Hey, I bet it don't half get messy inside that bonnet when you get airsick, yeah?"

Your galaxy needs you: join the Dark Side and see the universe.

Darkfire, aka Lindsay: the Star Wars-loving lady who has enraptured Paul.

FEEL THE FORCE

The Dark Side is alive and well online at the Emperor's Hammer

Monolithic. Huge. Gigantic. If Luke had ever bothered going online and seen the scale of the Dark Side on show at the Emperor's Hammer, he'd have carted Obi-Wan Kenobi off to the nearest old people's home, traded in his lightsaber for a Ford Cossie, and shagged his way round Tatooine.

On the other hand, if you've already succumbed to the battle for evil to triumph over good, there's no better place to meet, mix and goose-step your way round the galaxy on a murderous rampage than at the Emperor's Hammer.

Set up by William Call in New York, the 'bad boys and their toys' club opened officially in January 1995. "I wanted to continue where the LucasArts Game *TIE Fighter* (1994) left off," explains Cal. "The Emperor's Hammer was the first club to post 'edited' missions for use beyond those provided in the game and its expansion packs. EH has since grown to 3500 members worldwide with another 1100 in 'allied' clubs."

The club covers nearly all the Star Wars games where, for instance, people who own copies of TIE Fighter can join up as trainee pilots in the TIE Corp. To move up the ladder of promotion and win the treasured medals and club responsibilities, players need to complete missions (those provided in the game or ones which have been custom designed by EH members). As proof of completion, you then need to send in your .plt file – you'll find it tucked away in the directory you installed the game in – for approval by the club heads. Serious stuff indeed. Just be prepared to kiss your social life goodbye once you're hooked.

○ For more details, go to EH's headquarters at **www.emperorshammer.org**

The Empire wants you – sign up today.

Moving up through the ranks is taken deadly seriously within the EH community. Instead of owning your own uniform, costume templates can be downloaded, and any medals earned can be cut-and-pasted on to it.

Squadron Commander. "We met chatting on the IRC channel for the pilots of Battle Group II," offers US citizen Lindsay Noel Labanca, aka Darkfire. "I noticed Paul for two things: he's very funny, and he's very caring." (Surprising character traits for a bloke who spends his spare time annihilating free spirit on a galactic basis.) So successful were their chats in cyberspace that Paul put his TIE fighter to one side and climbed aboard a 747 to Louisiana, USA, to spend a cosy three weeks with Darkfire/Lindsay.

While the humble PC has paid off handsomely for Paul, what, in his expert opinion, does the mountain of *Star Wars* games offer the rest of us? "While I'm the kind of person who will quite happily wait a decade or so for George Lucas to get his act together and make more movies," offers Paul, "the games are invaluable because they keep the interest alive. And on the whole they're damn good entertainment too – with one or two notable exceptions (*Anyone for* Star Wars: Rebellion? – *Ed*).

His undying love for *Star Wars* has helped Paul survive the last few "traumatic" months while he temporarily hangs up his space helmet and busies himself on HMS Nottingham. In the meantime, he's retained his title (Major General), his medals and Fleet membership, and has already been asked to come out of partial retirement to run an online competition.

"I can rejoin the Fleet whenever I'm ready," says Paul, "and I will when I leave HMS Nottingham in May of next year."

Defending the free world during the day, and repressing the free universe at night? The force is strong in this one, me laddie. PCZ

ON A WEBSITE FAR, FAR AWAY...

The Internet is a galactic junkyard when it comes to *Star Wars* – you never know if you'll stumble across an informative site on Darth Vader's Ewok ethnic cleansing programme, or some fabulous faked pic of Leia with her bits out. Witness the following...

Official Star Wars site
www.starwars.com/
Bliss. No other production in film history has been as ferociously guarded as the new sequels to the classic trilogy. Featuring details on the new movie designs and characters, they've also enlisted the talents of a film-maker to create a documentary on the production – check out the Web exclusives at the site.

Due next year – Independence Day... er, Star Wars Episode 1.

Rebel Squadrons
www.rebelsquadrons.org/
The Jedi's response to the Emperor's Hammer. Hug an Ewok today and join up to stamp out the Empire.

Be a mummy's boy and join the Jedi rebels.

Star Wars collectibles
www.starwars.clara.net/starwars.htm
Books. Comics. Novels. Figures. Merchandising madness as typified by this UK-based site which profiles the many money-making spin-offs that have poured out of the 'creative' minds in Hollywood.

C3PO does his Charles Atlas pose for that 'great idea' – the Tazo as featured in bags of Walkers Crisps.

Technical commentaries
www.physics.usyd.edu.au/~saxton/starwars/
"The motivation of this [*Star Wars*] project is to synthesise and explore a physically self-consistent reality." In other words, inane babble, er, sturdy scientific research into such riveting subjects as why The Death Star is bigger than previously thought.

Troops
www.theforce.net/troops/
Download the new *Star Wars* film for free. Well, actually it's a ten-minute amateur job slapped together by Kevin Rubio and his student mates. The end result is a wry look at the deaths of Luke's Uncle and Auntie at the hands of stormtroopers. George Lucas apparently loves the movie – ie he didn't sue – and Kevin landed himself an agent because of it. Fugging git.

"Don't fancy yours much."

DOES MY BUM LOOK BIG IN THIS?

What the *really* dedicated *Star Wars* nut is wearing this season

Oh blimey! Throw out the ribbed condoms, boys! Stuff that lingerie and those sex toys under the bed, girls! Grab a tin of fibreglass resin and you can build your very own Stormtrooper outfit complete with matching codpiece. Then you can use said costume in a dodgy bedroom sex game (with your girlfriend as Princess Leia) and you'll never need that *Shag Better With Charlie Brooker* video ever again.

A Storm Trooper outfit is possibly the coolest item for any *Star Wars* nut to own, the instructional homepage details the entire process, and the end results are highly convincing. It looks like a painstaking process (and perhaps dangerous), but obsessive people aren't known for their logic.

From creating your own body cast and building a vacuum-forming table, to detailing the suit and perusing the How To online videos, this is top-notch stuff. Any *ZONE* reader out there who goes to the effort of actually making one should drop us a line with a picture (while playing said dodgy sex game with his loved one).

● For more details, check out www.studiocreations.com/stormtrooper/.

Grease yourself up before embarking on the body cast. Or get your bird to do it.
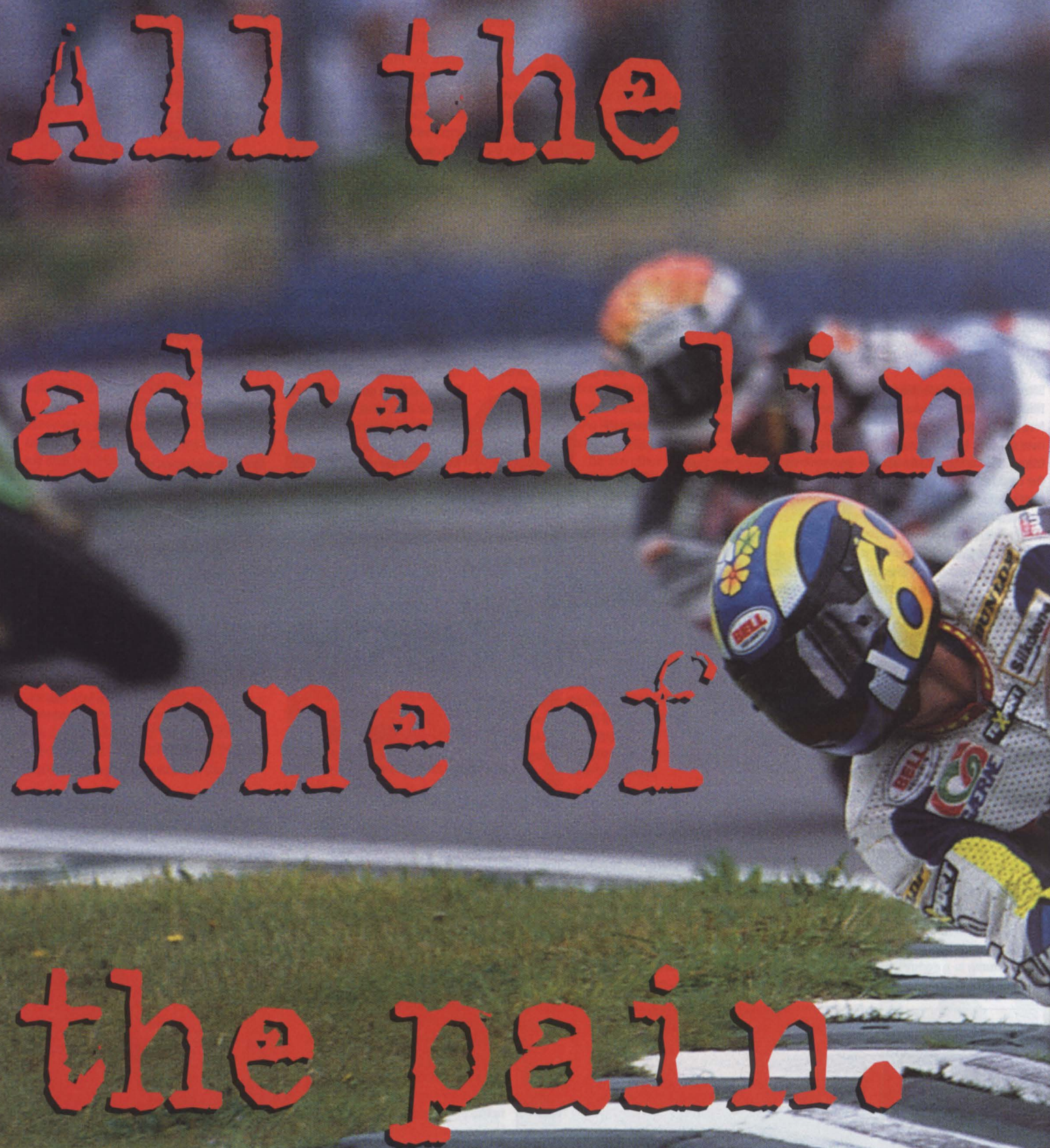
Now very carefully peel off the finished body cast.

Use vacuum-forming to create that mean mutha-looking Stormtrooper look.

Once done, you too can compare girth size with your fellow troopers.

If dressing up in poncy white armour doesn't do it for you, why not try a Boba Fett costume instead? Instructions at www.geocities.com/~byobf/.

All the adrenalin, none of the pain.

NOW YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE FOR JUST £9.97

NEW OFFER

Subscribe to PC Zone within 7 days to claim your new low rate of just £9.97 every 6 issues. That means each magazine will cost you just £1.67 instead of the normal shop price of £2.99 – a saving of 44%.

FULL MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

It's a 100% RISK-FREE offer because you're protected by our Full Money-Back Guarantee. So you can write to cancel at any time, for any reason, and receive a refund of the cost of all unmailed issues – no questions asked.

REPLY WITHIN 7 DAYS FOR YOUR NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATE

£1.67 AN ISSUE

PCZONE NEW LOW PRICED SUBSCRIPTION

YES! ☐ Please start my subscription from the next available issue
OR ☐ I am already a subscriber, please extend my subscription

YOUR DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Ms _____ Forename _____ Surname _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Daytime phone _____ Email _____

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION
Complete section ❶ Cheque ❷ Credit/Debit Card or ❸ Direct Debit

Cheque or Credit/Debit Card payment
1 year (13 issues) ☐ UK £21.97 ☐ Europe £38.97 ☐ World £54.97

❶ ☐ I enclose a cheque made payable to *Dennis Publishing Ltd*
❷ ☐ Please charge my ☐ VISA ☐ Access/Mastercard ☐ AMEX ☐ Switch (Issue No. ☐)

Card Number ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Expiry Date ☐☐☐☐

Signed _____ Date _____

❸ ☐ Direct Debit payment only £9.97 every 6 issues (UK only)

Dennis — Instruction to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit — **DIRECT Debit**

Please fill in the form and send to: Dennis Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST WD7, Bristol BS32 0ZZ.
Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To the manager: Bank name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Account in the name(s) of _____

Branch sort code ☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐

Bank/Building Society account number ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Originator's Identification Number

7	2	4	6	8	0

Ref no. to be completed by Dennis Publishing

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society
Please pay Dennis Publishing Ltd. Direct Debits from the account detailed in this instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Dennis Publishing Ltd and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Signature(s) _____

Date _____

Banks and building societies may not accept Direct Debit instructions for some types of account

☐ Please indicate here if you do not wish to receive details of other special offers or products.
All costs and savings relate to current standard UK cover price of £2.99

P8

Return completed form to: PCZONE Subscriptions Department
FREEPOST WD7 Bristol BS32 0ZZ (No stamp required)
Overseas readers reply to: PCZONE Subscriptions, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS32 0PP UK

ORDER HOTLINE: 📞 01454 620070

PEDAL TO THE METAL

PC ZONE, in conjunction with Ubi Soft, are giving a pair of lucky readers the chance to take us on in a real race around the legendary course at Silverstone in a variety of very fast cars. A VIP day out, racing around in a 306 Gti 6, a Mondeo skid car, an Escort Cosworth, a Caterham 7 plus a variety of go-karts (alongside reprobates from both *PC ZONE* and Ubi Soft) is on the cards for whoever comes up trumps in this mega compo. The only requirement is that you own a full driving licence (which therefore means you must be at least 17 years old) and can spare a full day to meet up with us at The Silverstone Driving Centre.

On top of this fab first prize, ten runner-up prize winners will each receive a copy of *Monaco Grand Prix* and a smart *Monaco Grand Prix* stopwatch.

QUESTION: What did Ubi Soft's *Monaco Grand Prix* score in the review in the previous issue of *PC ZONE*?

TIE-BREAKER: Design your own motif on the side of this F1 car and impress us all with your artistic skills.

To enter, just answer the question and complete the tie-breaker task, send them (cut out the panel below, or photocopy it), along with with *all* the information requested, to the address below.

✪ Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / E-mail / 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?

Send your entries to 'Clunk Click Every Trip' CPCZ9812A, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK. (The closing date is Friday 13 November 1998.)

COMPETITION

NOT FOR THE
FAINT HEARTED

HΛLF-LIFE

VALVE

PCZONE REVIEWS

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

THE HALL OF SHAME

✪ These are the games that we still haven't been sent for review. This means they're either completely crap and the publishers are scared we'll pan them, or their PR machine isn't quite up to full speed. This month's hall of shame comprises…

POWERBOAT RACING Interplay

STREETS OF SIMCITY Maxis/EA

MISSING IN ACTION GT Interactive

REAH Black Friar

BUST-A-MOVE 2 Acclaim

UBIK Cryo

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've got our Feedback section on page 141. This is where you get the opportunity to get your point of view into *PC ZONE*. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.

OVER 40 PC GAMES REVIEWED & RATED

DON'T BELIEVE THE JARGON

The standard spec machine these days is a P166 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.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

PC ZONE CLASSIC **90-100%** Here at *ZONE* we score every game out of 100. If a game receives a 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 a fan of the genre.

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED **80-89%** If a game scores 80-89% it's awarded a *PC ZONE* Recommended award. Games that fall into this category are excellent examples of their type, and if you're a fan of the genre they're well worth buying.

70-79% 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.

20-69% 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 see it at a reduced price.

PC ZONE PANTS **0-19%** Games that score under 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.

84 POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

90 SiN

108 QUAKE II: GROUND ZERO MISSION PACK
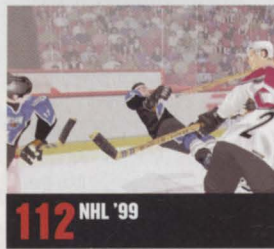
112 NHL '99

GRIM FANDANGO – AN APOLOGY

Looking at this month's cover, you may have noticed that we have listed *Grim Fandango* as having been reviewed in this issue. The game was originally set for a three-page review but at the last minute LucasArts insisted we sign a contract before they would release a gold master for review. We felt that the contract was unacceptable, insisting as it did that we give LucasArts the chance to check our copy and pull the review if they so wished. Our decision to withdraw the review is no reflection on *Grim Fandango*. In fact, from what we have seen of *Grim* so far, we are convinced that it is a bloody great game and quite possibly a *PC ZONE* Classic. We will review *Grim* next issue (out Tuesday 17 November) when we have received a final master of the game.

POPULO THE BEGINN

⭐ £ TBC • Electronic Arts • Out November

Command an army of followers? Raise and level land? *Become a god*? Any game foolhardy enough to inflate *Charlie Brooker*'s sense of self-esteem deserves to be subjected to intense scrutiny

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Win 95 or 98, P200 or higher, 16Mb+ RAM, 3D accelerator card recommended (although it still looks shit-hot without one)

PC ZONE CLASSIC

ALSO CONSIDER

DUNGEON KEEPER (EA Classics, £14.99) Okay, okay, so we probably got a *little* carried away when we slapped a score of 96 per cent on this one, but it's still a damn good game by any standards, and is now available to buy at a budget price. *Populous: The Beginning* swipes part of its interface directly. Which is forgivable, since they're both Bullfrog games. *PCZ #53, 96%*

AGE OF EMPIRES (Microsoft, £34.99) Similarly epic in scale, *Age Of Empires* was the *Civilisation II*-beater that proved Bill Gates' loyal followers could forge a decent game as *well* as a clunky operating system. *PCZ #54, 94%*

Mystics. Shamen. Obelisks. Reincarnation. Magical energy. It sounds like the stuff of a mid-seventies concept album, one of those preposterous 'rock operas' excreted by overpaid acid casualties with too much time on their hands. A 60-minute guided tour through a universe of pretension, with occasional breaks for timpani rolls, guitar solos and sword-and-chainmail sound effects, accompanied by echoing vocals, and ending with a fey medieval folk tune about a little man performing a jig atop a toadstool. Recorded over a six-month period in a farmhouse studio in the Brecon Beacons, with a trough full of hallucinogenic drugs in one corner of the room and a docile goat tied to a post in the other. You know, the sort of thing they cover in *Mojo*.

"Oh my *God*... Oh *no*... Oh *Jesus Christ*! No! No! *Christ!*"
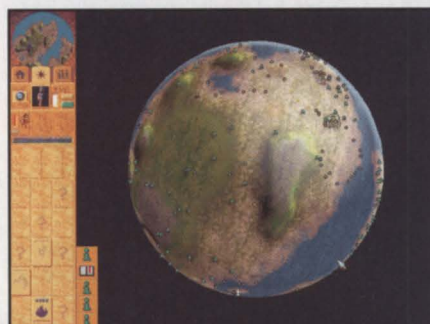
In this viewing mode you can spin the world around as if it were a big football.
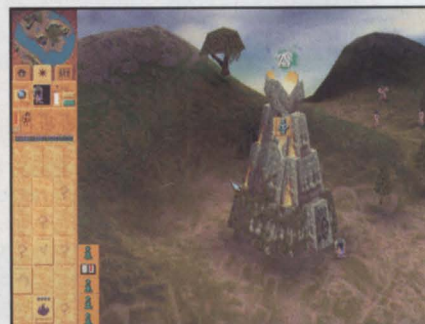
Look, the shaman's on her knees. Thinks she's Monica Lewinsky.

US ING

> ❝It may be 'just another real-time strategy game' in some respects, but it also happens to have the best interface, the best engine, the most finely balanced gameplay and the most original and distinctive underlying concept❞

A scene from the forthcoming public information film *Don't Burn Your House Down, You Stupid Twats!*

"Dad! Dad! There's a load of men outside in hot-air balloons. They say they've come to kill you."

Looks like the blue team are about to start a rumble on the green team's turf.

At the start of each level, the shaman creates a great big ring. Not that kind of ring, silly.

FLYBY MODE

COMIN' ON STRONG LIKE A SEVENTH SENSE

Could The Shamen be the shaman's favourite band?

Okay, let's get the Mister C jokes out of the way. The shaman in *Populous* has nothing to do with the early '90s New Age techno-pop outfit The Shamen. But there are three striking parallels.

First, the *musical* Shamen claimed to possess the ability to "move, move, move any mountain", yet were never called upon to prove this in a court of law. The *Populous* shaman can *demonstrably* cause mountain ranges to disappear (when equipped with the correct spell).

Second, the followers of the *Populous* shaman start out as savage tribesmen, then go on to become respected priests, cunning spies or fearsome, muscle-bound warriors. The followers of the *musical* Shamen started out as crusties, and went on to work as website consultants, independent TV producers, and as organisers of the International Festival of Contemporary Dance. Well, the ones that needed *jobs* did, anyhow. The rest are still living off daddy's trust fund. Bastards.

Third, in *Populous* it's best to keep an eye on your shaman each time she wanders near an expanse of water, since she can't swim and can easily drown – a lesson the musical Shamen had to learn the hard way.

WHINGER'S CORNER

Okay, it's good – very good. But every silver lining has a stain or two

It's not all milk and honey, of course. We do have a *couple* of niggles, which aren't enough to demote the game from 'Classic' status, but *are* a tad annoying nonetheless.

First of all, the AI. It's good, yes, and the enemies behave like complete and utter bastards in a very 'human' way, true. But your troops' navigational abilities sometimes seem lacking. They'll often spend ages clambering up an incredibly steep hill instead of going around it. Still, you *can* set waypoints, so perhaps we're being a bit picky.

The other moan is this: a drawback to having the action take place on a wrap-around, spinny-roundy globe is that it's very easy to totally lose your bearings. Sometimes you think the enemy camp is ten miles away to the north, when actually it's just ten *metres* away, behind the hill to the south. Still, that's hardly a fault in the game design, more a fault in our own spatial awareness nodes.

"Up, up, and away, in my polygonal balloon..."

But that isn't what we're looking at here. All these things – shamen, obelisks etc – are part of *Populous: The Beginning*, a new virtual reality computer game designed to enliven your eyes, hands and brain. And it's good.

IN THE BEGINNING...

Quick history lesson: *Populous: The Beginning* is a 'prequel' to *Populous 1* and *2*, both wildly successful games, the first of which appeared back in oooooh... 1968 or so *(1989, actually – Ed)*. The original *Populous* is treated with reverence by self-styled computer game 'historians' for several reasons:

1) It was the first 'god game'

God games. Familiar with them? *Sim City (PCZ #20, 90%)* was a god game. So, in a way, is *Creatures 2 (PCZ #68, 90%)*. But *Populous* is widely regarded as the first. As the name implies, 'god games' cast you as an almighty, omnipotent entity shaping the destiny of the on-screen world. This is precisely what *Populous* did, granting everyone the ability to move mountains and destroy entire civilisations with apocalyptic curses. Since the majority of computer game fans are craven, powerless outcasts harbouring violent revenge fantasies, the game was a runaway success.

2) It had about ten billion levels

Okay, more like a thousand. But the fact remains that *Populous* was huge. No one ever completed it. Well, apparently *one* person claims to have completed it, but they were probably just being silly. Still, a thousand or so levels was a lot, especially back then, when most games had about six

stages, four of them crap. The perceived 'endless lifespan' did wonders for the game's 'value for money' rating at the hands of the reviewers, who dribbled in awe at the sheer number of stages, never once reasoning that playing a game with a thousand levels soon becomes tiresome, in the same way that watching a 73-hour war movie would eventually drive you genuinely insane.

3) It was weird, but in a cerebral sort of way

Back then, there were loads of surreal games available, but they tended to be strange in a 'zany' sense – gigantic humanoid lemons riding penny-farthings around the rings of Saturn, that kind of thing. *Populous*, with its abstract gameplay, geographical manipulation and extensive use of religious iconography, was just the sort of thing highbrow gamers could discuss at length without feeling stupid. After all, it's impossible to deliver a persuasive

HOW IT GOES

You put your left foot forward, your right foot forward... and away you jolly well go

Let us take you by the hand, and lead you through the streets of gameplay, we'll show you something you've never seen before. Namely this: level numero uno of *Populous: The Beginning*, a nice, basic stage which should give you a rough idea of how the gameplay hangs together.

1 Here we are at the start of the very first level of the game. And check it out: I'm surrounded by a group of people who worship the very ground I walk on. Call this a game? It's a documentary, I tell you.
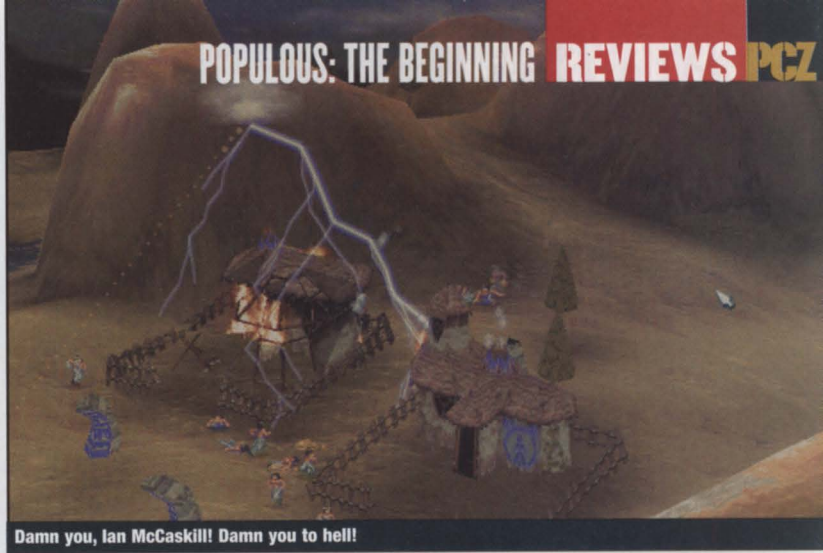

2 First things first. I've noticed one of those 'stone head' monuments, and have sent a minion to go and worship it.
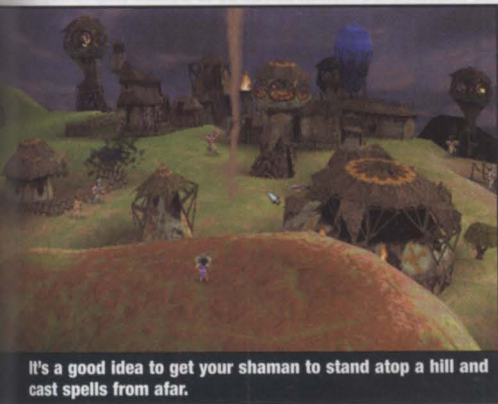

3 While he's occupied in *Songs Of Praise* mode, I'll command the others to build some more houses... just... here. These should complement the ones I already have.

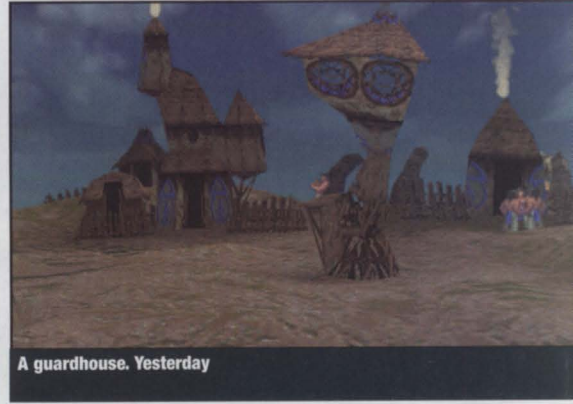That's what happens when you build too close to the sea. Cuh.

Damn you, Ian McCaskill! Damn you to hell!

It's a good idea to get your shaman to stand atop a hill and cast spells from afar.

It's all a bit *Wicker Man*, isn't it? You keep expecting them to sacrifice Edward Woodward.

A guardhouse. Yesterday

and considered narrative discourse regarding the pros and cons of *Fat Worm Blows A Sparky* without inviting loud snorts of derision from your audience.

So, there you go: the original *Populous* was a legend among games. Which is why it's surprising that Bullfrog have decided to do away with the traditional *Populous* basics for this, the third entry in the series.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE... MAKE IT BETTER

Populous: The Beginning owes a debt not only to the original *Populous*, but also to real-time wargames like *Command & Conquer* (*PCZ* #28, 95%) and most significantly, *Total Annihiliation* (*PCZ* #56, 92%). In the original *Populous* titles, you could shape the landscape, but

had little direct control over the populace itself. *Populous: The Beginning* reverses this: you're forever ordering minions around, while reshaping the land itself is a rare treat. A cynic might argue – not altogether unreasonably – that this seismic shift in game design reduces *Populous* to the level of just another real-time strategy game. A valid point – but one that ignores something rather more significant: all the changes Bullfrog have made actually serve to improve the game. This is a better play than *Populous 1*. Permit us to illuminate.

As we mentioned earlier, *Populous: The Beginning* is a 'prequel' to the previous games. This is a nifty way of explaining one of the game's major departures: the fact that you, the player, are actually playing one of

the characters on-screen. Not just any old character, mind. You're a mystical shaman, blessed with magical powers. Oh, and you're a woman as well. You know, a woman. With knockers and a fanny and everything.

Anyway, your ultimate goal is to become a god (try telling that to your careers advisor). Achieving these herculean

> **" It's so dang neat, it's one of those games that makes passers-by stop in their tracks and start gawping "**

ambitions requires help in the form of followers – ordinary humans who just happen to worship the ground you walk on. The more followers you have, the more magical energy you get to play with. As each level begins,

you're granted a set number of followers; acquiring more requires the use of a conversion spell (which turns savage wildmen into willing minions), or, most often, via the traditional method – mating.

Yes, mating. You want your followers to breed and create more followers. To do this you need to get them to build huts to

shag in. But in order to build huts, they first need to go and chop down trees, of which there is a finite supply. Thus begins the familiar resource management merry-go-round.

Once they're successfully

breeding like rabbits, you can start training them. Send a few to become warriors and build yourself an army, or ordain others as priests who will attempt to convert the enemy hordes to your way of thinking. Later in the game, other options present themselves: you can have 'fire warriors' (who can shoot balls of fire – *quelle surprise*) and spies (who can disguise themselves, all the better for cunning invasion plans), or send followers to sail boats and pilot balloons.

And that's just the *people*. It's in the range of spells that the real fun lies.

ABRA, ABRACADABRA

Your quest to become a deity isn't just plain sailing. Each stage takes place on a different planet, and each planet is home to at

4 Check it out: they're beavering away like worker drones while I sit on my arse eating pies. This 'religious leader' gig is quite a laugh. Might try it in real life.

5 Now the hut's complete, I've ordered some minions inside to get breeding. Oddly, despite the fact that they're all male, they'll soon spawn some offspring. Shocking news for biologists everywhere, that.
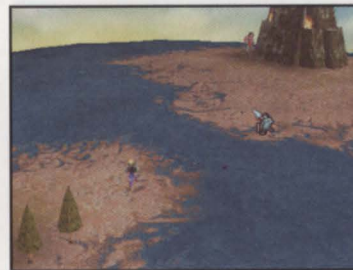
6 Time to send the shaman off on a stroll to survey the rest of the area. And what's this? A nearby island. Luckily my stone head-worshipping has just paid off, granting me a 'land bridge' spell... which I'll demonstrate in a moment...

7 Look at that. Creating a connecting vista of earth with my magical powers. Top *that*, Martin Daniels. Note the lone enemy tribesman on the left. He ain't going to last long.

A tornado cutting a swathe through a sea of blood. That's nice, isn't it?

A bunch of natives having a nice little fireside chat in a computer game.

YOU'VE GOT FRIENDS

You're never alone with your minions, priests and warriors

1 Selection arrow Indicates which minion you've currently got selected.
2 Priest Deceptively useful, priests. While they're not much use in a fist fight, they're ideally suited for incredibly sneaky tactics. Providing there aren't any rival priests around, your religious messengers are capable of causing the opponents' warriors to down tools and eventually join your cause, thereby swelling the ranks of your army at a stroke.
3 Warrior The warriors are violent bastards to a man. Thankfully they're *obedient* bastards into the bargain. Warriors are the guys who *really* get their hands dirty. Not averse to kicking the enemy's face in, smashing up buildings or sacrificing themselves in order to save you, they're often a shaman's best friend.

INFORMATION DESK

Where you are, how you stand and what you've got

1 Map A kind of radar snapshot of your local surroundings.
2 Panel indicator Shows which bunch of 'things' you've currently got selected. From left to right: buildings, spells, personnel. We've got spells highlighted right now.
3 Shaman That's you, that is. Right-click on here and the playing area will automatically zoom to your current location. The white bar to the right is the amount of energy you've got left.
4 Followers This bit lets you know how many followers you have in each category. We've got 34 warriors, which is like having 34 obedient Grant Mitchells at our disposal.
5 Mana bar Shows you how your magical energy is currently charging up. Ours is, er, empty right now. Something must be up.
6 Firestorm spell A delightful spell which causes fireballs to rain down on the enemy's heads.
7 Raise Land spell Enables you to build bridges across the sea.
8 Lightning spell Fries more or less anything.
9 Hypnotise spell Temporarily makes enemy warriors fight on your behalf.
10 Hornets spell Sends a swarm of angry wasps in to cause chaos among your opponent's troops.
11 Blast spell Weedy little blast for picking off individual troublemakers. This has just run out.
12 Convert spell Turns wildmen into loyal believers.

◐ WALKTHROUGH CONTINUED

8 Told you. I've fired a 'blast' spell at his arse. You can just about make him out flying through the air with his fundament aflame. Bwahahaha.

9 Here's my reward for that minor act of brutality – the chance to enter a rival Vault of Knowledge, which should contain the plans for a new kind of building.

10 Sure enough, it did. And here's the proof – my first warrior training camp. Common-or-garden braves can be sent here and transformed into my own private army.

11 A little bit later and I've acquired another spell (lightning) and some more warriors. And... u-oh – I've just spotted another island, with an enemy encampment squatting on it.

least one other religious movement other than your own. And as we all know, opposing religious factions have a tendency to, well, destroy one another. In the early stages, it's you versus a single other tribe; as you progress further you'll be pitted against up to three others. However many you're fighting, you're going to need some high-faluting magical tricks if you're going to make any real headway.

These spells start out as fairly weedy spangly effects (such as the ability to build yourself a wickle bridge of soil across inconvenient stretches of water), and eventually graduate to full-on apoc-a-licious cataclysms (such as impromptu volcanic eruptions or flaming meteoric downpours). Gaining new entries into your mystical arsenal is a slow but steady process, and a great incentive to carry on playing, even when things get mighty tough – which starts happening some time around level five.

Which brings us neatly on to level design, and sensible use of the learning curve. It's often been a failing of Bullfrog games – they

Although obviously the basic motives remain the same, every level seems to pose a new threat, demand fresh tactics and provide a plethora of exciting extra spells and features. Of course, you'd expect this of any game, but with *Populous* it feels… well, it just feels *right*, that's all. You want to keep on hammering away until you've finished it. And when you've done that, you can take on your friends – the game includes loads of carefully thought-out multiplayer options, enabling you and three fellow omnipotent deity wannabes to go head to head to head to head in an orgy of spell-casting, mountain-shaking violence.

I WANNA REACH OUT AND GRAB YA

On to the building blocks: sound and graphics. The visuals really are quite astonishing. The action all takes place on a 'proper' globe: that is, the interface bungs you an entire three-dimensional planet to play with. You can spin the thing around, zoom in and out, and rotate the viewpoint to whichever angle serves you best.

Oooh, boats. Can I have a go?

Fire warriors. They're like ordinary warriors, except they're all 'fiery'.

is a direct lift from *Dungeon Keeper* (PCZ #53, 96%), and elements of the landscape and structure design are strongly reminiscent of *Magic Carpet*.

Sonically it's not bad, although the pan-pipey New Age music grates a little. Mind you, at least it's in keeping with the theme – and let's face it, what else could they have used? B*witched? R Kelly? Chas and Dave? Actually, that last one isn't a bad idea – future games developers make a mental note.

SUMMARY JUNCTION

And so we come to the big question: should you buy it? Short answer: yes. Long answer: *Populous: The Beginning* may be 'just another real-time strategy game' in some respects, but it also happens to have the best interface, the best engine, the most finely-balanced gameplay, and the most original and distinctive underlying concept.

And another thing: this is an important game for Bullfrog. When co-founder Peter Molyneux left to form Lionhead, many doubted whether the company he left behind would be able to maintain the high standards it had achieved under his command. On this showing, they're capable of surpassing them. PCZ

PCZVERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** Improves on the established *Populous* titles • Fantastic graphics, brilliant engine • Excellently balanced levels • Cool multiplayer options

⬇ **DOWNERS** Changes may irritate *Populous* purists • At the end of the day, it *is* another real-time strategy game • Navigating around a 3D globe can be disorientating

92 Praise be!

> **Every level seems to pose a new threat, demand fresh tactics, and provide a plethora of exciting extra features**

start out with tons of features, incredible graphics and innovative gameplay, but tend to play their hands too early. *Magic Carpet* (PCZ #21, 96%), *Theme Park* (PCZ #17, 93%), *Syndicate* (PCZ #17, 92%) – all superb games, but ones which tended to become very 'samey' very quickly. In recent years they've been improving the balance – *Theme Hospital* (PCZ #49, 91%), for instance, retains your interest for far longer than *Theme Park*. But with *Populous: The Beginning* they've excelled themselves.

It's so dang neat it's one of those games that makes passers-by stop in their tracks and start gawping. It even runs smoothly without an accelerator – well, it does if you've got a fairly hefty system, anyway.

A special tip of the hat has to go to the use of colour in the game. It really is superb. Clearly Bullfrog's 'Mister Pallette' is a talented individual. There are elements from previous Bullfrog titles at work in the game: the interface which enables you to select different types of follower

NOW THAT'S MAGIC!

When it comes to flash 'tricks', the shamen's *it*

Today's magicians are *rubbish*. Paul Daniels? He may be able to saw Debbie McGee in half, but he hasn't managed to put his disjointed career back together again, has he? David Copperfield? If he's such a shit-hot sorceror, why can't he make all those pernicious rumours regarding the nature of his marriage to Claudia Schiffer simply disappear in a puff of smoke? Eh?

In case you need further proof that the mystic men of the Nineties are mere tuppeny tricksters compared to the *Populous* shaman, check out some of these in-game spells. Rope tricks? Table-top card magic? Disappearing coins? Piss off. This is *hard-core*.

Lightning spell.

Tornado spell.

Volcano spell.

END

12 Another land bridge spell should enable me and my hastily assembled troops to cross the ocean and steam into the enemy HQ.

13 Although I needn't have bothered with the warriors, as it turns out. I can sort out their poxy buildings from here, with my new lightning spell.

14 Lurking at the back of the island – it's *their* shaman. Time to do away with that particular rival – with a lightning spell again.

15 With the rival shaman dead, and all her followers butchered, I am crowned the victor. My followers dance around in jubilation. But hey. This is only level one, and is therefore a piece of piss.

SiN

★ £39.99 • Activision • Out November

It's a sin that this game has taken so long to develop. *Steve Hill* **decides whether it was worth the wait**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major 3D cards **WE SAY** It really does need a 3D card

PC ZONE CLASSIC

ALSO CONSIDER

QUAKE II (Activision, £44.99)
You really should all know about this one by now. Still the most intense multiplayer action available.
PCZ #59, 97%

UNREAL (GT Interactive, £39.99)
Pretty colours and flashing lights in your head arguably disguise a not particularly exciting game.
PCZ #65, 93%

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD (MicroProse, £39.99) The *Unreal* engine allied with the *Star Trek* universe makes for an extremely sweaty game. No Ginsters required.
PCZ #68, 94%

JEDI KNIGHT (Virgin, £19.99) Not quite vintage but certainly getting on, this is still the real deal as far as *Star Wars* games are concerned.
PCZ #62, 95%

PHOTOGRAPHY Simon Clay **MODEL** Vanessa Upton
AGENCY Samantha Bond **STYLIST** Sally Cairns

⟳ *SiN*'s Elexis Sinclaire brought to life. There's something about a girl in tight-fitting red leather and holding an enormous weapon, don't you think?

You think you're pretty cool. You think you know what's going on. In particular, you think you're clued up regarding films, and in fact constantly make references to them in order to make yourself look hard. Well check this out, film boy. Imagine if John Woo directed the next James Bond film, and then somehow got it confused with *The Island Of Dr Moreau*. And then, of course, he decided to make it into a game rather than a film. It'll never happen, but that convoluted scenario is, in a rather distorted nutshell, the *SiN* experience. Of sorts.

Naturally, you will by now have played the demo. If you haven't, you're an idiot; we gave you one on our issue #68 cover CD, and it's also freely available from the Internet. Folly withstanding, you've played the initial bank level to its conclusion, you're quietly impressed, and now you're hankering to know what happens next. Clearly, lots does, the unlikely story panning out into a macabre tale spanning numerous elaborate locations, and encompassing extreme violence, with the obligatory claret all over the shop and a body count in the hundreds.

SiN uses the *Quake II* engine. And while popular opinion would appear to be in favour of *Unreal*'s

aesthetic circus, it's still capable of throwing about some impressive graphical trickery. *SiN* isn't really about showing off pretty colours though, its strength lies in a permanently evolving storyline wrapped around strong characters, and some particularly impressive levels. Developers Ritual Entertainment know more than a little about level design, having previously knocked out the excellent *Quake* add-on pack *Scourge Of Armagon* (*PCZ #49*, 90%). With the exception of the charismatic and sage-like Richard 'Levelord' Gray, Ritual are a tight young unit, most of whom live, shit and breathe level design, regularly putting in 18-hour days and largely keeping themselves to themselves. What they lack in social skills though, they make up for in ingenuity and imagination, and thankfully their *SiN* levels are a vast improvement on their personal hygiene levels.

SiN is a natural progression of the incestuous Dallas development scene initially spawned by 3D Realms' *Wolfenstein 3D*, which in turn begat *Doom*, *Duke*, *Quake* and so on. Although clearly drawing on numerous influences, the levels in *SiN* often come across as a latter-day mutant hybrid of *Doom* and *Duke*. That's hardly surprising, as these are the games on which the majority of *SiN*'s level designers earned their wings.

ACTION, MAN

Spanning six episodes, *SiN* incorporates some 35 levels, although the game is far ➡

A FAREWELL TO ARMS

At some point in the game it becomes apparent that Elexis Sinclaire is creating hideous biomechanical atrocities. She does have the decency to recycle the parts though. Here's where you discover her plan...

1 Oi, oi, what's going on here, then?

2 Hmm, a dead biomechanical freak appears to be on the verge of dismemberment.

3 Oh dear, there goes his right arm...

4 ...and his left.
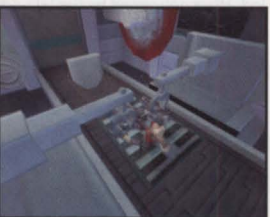
5 And now they're being taken away for recycling. You don't see that every day.

GIRLS

This buxom girl looks like she's up to no good. Which is okay by me if I can join in.

GUNS

This handsome pair probably aren't seeking directions to the local church.

ULTRAVIOLENCE

How many pints of blood in the average body? Not much after you blast him in the back.

SHOOTERS WITH SHOOTERS

Some of the everyday people you might meet while living in *SiN*

ELEXIS SINCLAIRE
AGE 31
OCCUPATION Bio-geneticist, chemist, and head of SinTEK Industries.
DISTINGUISHING MARKS Tattoo on right buttock, tattoo around ankle, and naval ring.
No relation to boffin Clive – the egghead responsible for the ZX Spectrum and the C5 buggy – Elexis is the arch enemy behind the story of *SiN*. Born in the sumptuous suburb of Sal Marinos in the city of Freeport, at the age of two her mother made off and left her in the charge of her father, Dr Thrall Sinclaire.

A bright child, by the age of five she had successfully cloned a frog, albeit with the eyes of a human. Following a twisted childhood, she rapidly earned degrees in both chemistry and biology, quickly followed by Masters in each, and a Ph.D. in biochemistry and genetic engineering.

She then joined her father at SinTEK Industries, and they quickly rose to the forefront of the medical and scientific community. Their latest breakthrough, Vanity, astonished the world with its apparent ability to stop and almost reverse the aging process. With success assured, Thrall quietly retired from prominence, leaving SinTEK's care in the hands of his capable daughter. Big mistake.

JOHN R. BLADE
AGE 30
OCCUPATION Security force Commander, weapons specialist, and head of HARDCORPS.
DISTINGUISHING MARKS 'HARDCORPS' tattoo on right arm.
Born in the bustling city of Freeport on June 28, 2007, John was a normal child. His father was a police officer for the Freeport City Police Department, and his mother a sector supervisor for the LegionTEK Corporation's chemical research facility. Everything was going fine until the death of his mother in a mysterious fire at the chemical plant. John slowly started to drift away from his father over the coming years, and wandered the streets looking for excitement and adventure, finally hooking up with a group called the Young Masters, whose only purpose in life was self-gratification through the pain of others.

Following six months in a youth rehabilitation facility, John finally decided to get out of gangs and get on with his life. His so-called friends beat him senseless, tied him up and left him locked up in the dark for two days without food or water, finally dragging him along for one last job, in which John's father was fatally wounded. Following years of training in martial arts, weapons and military tactics, John joined the busies.

JC
AGE 21
OCCUPATION Security forces technical specialist, small arms specialist, and head of HARDCORPS Information Services Division.
DISTINGUISHING MARKS Glasses, small scar under left ear, star-shaped birthmark on right forearm.
A master hacker of everything digital, at the age of eight JC began to explore the wonderful and frightening world of the Internet, teaching himself the intricate workings of the machines. He learned so quickly that at the age of ten he hacked into his first supercomputer and crashed the entire system. This incident lead to a full-scale investigation that landed JC in serious bother, spending six months in a facility for troubled youths. While inside, he vowed never to get caught again.

His life took a turn for the worse on his twelfth birthday when his parents' plane crashed into the ocean on a business trip. JC turned to his best friend, his computer, and lost himself in its intricate workings. Some close friends of the family took him in, and he continued with his hobby, becoming an expert in all manner of computer systems. After dabbling with crime, he was caught breaking into the HARDCORPS server, whereby John Blade made him a unique offer: join the busies or get a slap. JC chose the former.

Two scientists getting jiggy with it: D...Desirable, I...Incredible, S...Super-sexy, C...Can't be bad now, O...Ohhh!

A cut-scene with the voluptuous Ms Sinclaire, who doesn't appear to have dressed for the occasion.

Explosive action is never more than a trigger finger away.

The sniper rifle's zoom facility is ideal for picking off long-range targets.

It's going to take more than a pair of driving gloves to get past this lot.

from linear, and indeed entire levels can be missed out depending on the your actions. Loosely tagged as Action-Based Outcomes, what this means is that a certain event in one level has a knock-on effect in a later level, which can be either advantageous or detrimental. For instance, shooting out a water pipe on one level will flood certain areas in a further level, including an elevator shaft, thus enabling you to swim down to a secret treats room for some more weapons. Neat. Similarly, natural disasters such as a lava flow can alter the entire geometry of the map. Most levels can be played in at least two ways, and the very first demo level is one such example: shooting out the turrets enables you to make an advantageous rooftop entrance, whereas if the chopper takes too much damage it is forced to land, necessitating a less effective front door assault. This constant branching certainly adds replay value. And although it's hardly a completely different game every time you play it, the nuances certainly encourage you to come back for more.

The sheer variety of levels is particularly impressive, ranging from vast outdoor arenas to claustrophobic underground affairs. All the locations have some meaning as regards the plot, advancements in which are relayed via cut-scenes, *SiN* conforming to the current trend of using the game engine to relate the tale. This works effectively, and the plot is truly elaborate, encompassing a number of genuinely nasty villains, the very first of whom appears robbing the bank in the first episode. Mancini is his name, and you spend the next three levels chasing him, during which time the arch villain Elexis Sinclaire is seen injecting him with a so-called Mutagen, which then turns him into a Manuman – essentially a nastier (and less green) version of the Incredible Hulk.

This provides the first of several bosses, which pop up intermittently throughout the game and not necessarily at the end of an episode. The levels flow seamlessly into each other, and the game is very much in the mould of an action-adventure film. This is further enhanced by the dynamic music, which kicks in when the action picks up. It's an effective ploy, although some of the tunes may be a little too 'rawk' for some tastes – they were, after all, recorded in Seattle by a guy called Zak.

CHAT
As well as the music, there is also constant chat between the main character, Blade, and his rarely

LOCK, STOCK & BARREL

A punch in the face can be an effective ploy, but *SiN* also features a decent spread of firearms

MAGNUM
According to Dirty Harry, it can blow your head clean off. Not in this game. But it can be fitted with a silencer.

SHOTGUN
A good old-fashioned shooter, this has a satisfying kick to it. A head shot can be fatal, and produces gibs galore.

ASSAULT RIFLE
Effectively a powerful machine-gun, this is a relentless weapon with a real *Scarface* feel. Also supports a silencer.

HIGH-VELOCITY CHAINGUN
Carve an opponent to ribbons in seconds. Doubles as a grenade launcher.

SPEARGUN
Only appears in the underwater level, but is nevertheless effective when you're sunk up to the nuts in the drink.

ROCKET LAUNCHER
Have a guess. Not quite as devastating as its *Quake II* counterpart, but quicker reloading makes up for it.

SPIDER MINE
A cunning device in certain scenarios, scuttling like a spider before attaching to its target. Detonated remotely.

PULSE RIFLE
Fires a particularly nasty energy bolt, which if it doesn't kill you outright will at least singe your eyebrows.

SNIPER RIFLE
This elegant piece enables you to zoom in on your target before separating his head from his shoulders.

If left alone, this cack-handed freak will actually scratch his arse. Now *that's* attention to detail.

An unwitting technician becomes familiar with the business end of an assault rifle. Nice use of purple lighting.

66 *SiN*'s strength lies in a permanently evolving storyline wrapped around strong characters, and impressive levels 99

UNDER THE TABLE

SiN features a deathmatch with a difference

Long-time readers of *ZONE* will immediately recognise the magazine in the accompanying picture, although a closer examination reveals that it is actually a copy of our sister magazine, *PC ZONE* Benelux. It forms part of the scenery of a particularly surreal DeathMatch level set in a small but ornately decorated study. Not much room to get about, you might think, until you realise that the characters are approximately the size of small rodents. Reminiscent of *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, you can scurry behind the skirting boards, hide under the coffee table, climb up pencils and cotton reels, and even bounce up and down on the sofa. Eminently playable, it is the brainchild of Richard 'Levelord' Gray, a former navy man who also enjoys the more recreational aspects of life. Levelord nurtures ideas from all avenues, and it is tempting to assumme that he was inspired to create this one while quite literally under the coffee table himself. The truth is far simpler though: the inspiration actually came from an episode of *The Simpsons*, a series which is on heavy rotation in the Ritual office. Devotees will be aware that the intro changes from episode to episode, and apparently there is one where the titular family run into their living room as per usual, the twist being that they are the size of small rodents.

And as for the gratuitous magazine placement, Levelord is simply a fan, particularly of the section entitled The F***ing Manual (we kid you not). Purely coincidentally, *PC ZONE* Benelux is based in Amsterdam, where it is apparently legal to 'get turned on' by 'smoking 'erb'.

PC ZONE: going where no other games magazine has gone before.

You were going to use *which* magazine in the game instead? Eat that, slimeball.

seen sidekick JC, the latter providing information on each mission, ensuring that the objectives are always made clear. This can range from disarming nuclear warheads, to the slightly less breathtaking task of installing a remote modem, which may be pushing the computer motif a little too far. Nevertheless, the techno-gadgetry all adds to the pseudo James Bond feel, and further geekery is added by hacking into computer consoles to close down systems and so forth.

There are also some fairly straighforward logistical puzzles, as well as the occasional manual dexterity tests such as leaping from ledge to ledge in a *Mario* style. There is a pure stealth level that involves crawling around on your belly to avoid detection, but in the main *SiN* is about shooting people in the forehead. Head shots cause roughly eight times the damage of body shots, and this soon becomes evident, with your shooting skills rapidly being honed to perfection. The shooting scenes can be particularly frantic,

with numerous characters on screen at once and a healthy dose of bedlam ensuing.

The lead character shows plenty of gung-ho additude, whooping like a child and barking out lines such as "I'm gonna make you my bitch". Furthermore, the plot occasionally necessitates the bludgeoning of defenceless women, an act that, bizarrely, sometimes leaves their breasts exposed. Not that games are the sole preserve of angry mysoginists, it's a crucial part of plot development.

But if you can shamelessly overlook such unpleasantness. *SiN* is ultimately a triumphant game. The plot is genuinely absorbing and the action is largley incessant. Numerous cunning touches are added, such as utilising several parts of the scenery to make things easier. An array of vehicles are also at your disposal, and indeed one level has you permanently astride a buggy while wielding your weapon. There's always something going on, and the ever twisting plot constanly encourages you to

make further progress. And, as previously mentioned, you do get to shoot people in the head. ◼

PCZ VERDICT

⬆ UPPERS Involving storyline • Strong characters • Elaborate levels

⬇ DOWNERS Gratuitous misogyny • A bit fiddly in places

91
It would be a sin to overlook it

MAGIC AND MAYHEM

⭐ £34.99 • Virgin Interactive • Out now

It's a real-time strategy game, but not as we know it, captain. *Chris Anderson* **takes a look at something genuinely different**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Four-player multiplay over a network **WE SAY** P200 or better and 32Mb RAM required for hi-res

PC ZONE CLASSIC

What springs to mind when you hear the term 'real-time strategy game'? You probably conjure up a mental image of large groups of little men and little vehicles wandering around blowing the shit out of each other in yet another *C&C* clone (or maybe even *Red Alert* itself) without stopping to think about it.

Well, let's just stop and think about what the term really means. The strategy side of things is pretty self-explanatory in that it clearly implies the need

ALSO CONSIDER

WARCRAFT 2 (Cendant, £34.99)
Lots of spells, lots of wizards and plenty of action. But it doesn't have anything like the depth witnessed in *Magic And Mayhem*, not at all.
PCZ #36, 82%

HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC 2 (Ubi Soft, £39.99) Yes, we know it's turn-based, but some people prefer that. If you're one of them, this is similar to *M&M* in subject matter and a bloody good game to boot.
NOT REVIEWED

CHAOS (free) This is the Spectrum game that inspired *Magic And Mayhem* (see panel page 96) and you can get an emulator that runs it so hey, it's free. *NOT REVIEWED*

> ❝**What we have here is a mixture of real-time combat with very strong strategy elements that almost represents a category all of its own**❞

direct opposite of a 'turn-based' strategy game, in which you can quite happily sit in front of the screen for hours without doing anything at all, safe in the knowledge that your digital armies will not be attacked until you end your turn.

So where does *Magic And Mayhem* fit into all of this? Well, it doesn't, despite the fact that it's indisputably a real-time strategy game. And that's one of the best things about it. What we have here is a mixture of real-time combat with very strong strategy elements that almost represents a category all of its own.

The premise behind the game is actually quite simple. There are three large maps to play through, each divided into separate realms. Your role as an apprentice wizard is to visit each of the realms and vanquish any rival wizards found therein. Conquering one realm gives you access to another, until

to think about what you're doing and consider various tactical options before committing yourself to an attack. 'Real-time' implies that the action unfolds in front of your eyes, and bad things will happen to you if you simply sit staring at the screen doing nothing. This is of course the

you eventually enter the final realm, conquer the last remaining wizard and win the game.

No big deal in theory, but of course in practice it's not quite that straightforward. To start with, after the first two levels are completed (they serve as tutorials and are there to introduce you to

the game), you find yourself with some serious decisions to make before continuing on to the next level – like what to take with you, for example.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

Magic And Mayhem is like no other real-time strategy game in that the decisions you make before each level determine to a large degree how successful you will be. You have at your disposal a number of magic ingredients which can be mixed and matched on Chaos, Neutral and Law talismans to make different spells. Law talismans tend to make healing and protective spells; Chaos talismans, as you would expect, make attacking spells and spells that are

generally designed to cause all sorts of bother for rival wizards; Neutral spells are obviously a compromise between the two.

Many of the missions revolve around locating a magic ingredient which you can then use to make new spells to take with you on the following levels. This is a great incentive to get to the later levels in the game, and indeed one of the best things about *M&M* is the excitement of discovering new spells.

The range is also very impressive. Apart from spells that conjure up all manner of wicked creatures, there are the more traditional lightning and fireball spells which, in their later incarnations, aspire to meteor and chain lightning spells which

Trolls are the toughest enemies on the earlier levels. They're also the ugliest.

WIZARD AT WORK

The Pormanteau is your portable spell creator. Your spell ingredients are at the top of the screen, your talismans at the bottom. Each ingredient can make any one of three different spells, depending on which talisman you put it into. Simply drag the desired ingredient on to one of the talismans and you create a new spell. Placing the cursor over the talisman tells you exactly what the spell in question does.

The Portmanteau, your portable spellbook.

⭐ WALKTHROUGH

TRAPPED

Many of the missions have puzzles that you need to solve. Here's a walkthrough of one of the earlier missions. They get more difficult the further you get into the game.

1 You're stuck in a room with no obvious way out. But hang on, that switch on the left looks a bit suspicious.

Meteor spells not only look fab, they're also great for taking out groups of enemy monsters.

3/15

Raise Dead

The Grimoire is an online encyclopedia with info on all the realms, spells and creatures in the game.

Cornelius

Use experience points to increase your mana, health and the number of creatures you can control at once.

This level is set in a maze inside a dungeon. And it's bloody difficult.
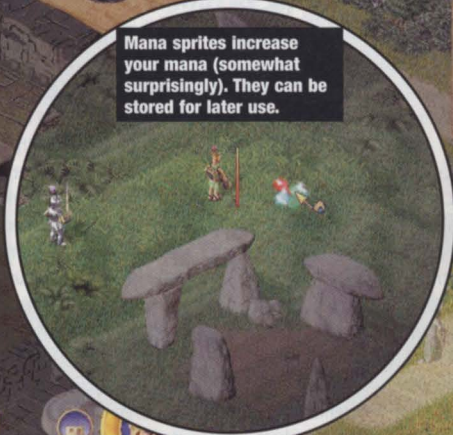
Mana sprites increase your mana (somewhat surprisingly). They can be stored for later use.

Medea

Until you interfered wizard the arcane realms were entering a wonderful new era.

A rival wizard voices her concern at your appearance on the scene.

END

2 Cast a monster outside the room and send him over to investigate the switch located on the far-left side of the room.

3 The monster stands on the switch and the room opens up. Now how are you going to open that door to the outside?

4 It's no good, the damn thing won't open. May as well cast a zombie outside and send him off to look around.
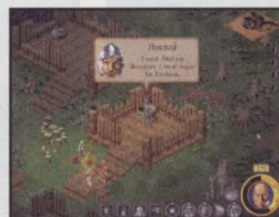
5 The zombie comes across Sir Percival locked in a room. He sets him free. Percival is very, very happy.

6 So happy, in fact, that he releases you from your prison. Now you can deal with the wizard hanging around outside.

Four wraiths prepare to take on a pack of enemy bloodhounds.

THE CHAOS TRILOGY

It's retro time. Come on down, *Richie Shoemaker*

In 1984 Julian Gollop wrote *Chaos*, a turn-based strategy game for up to eight players. Funnily enough the aim was to destroy the other players' wizard by summoning unearthly creatures and throwing fireballs. It was a hit on the Spectrum and spawned a sequel, *Lords Of Chaos*, on the Atari ST. It would be hard to confuse *M&M* with its predecessors but beneath those 16-bit graphics lie a game that's over 14 years old. How many other developers could pull off the same game, 14 years later, and still make it original? None, exactly. Ha.

simply have to be witnessed to be believed. The decision-making process doesn't stop there either. At the end of every level you are awarded experience points (the number depends on how much of the level you've completed) which you can use to increase the amount of mana you bring into battle, or increase your health, or even buy talismans that enable you to carry more spells. Of course, none of this matters if at the end of it all you are transported into yet another fantasy *C&C* clone. Thankfully, *Magic And Mayhem* has all kinds of tricks and treats in store for would-be wizards.

MISSION IN ACTION

At the beginning of most of the levels, you find yourself searching for places of power. Once found, these provide you with a constant flow of mana which, in time-honoured tradition, provides the energy for your spells. It's usually pretty easy to find them, but holding on to them is a lot more difficult, as enemy wizards are also out to seize places of power

for their own nefarious ends. I've lost count of the times I've secured two or three places of power, only to return and discover that some git of a wizard has stolen them. It therefore makes sense to leave a few well-armed, kick-ass monsters guarding your places of power before you go sight-seeing around the level.

Mission objectives are many and varied. Some involve locating valuable artefacts, many of which you can use yourself later. Others amount to no more than simply wiping out enemy wizards, although this can prove a difficult enough task on its own in the later levels. The hardest missions are those which involve protecting other characters. Characters like your uncle Lucan, for example, who, incidentally, is the tosser who got you into all this trouble in the first place. At the beginning of the game, Lucan leaves a message for you to come to his house. He then buggers off around all the realms, leaving you to chase him from place to place. Which brings me to the only problem with the game...

JESUS WEPT

If there *is* a problem with *Magic And Mayhem*, it's these 'help and protect' missions. Leave Lucan on his own surrounded by lots of monsters for his protection, and you'll often return to discover the old arse-bandit's sloped off for a picnic right in the middle of enemy territory. "Help me, I'm growing weak," he'll yelp, while

> ❝ *Magic And Mayhem* is a triumph. It comes along to remind us that nothing is more important than solid gameplay ❞

being attacked by the monsters who interrupted his foray. "Good, you're a complete pain in the arse," you'll often reply, which may give you a great deal of satisfaction, but if Lucan dies you lose the mission and have to start over from the beginning. This means you've got no choice but to follow the old tosspot all over the place to make sure nothing happens to him. Other comedy events include Lucan suddenly realising he's hardly got any health left, and then deciding that

this would probably be a good time to go in search of a big fight. No prizes for guessing what happens next.

The reason all this stuff is such a problem is that you haven't got control of other characters in the game. If you could control Lucan, you could simply send him off somewhere safe and forget about him until

the end of the level. But don't let this put you off, because this really is a minor niggle in what is generally an absolutely splendid gaming experience. Even the presentation is superb (which is something of a surprise considering that *M&M* developers Mythos are the people who originally created *X-COM*, a game not often noted for its incredible graphics, though the gameplay is superb), and the intriguing storyline will keep you guessing to the end. The music in *M&M* is

excellent too, with a very strong Celtic feel which suits the game perfectly. And you can play it on your normal CD player. I know this to be true, because I'm listening to it now as I type up this review (just to get me into exactly the right frame of mind, you understand).

Magic And Mayhem is, then, a triumph for Mythos. Amid a frightening deluge of real-time strategy games, it comes along to remind us that nothing – *nothing* – is more important than solid, addictive gameplay. And that, after all, is what it's all about. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

↑ **UPPERS** It's a real-time strategy game like no other • It's easy to play and difficult to master • It has incredible depth

↓ **DOWNERS** Keeping allies out of trouble can be difficult at times

92 Industry ponders original game shock
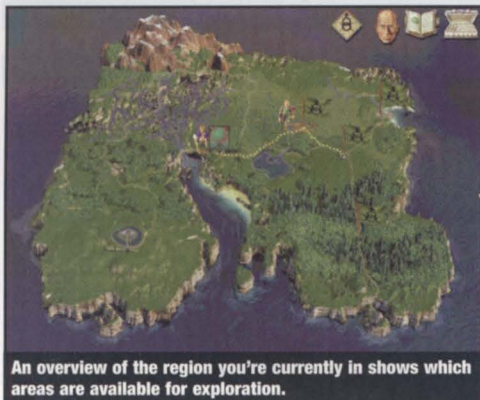
An overview of the region you're currently in shows which areas are available for exploration.

Choose your skill level before entering the fray. Higher difficulty levels give you more points.

MULTIPLAYER MADNESS

Much comedy ensued when we tried multiplayer *M&M* in the *ZONE* office, with three of us fighting it out for the elusive places of power. Suffice to say it's one of the best multiplayer games we've played, but you'll need decent machines (P200 or better for hi-res) to get the best out of it.

Low on health? Pick up the food tokens scattered around.
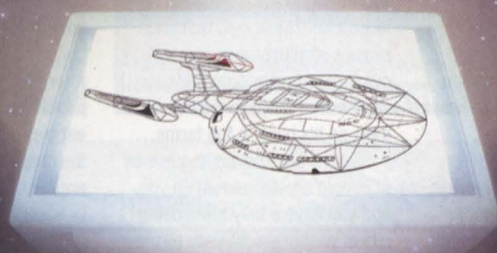
CAESAR III

★ £34.99 • Sierra • Out October

What have the Romans ever done for us? Inspired a chronically addictive god sim, for starters. *Steve Hill* **thought he could handle it**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM **Processor** P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx
WE SAY You can probably get away with a P133

PC ZONE CLASSIC

There's a scene in Monty Python's *The Life Of Brian* where members of the indigenous populace are railing against their Roman oppressors. Their contribution to society is examined in depth, and eventually it transpires that the supposedly malevolent Romans have provided the plebs with roads, aqueducts, irrigation, education, housing, sanitation, security, fire prevention, the walls, and of course peace.

So what? So this. *Caesar III* features all the above and more in a frighteningly detailed simulation of life in Roman times. Starting from scratch, with little more than shrubbery for company, the idea is to construct a majestic Roman city and ensure a harmonious existence for its citizens. To the layman, this could potentially sound like the dullest thing on earth. But it isn't, it's great. It's immensely addictive, proves ruinous to your body clock, and can steal entire days of your life.

There are essentially two ways to play, depending on your ambitions as a Roman Emperor. A career path is offered where you start out in charge of some godforsaken one-horse town and

ALSO CONSIDER

AGE OF EMPIRES (Microsoft, £29.99) Incredibly in-depth civilisation 'em up. *PCZ* **#54, 94%**

SIMCITY 2000 (Maxis, £19.99) The big daddy of city simulations. *PCZ* **#13, 92%**

SETTLERS II (Blue Byte, £9.99) Unless you're poor, don't bother, because *Settlers III* is out soon. *PCZ* **#69, 85%**

KNIGHTS AND MERCHANTS (Interactive Magic, £39.99) A more grass roots simulation. Check out the review on page 118.

progress through larger urban sprawls until you eventually covet the position of Caesar himself. Alternatively, you can simply build a city and attempt to remain there for the rest of your natural life – something that isn't beyond the realms of possibility.

MAKE A BUILD

So what makes it so addictive? It all starts harmlessly enough: you need some people, so you clear some land for them to build homes on. They need feeding, so

you knock up a couple of farms. Wheat needs to be stored, so you build some granaries. Food needs distributing, so you install some markets. Buildings can collapse, so you bring in engineers. Houses need water, so you build wells. Wells are shit, so you build fountains. People get sick, so you build hospitals. People need to bother gods, so you build temples. None of this comes cheap, so you set up trade routes. You need something to sell, so you set up industries. These new buildings require employees, so you sort out some more accommodation. The new employees require more food, so it's back to the farms…

Before you know it, thousands of people are dependent on you and you have a fully functioning city at your disposal, with all the

> **"Before you know it you're living in a vague approximation of Chester, albeit with fewer pubs and a better football team"**

problems that this entails. The citizens can clearly be seen going about their business, and indeed clicking on them reveals their state of mind and their current needs, their thoughts delivered in a comedy voice.

Every building created has a knock-on effect, and eventually disparate areas of town become apparent. For instance, it's possible to set up a small fishing community in a distant corner of the map, proving largely self-sufficient while constantly

supplying the city with their wares. Other areas become more salubrious, with people living in villas, attending the theatre and dangling grapes into their gobs at the local baths.

The city takes on a life of its own, and distinct class statuses become evident, with naive notions of social responsibility soon eschewed in favour of harsh financial realism. Why waste money on lowly farm hands when you can furnish your more upmarket citizens with the bourgeois trinkets they yearn for? After all, those in the big houses pay the most tax. Let the proles eat pies and live in shacks, while the chattering classes lounge around discussing the merits of balsamic vinegar and watching lions tearing men apart in the name of sport. This vaguely fascist policy can work in the short term, although the denizens of more run-down areas may start rioting, in which case you can either tend to their needs or simply employ some heavies to give them a slap.

TIN SOLDIER

Once your city is in full effect, it may be at the mercy of barbarians who drop by for the odd urn of wine, not to mention wanton destruction on a mammoth scale. To this end, defences are required and troops must be trained. The combat in *Caesar III* is purely defensive and, in contrast to its predecessor, the skirmishing actually takes place within the confines of the city. The

marauders can be a tenacious bunch, more than capable of wiping out entire armies, in which event the local populace has to steam in, attacking the invaders with sharp sticks. The damage to the city is often tangible, and it can take years to absorb the effects of a skirmish. In order to keep the bastards out, vast city walls can be constructed, and before you know it you're living in a vague approximation of Chester, albeit with fewer pubs and a better football team.

Ultimately, you effectively take on the role of a troubleshooter, constantly tending to the needs of various areas of the city. *Caesar III* is a latter-day incarnation of the old cabaret trick of spinning plates on sticks, and there's never a moment's rest. Your mind is constantly racing, to the exclusion of all else. Natural save points fail to present themselves, and hours merge into days. Food remains uneaten, cups of tea go cold, and cigarette ash tumbles to the floor under its own weight. Unless you are in prison, unemployed or a student, be warned: *Caesar III* will screw you up. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** Incredibly detailed • Utterly absorbing
⬇ **DOWNERS** Could ruin your life

92 More addictive than Smarties

★ WALKTHROUGH | END

CITY SLICKERS

Rome wasn't built in a day. But this lot was

You too can start off with nothing and become a rich, fleecing-bastard property owner and industrial magnate.

1 The start of a mission, with only a simple path to build on.

2 Within three years, progress has been made, with a thriving pottery industry in place. People still live like pigs though.

3 With religious facilities and education, people are now almost civilised. And it only took eight years (not real years).

As far as entertainment goes, it doesn't get much better than a hippodrome, which plays host to chariot races. Like what they had in *Ben Hur*.

Quarries supply marble, which can be traded from this warehouse. The screen can be rotated in 90-degree increments for a better look.

The map of the Empire shows available trade routes, as well as the position of incoming enemies. Which is nice.

Rudimentary shacks have blossomed into villas thanks to clean water, educational facilities, gardens and plazas. The posh twats.

Natural disasters add to the mix. Here an earthquake is in full effect.

If you spunk all your money, Caesar himself will lend you a few Denarii.

The people of this isolated farming community keep themselves to themselves. And we know what that means.

DIARY OF AN ADDICT

A day in the life of *Caesar III*

11.45am Novelty doorbell rings twice. Eventually emerge from crypt to sign for package. Tear it open and inspect *Caesar III* discs with trepidation. Resume catatonic state.

1pm Watch seemingly interminable *Football Focus* while fashioning rudimentary breakfast.

3pm Check out Division Three scores on Ceefax. Start installing *Caesar III* discs. Watch vaguely dramatic and disturbingly violent pseudo-historical intro. Piss through trainer missions.

4.08pm Perform extravagant celebrations as Ceefax relays news of Chester City scoring. Municipality coming on nicely.

4.39pm Feign indifference at late Carlisle equaliser. Watch final scores in vague despair. Some skirmishing on the outskirts of the city.

5.05pm *Brookside* omnibus. Vaguely perturbed at similarities between Max Farnham's bouffant and own recent 'trim'. Promoted by the Emperor.

7pm Quick break for chips, gravy and mushy peas (you can't buy class). Idiot's lantern spews forth inane Saturday night viewing to little effect. Back to the game.

10.30pm *Match Of The Day* briefly vies for my attention. Shrewd economic strategy beginning to reap financial reward.

11.54pm Promoted again. Right hand is now locked in claw-like position.

1.36am Vision becoming affected. Having to play with one eye at a time.

2.09am Catch the arse end of Commonwealth Games marathon. They don't know the meaning of the word.

2.23am Eat half an apple.

4.40am *Prisoner Cell Block H* barely registers.

5.30am Become aware of natural source of light. Realise squalor of situation. Attempt to save game. Fail. Stagger past half-full mugs and overflowing ashtray and retire to crypt.

5.50am Feelings of low self-worth and confusion merge into fitful dreams. I am King of Rome and I will kill again…

THE FIFTH ELEMENT

⭐ £34.99 • Kalisto • Out now

The review of the game of the film. *Paul Rose* sees it, plays it, writes it

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** DirectX 5.0
WE SAY You could probably get away with a P133. With a bit more RAM

No. I. Don't. Want. Any. Bloody. Towels. Damn room service.

Combat is all too common in The Future™. Best stay in The Past®.

"The cut-scenes which pepper the gameplay feature several scenes not found in the movie"

Goodness gracious, great balls of blue phosphorous powder.

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

If we were all the same, the world would be a dull old place. We'd all support the same football teams, like the same music, laugh at the same jokes. There'd be no wars, no conflict, for we'd all agree on everything, including the same films. If there was any justice in this 'imperfectly perfect' world, no one would doubt that Luc Besson's sci-fi epic *The Fifth Element* was a work of genius – a triumph of style over substance, if you will. Alas, we live in the real world – box office and critical reaction was mixed, and the planned follow-up is unlikely ever to materialise.

We must content ourselves with the PC game incarnation of the movie, which, according to its developers Kalisto, can be viewed as a sort of director's cut. You see, the cut-scenes which pepper the gameplay feature several scenes not found in the movie. The lazy way to describe *The Fifth Element* would be as a '*Tomb Raider* clone'. However, that wouldn't be doing the game justice. Admittedly, the third-person perspective camera angle suggests similarities, but *The Fifth Element* is much more an action-based game with puzzles, as opposed to a puzzle game with action.

YIPPEE KI YAY!

Levels are split with you controlling either Bruce Willis' Corben Dallas, or the unfeasibly athletic Leeloo – the 'perfect being' herself. Corben is slightly slower, but has the benefit of having several handguns at his disposal, whereas Leeloo dispatches her enemies with displays of kick-boxing prowess and open-palm techniques. *(Stop sniggering at the back – Ed.)*

The game loosely follows the plot of the film, and all the major locations are faithfully reproduced, from Corben's claustrophobic apartment, to the bizarre spaceport-cum-junkyard, and climactic Egyptian tomb. Enemies range from sluggish policemen – vaguely resembling the resultant offspring should Judge Dredd ever get it on with Russell Grant – to robots, and far more dangerous alien foes, armed with some seriously sauced-up weaponry.

This is a true 3D platform game, possibly more so than the majority of pretenders to the title that we've had to suffer over the last couple of years. The gameplay always manages to surprise, and the levels are stuffed to the guts with hidden areas and secrets.

FEEL THE FORCE, LUC

Given the potentially nightmarish graphical demands of recreating Luc Besson's vision in game form, Kalisto have done a spectacular job. The streets of future New York are as towering as in the film, and choked with flying traffic that is more than merely scenery; you'll be leaping from ledge to ledge, or climbing beneath walkways, the whole time avoiding flying taxis and cars lest you be knocked the several miles to the ground: it's not a game for vertigo sufferers. It's probably these early stages which most impress, but later sections, such as those set on the Fhlotsam Paradise floating space hotel, impress with their visual oppulence. It's no *Unreal*, admittedly, but at least the characters don't move as if they've got a big crapcake in their pants.

DEAD PARROT SKETCH

Movie-licensed games are generally a hit and miss affair. *Independence Day* was a heap of shite – so bad that some reviewers were flatly refused copies from the publisher; in contrast, *Blade Runner* succeeded in recreating the world of the movie perfectly, while being a stunning game in its own right. *The Fifth Element* can certainly be counted as a success. Perhaps the only thing it lacks from the film is the sense of irony and slightly Pythonesque humour which elevated it above the average summer event movie, and so alienated the film to the Americans. Then again, Americans think *Monty Python* is sheer genius, so perhaps I'm talking out of my bottom. Except that Yanks also feel the same way about *Mr Bean*, so I could be justified after all.

But I digress. *The Fifth Element* is a great game. It's a must-have if you're a fan of the movie because it expands on what was on screen – both with the inclusion of missing scenes, and because it gives you the opportunity to explore the world first-hand. It's also recommended to the general action freak: the pace is fairly relentless, there are some great set-pieces and the explosions are gratifyingly... explosive. It's probably not visually exciting enough to be hailed a classic, but what it does do it does pretty damn well. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

🔼 **UPPERS** Entirely faithful to the movie • Great movie clips • Relentless action

🔽 **DOWNERS** Some slow-down, even on a P233 • Some frustrating camera angles

82 Elementary good gameplay

Discovery consists of seeing

what everybody has seen

and thinking

what nobody has thought.

Albert Szent-Györgyi

The Future is in Your Hands
Lead an empire from primitive beginnings into the stunning sci-fi future of 3000 AD. Every decision you make has repercussions on your future world. Will you rule a grim, industrial jungle or a utopian society?

Not All Wars are Fought on the Battlefield
Add to your lethal military might with unconventional types of warfare, such as biological terrorism or religious conversion. A variety of units, buildings, governments, wonders, and research options are at your disposal.

Discover Who Among Your Friends Will Rule
Go head-to-head in multiplayer world-building. But remember – in war, even friends can become enemies. A nanovirus you release in one opponent city may spread to others, leading you into a war with an unintended party.

LINKS LS '99

⭐ £44.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out November

Time for a quick round, or time to be put to sleep? Taking a swing at the latest game in the second-longest-running golf series in history is *Paul Presley*

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P150 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** The faster your machine, the faster each screen redraws. A good 2D graphics card also helps a lot
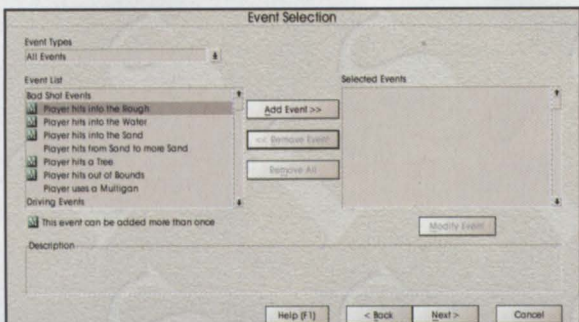
It's almost impossible to make a bad golf game these days. The history of the genre has tended to fluctuate, starting in the early days with simple and fun titles such as *Leaderboard* and *PGA Tour Golf*, moving on in later years to more complex games such as *Links* (*PCZ #10*, 80%) and *David Leadbetter's*, then veering wildly for a (mercifully) short time into the realms of the bizarre and experimental – *International Open Golf*, for example. Fortunately the organ grinder is back in control of the monkey and things appear to be getting back to normal.

THE GOLF CLONE

Maybe too much so, since it appears that the formula for creating the 'perfect' golf game has been found. I've played many

and-hope-you-hit-the-damned-ball. Designers of golf games please note: this mouse-swing thing doesn't work. It was a novelty that was sort of okay in Empire's *The Golf Pro* (*PCZ #62*, 90%), but it just hasn't really caught on. Unless you're designing your whole game around it and providing all sorts of options to deal with it, it's a complete waste of time.

HE AIN'T TIGER WOODS

Links LS '99 is the latest in this incredibly long-running series, and to be honest, even Arnold Palmer's wrinkled face on the box seems to be suggesting that retirement would be an ideal option round about now.

Obviously you're looking at the score and thinking it's a bit harsh. Well let me explain. *Links LS '99*

> **Even Arnold Palmer's wrinkled face on the box seems to be suggesting that retirement would be an ideal option**

different titles in the past half a year, including *Links LS '99*, and frankly they're all the same. All have practically photographic-quality graphics, all have a wealth of single and tournament play options, all have fully customisable players, and all apparently have the same choice of three control methods – the two-click, the three-click and the slide-the-mouse-around-wildly-

does very, very little that sets it apart from: a) any other golf game currently out there, or b) any previous version of *Links*. A few multiplayer Internet options sure, but then *PGA Tour Pro* (*PCZ #55*, 94%) did the same thing ages ago. Slightly improved graphics? Well, frankly I've taken a long and hard look at both this and the last version of *Links* and been hard pressed to tell the difference. The

30-odd customisable modes of play are a nice idea, but a redundant one, since you know full well that when you've got a few mates round to play a golf game prior to now, you'd always make up your own rules anyway.

More than that, *Links LS '99* still hasn't addressed the problems all the previous versions had: a confusing and unfriendly aiming system, an impossible-to-judge power meter, and a lack of shot adjustment options (eg no foot stances or club face adjustments). *Links LS '99* is exactly what every other *Links* title has been – all style and no real substance. 𝗣𝗖𝗭

PCZ VERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** Surprisingly few
⬇ **DOWNERS** Lack of originality • Annoying control problems still not fixed

50 The most average golf game yet

The mouse-swing thing in all its glorious splendour being demonstrated by the finest man in golfing history.

You can add your own sound effects to the game, so be prepared for some manic screaming if you slice it.

Setting up your own MOP. You can assign all sorts of outcomes to all sorts of shots. This is actually quite a good bit of the game.

As the cars started to conga past him, Jake realised that not all sports benefit from drug use.

There's no pressure Arnie. No one's watching.

MONTEZUMA'S RETURN!

A first-person real-time 3D action adventure game

First console style 3D-action game for PC designed to be played in a true 3D perspective – where you have to look and move in every direction.

Combining all the best elements of adventure games - jumping-climbing-fighting, all wrapped up and spiced with humour.

Massive levels and bonus rounds full of challenging 3D puzzles and comic fighting sequences against a horde of unique enemies and bosses.

Includes FREE original 8-bit version of Montezuma's Revenge. A retro-gaming classic.

UTOPIA
TECHNOLOGIES INC

TAKE 2
INTERACTIVE SOFTWARE

Web Site:
www.take2games.com

ISRAELI AIR COMBAT

⭐ £39.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

A strip of land named after a fat geordie footballer in't much, but *Steve English* thinks Israel might be a nice place to visit

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major 3D cards **WE SAY** P200, 3D accelerator card and 64Mb RAM recommended

ALSO**CONSIDER**

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR (Ocean/DID £39.99) The combat sim by which all others shall be judged. Incredible attention to detail, flight dynamics and overall gloss mean that if you want as real as it gets, this is the one to go for. *PCZ #68, 95%*

JANES F-15 (Electronic Arts, £39.99) You've only got the one toy to play with, but when it's the USAF's premier multi-role attack aircraft, who really cares? Tech heavy, but then that's what combat sim fans want, right? *PCZ #64, 92%*

US MARINE FIGHTERS (Electronic Arts, £12.99) A plethora of planes to fly and fight in. The flight modelling is not perfect and it looks a little dated, but like *IAC* you're not restricted to just one type of aircraft. *PCZ #30, 92%*

The Israeli Air Force is supposedly one of the most effective air forces in the world. And with good reason. While Western combat pilots spend their time playing glorified tag over the highlands of Scotland, the IAF has had to hone its combat skills in one of the most explosive hot spots of the modern world. The Middle East has seen more than its fair share of slightly deranged dictators and psychos, and as a result of this (and the fact that the entire land mass is virtually floating on billions and billions of dollars' worth of black gold) a few (how shall I put this?), 'skirmishes' have broken out. The war with Lebanon, Yom Kippur, the Six Day War… They're all part and parcel of life in the IAF. And now EA have decided that the time is right to give the PC pilot the chance to get shot down over Iraq and make a break for the border, Bravo Two Zero-style.

Israeli Air Combat is another in the highly successful line of Jane's-branded combat sims. We've had helicopters (*Longbow*), we've had US multi-role fighters (*F-15*), and now we've got the chance to fly any one of seven aircraft that are either currently serving in the IAF or are due to enter service in the near future. With choices including the venerable F-4 Phantom (plus the 2000 version, with updated avionics), Mirage III, Kfir and the canard-equipped Lavi (as well as the more usual F-15 and F-16), there's a nice mix of old and new equipment.

LOW LIFE

The structure of the game is such that nothing is too difficult to get into. As well as a choice of six campaigns that offer more than 42 missions (both historical and hypothetical), there's the usual scramble mode (perfect for those who prefer to leap straight in at the deep end), multiplayer scenarios and several training missions (complete with flight leader and in-flight talk-through). And it's all bolted on to a front end that's as smooth and as trouble-free as you could wish for.

So what's the actual flying like? Well, the first thing you notice is the graphics engine. And it's not good. Or rather, it's not great. The military doctrine preached in the IAF teaches pilots to use avoidance techniques and terrain-masking to maximise the capabilities and strike potential of their aircraft. What this means in plain English is that to succeed and come back in one piece you've got to get low. And getting low means you're on speaking terms with the terrain synthesised in the game. Apparently "the development of a high-quality terrain involved capturing stereoscopic satellite data at ten metres per pixel resolution with true elevation and colouring". What this means to you and me is that, from a few thousand feet in the air, things

> **❝I did witness one enemy aircraft stop dead in the air and turn to face me – a neat trick if you can pull it off❞**

look quite peachy on the ground: mountains stretch off into the distance, and fields and populated areas give you something nice to look at. But the lower you get, the more distorted it becomes, which is not good when you want to follow a retreating MiG-29 down a canyon. The old Origin games used to suffer from pixel warp when you got close, and *IAC* seems to have a slight dose of that as well. Also, there's a distinct lack of ground targets to really push the realism envelope that bit further.

The aircraft themselves are nice enough though, with fully animated control surfaces, and the flight model strikes the right balance between realism and playability. Take up a fully laden F-16 and the thing wallows around the sky like a doped-up slug. But mix it up, let a couple of AIM-9s off the rails, and suddenly you can turn in tighter than a London cab in Oxford Street.

Pixel Multimedia, the developer, is made up of active and retired Israeli Air Force pilots, so the historical campaign missions and a lot of the enemy intelligence is pretty much spot on (although I did witness one enemy aircraft stop dead in the air and turn to face me – a neat trick if you can pull it off).

IAC is up against a lot of competition. The skies are full of combat sims at the moment, all making use of 3Dfx technology to push the realms of realism that bit further. It's a shame that in choosing to simulate an air force that makes low-level sorties on a regular basis, Pixel didn't choose a slightly better graphics engine. Had they done so, then *IAC* would have been an interesting choice. As it is, it's just interesting. PCZ

PCZ**VERDICT**

🔺 **UPPERS** Nice flight modelling • The Israeli Air Force has never been simulated before

🔻 **DOWNERS** Terrain warping • Slightly oversimplistic controls and avionics • Aircraft stopping in mid-air!

76 Nice flight model, shame about the legs

Although it looks fairly complicated, the avionics simulated in *IAC* are simplified.

Apart from a few sporadic encampments, ground scenery is fairly thin on the, er, ground.

The Lavi is the next-generation Israeli fighter that bears a striking resemblance to our very own Typhoon (or Eurofighter as was).

With the advent of 3D acceleration hardware, you'd think blocky landscapes would be a thing of the past.

QUAKE II MISSION PACK: GROUND ZERO

The second official *Quake II Mission Pack* proves to be far less than easy, as *Paul Mallinson* rapidly finds out

⭐ £24.99 • Activision/Rogue Entertainment • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 130Mb of uncompressed hard drive space. **SUPPORTS** *Ground Zero* supports some OpenGL 3D accelerator cards (24Mb RAM required for accelerated version), joystick and mouse supported (three-button mouse recommended). Supports network and Internet play via TCP/IP **WE SAY** Accelerated *Quake II* runs okay on a P133 with 24Mb RAM. For the full impact though, a more powerful PC (P133 with 32Mb RAM) and some f**k-off speakers should be sought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

ALSO CONSIDER

QUAKE II (Activision, £39.99) The original and the best – just like Kellogg's Cornflakes. Actually, the AI isn't up to much, but who cares with gameplay as satisfying as this?
PCZ #59,97%

QUAKE II MISSION PACK: THE RECKONING (Activision/Xatrix, £24.99) Better level design than *Ground Zero*, but standard *Quake II* AI. *The Reckoning* is far easier than this second mission pack, and therefore doesn't last as long.
PCZ #65, 84%

UNREAL (GT, £39.99) This superbly designed (but ultimately shallow) 3D shooter has taken some of the wind out of *Quake II*'s sails. 3D shoot 'em up purists know the score though.
PCZ #65, 93%

C rikey, this is hard. *Quake II Mission Pack: Ground Zero*, Activision's latest 'official' add-on to the ubiquitous and fabulous *Quake II* (*PCZ* #59, 97%), is not for wimps. No siree. I had ascertained that fact within minutes of installing and launching Rogue Entertainment's enhanced take on iD's world-famous shooter.

Being something of a *Quake II* fanatic (at the same time openly admitting to being not *that* good at it), I was surprised to find the previous *Quake II* mission pack, *The Reckoning* (*PCZ* #65, 84%), far too easy to complete. This is not the case with *Ground Zero*. Whereas Xatrix seemed to make do with the same AI routines in *The Reckoning* as in the original *Quake II*, Rogue have seen fit to completely overhaul how the monsters in *Ground Zero* work, and this new spin completely changes how the game is played.

For starters, the Strogg forces now hide when they appear to be outgunned by you, a rudimentary 'line of sight' defence technique

The introduction of the Stalker adds a lot to *Quake II*. This highly manoeuvrable creature can walk on the ceiling and is prone to hiding in lift shafts.

sadly missing from the original. Secondly, and more importantly, monsters are now capable of leaping down from high platforms (sometimes to their deaths – the idiots) to get at you, and can also push buttons to operate lifts and the like.

ALL A BIT TOO MUCH

The most interesting additions to *Quake II* in *Ground Zero* are the numerous scripted 'traps' that you encounter en route through the game's five all-new 'units' (further sub-divided into 15 linked

> **❝** *Ground Zero* is an heroic effort to maintain *Quake II*'s high profile in the market, and on many levels it works very well **❞**

'levels'). On occasion you'll find a guard shooting at an unstable rock outcrop in order to bring it down on your head, or a piece of heavy machinery sent hurtling your way in a clever, premeditated manner. More lethal than this, however, are the automated gun emplacements that pepper you with crossfire when you least

expect it. A times it can be very difficult to secure a safe place to hide, such is the intensity of these new Strogg defences.

On top of this, a wave of new monsters are out for your blood. Stalkers are spider-like creatures that can leap on to ceilings at the blink of an eye, evading your blasts, or dropping down on your
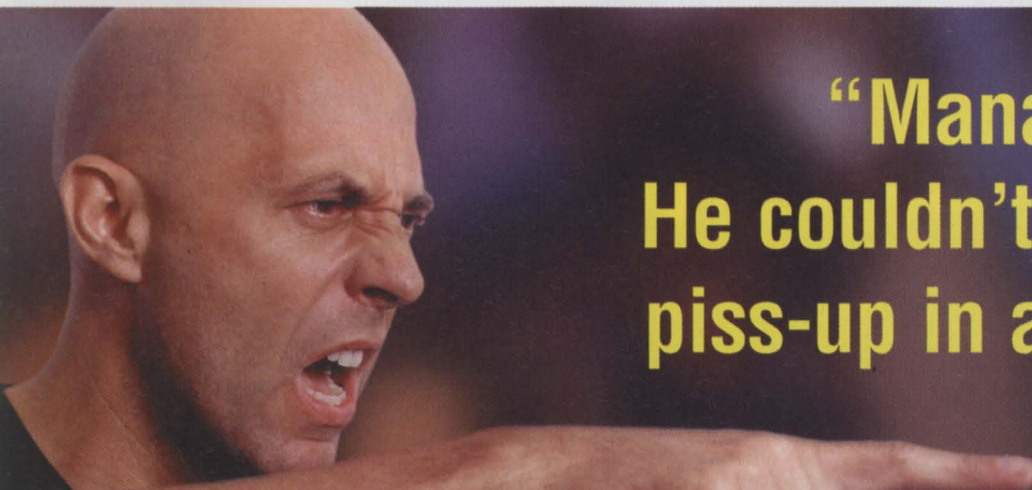
head when you least expect it; *Daedelus* are an acid-spitting incarnation of *Quake II*'s floating *Icarus*. A number of other variants, plus some imaginatively designed 'bosses' also await. The disturbingly frequent presence of the dreaded *Rejuvinator* also makes things far more difficult, when previously killed monsters are raised from the dead in front of your very eyes. Sometimes it can all get a bit too much.

HIT ME WITH YOUR LASER BEAM

The new weapons are not much consolation either. The chainsaw is handy enough for taking care of ground troops when low on ammo, but is next to useless against gun emplacements. The limpet grenade launcher is cool, but can cost you health if you step on your own bombs. Proximity mines? Couldn't care less. The flechette gun is okay – a hark back to the original *Quake* – and the plasma gun is nice to look at and reasonably powerful, but somehow you can't help but feel that 'laser beams' had no place in a game as gritty and militaristic

as *Quake II*. Combined, a full arsenal would be enough to help you through the tougher levels of *Ground Zero*, but unfortunately Rogue haven't made it that easy, and you rapidly realise that conservation is the best policy. Wide open spaces are a pretty rare occurrence in this game, which makes escaping the onslaught all the more difficult.

In terms of single-player level design, *Ground Zero* is professionally put together. It lacks the creativity of *The Reckoning*, *Unreal* (*PCZ* #65, 93%) or *Dark Forces II* (*PCZ* #55, 94%), but is intricate enough to keep you thinking. Sometimes this intricacy gets in the way. Having to constantly press F1 as orders change and are updated becomes a chore and gets in the way of the action.

LAST TRAIN TO FRAGTOWN

As the so-called 'next generation' of 3D shooters get ready for release (*SiN* and *Half-Life* being the two most imminent titles), *Ground Zero* could be looked upon as a last

chance to squeeze the last drops of blood from the bleeding corpse that is 'vanilla' *Quake II*. We've already played demos of Ritual and Valve's efforts, and we're suitably impressed; both look like *Quake II* beaters – single-player, at least.

Ground Zero is an heroic effort to maintain *Quake II*'s high profile in the market, and on many levels it works very well. The new monsters are scary as hell, the game is brilliantly challenging and the scripted elements reasonably dazzling. But in light of these new games, *Ground Zero*'s days look numbered – Activision should maybe have released this add-on at the same time as *The Reckoning* to have ensured

its success. Now, what is essentially an exceptionally well-designed 3D shoot 'em up is already being overshadowed by the Next Big Thing(s).

Quake II completists should not miss out though. *Ground Zero* comes highly recommended to those capable of fighting their way through the game without cheating. It may be rock hard, and in danger of eclipse from newer arrivals, but it is not to be dismissed without trial. PCZ

This is where the chainsaw comes in really handy.

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

Ground Zero sees the return of Ritual's patented deathmatch 'spheres', as introduced in the *Quake* mission pack *Dissolution Of Eternity*. They sort of float above your head and protect you from attack. Pick up any of the three available and the balance will surely tip in your favour.

Defender Sphere: the homing missile from hell.

Hunter Sphere: shoots back at antagonist if attacked.
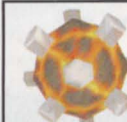
Vengeance Sphere: guarantees scalp of any nearby assailant.

The plasma gun makes short work of this tank commander, but the Rejuvinator in the background will bring him back to life if you don't act quickly enough.

The level design in this add-on is excellent, and there's some good animated architecture too.

All hell breaking loose: a typical scene in *Ground Zero*.

FA PREMIER FOOTBALL MANAGER 99

⭐ £39.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

Sitting in the dugout, looking at the 'all-new' and 'official' challenger to *Championship Manager* **is** *Jeremy Wells*

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major 3D cards **WE SAY** If you want to watch the game in 3D (you won't), then a 3D card would help on lower spec machines

Weighed down with 24 cans of export lager, a rather weighty manual and the review code of *FA Premier Manager*, I arrived at a mate's house ready for a serious session of armchair football. Three managers, three teams, three dreams.

Cracking open the first can, we loaded up the software and prepared to choose our teams. And that's when it started to go wrong. No matter how hard we tried, we could only select one team. "Surely they haven't made it one-player only?" remarked Villa's manager-in-waiting with incredulity. "That's the whole point of football management games."

"No matter," piped up the pretender to the hot seat at Newcastle, "we'll do a Liverpool and manage the club en masse. The marketing manager over there can look after the business side, and we'll take care of the team, transfers and tactics."

Setting up the team didn't prove to be too much of a problem, although we were surprised to find Marc Overmars not even on the bench, and playing for the reserves, along with Chris Wreh and Stephen Hughes. Further eyebrows were raised when Ryan Giggs went abroad for just £8 million in the first week of the season; and we managed to succeed where Arsene Wenger failed, and signed Dutchman Ronald De Boer for a measly £2 million! The fact that he only wanted £2000 a week confirmed that the transfer market was indeed all to cock.

After watching half a dozen or so matches, we decided to just get the results and forgo any chance to alter our tactics and formation during a match. Just like *CM97/98*, it took ages to get all the results in. We played out the rest of the season and finished top – seven points clear.

Not bad for our first season in charge. But wasn't it a bit easy? Maybe we should try again with someone like Coventry.

So what was the verdict? "It looks nice and the business model is pretty good," confirmed the marketing manager. "It's okay," added the assistant manager, "but there's an awful lot wrong with it."

Overall, there are just too many holes. For starters, the first team selection for many teams seems to be wildly at odds with reality. The transfer market is not exactly what you'd term realistic.

> ❝ **We managed to succeed where Arsen Wenger failed, and signed Dutchman Ronald De Boer – for a measly £2 million!** ❞

And the 3D match view is both time-consuming and largely useless. As soon as you lose that suspension of disbelief things just deteriorate.

Should you buy it? Well, if you can put up with all the inaccuracies then it's not unenjoyable. For me, it's only a stop-gap until I get my hands on *Championship Manager 3*. Which, rest assured, will get exactly the same treatment. **PCZ**

ALSO CONSIDER

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98 (Eidos Interactive, £24.99) The best-selling football management game ever. It's also incredibly addictive and extremely well-researched. If you haven't got a copy, buy one now. ***PCZ #57, 90%***

FIFA SOCCER MANAGER (EA Sports, £29.95) Ambitious in terms of presentation and design, but didn't really offer much in the way of long-term appeal to the hardened football management sim addict. ***PCZ #54, 74%***

PCZ VERDICT

🔺 **UPPERS** Slick presentation • Strong business model • Lots of customisable options • Accessible user interface

🔻 **DOWNERS** Single-player only • Poor 3D match representation • Slow • Questionable team set-ups and AI

72 A bit better than last year's effort, but not a *CM*-beater

You can't look at a player's profile during a match. If you have to make a substitution, you don't know who's best to replace the injured player.

The EAMail is a nice idea, if time-consuming to trawl through.

You can't search for a player using more than one criteria.

Attendances seem way off – Arsenal versus Liverpool attracted a crowd of only 25,000.

IF IT'S IN THE GAME...

The fact that you can actually see what's happening on the pitch in 3D sounds like a good idea, but it's actually of no real practical use whatsoever

After experimenting with various formations and tactics, it became increasingly obvious that what was going on on-screen had very little to do with my team orders. In fact, if anything the 3D match representation only served to confirm how poor the AI is, how little my players were following instructions, and how pointless the formation, team instructions and individual orders actually are. Basically, the 3D matches aren't worth the hassle. They take an absolute age to load up, and it seems to take ages for players to get into position ready for a set piece or goal kick. If it had been done correctly, it might have been useful. Shame.

If Gordon Strachan had to watch this kind of drivel every week he'd go mad... Oh yes, he does. He is.

NHL 99

⭐ £39.99 • EA Sports • Out November

Fed up with sports sims? Think they're all the same? Take to the ice with *Craig Vaughan* and see what you're missing

The calm before the storm as the players get ready to rumble.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 16Mb **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx and most 3D cards. Multiplay over network and Internet **WE SAY** Try a P200, with a 3D card and 32Mb

PC ZONE CLASSIC

ALSO CONSIDER

NHL 98 (EA Sports, £39.99) A veritable tour de force. It has an incredibly fast 3D engine, stunning graphics and spade loads of replay value. ***PCZ #57, 94%***

ACTUA HOCKEY (Gremlin Interactive, £39.95) Totally inferior to the *NHL* series, but boasting the Olympic licence. Frustrating AI and sloppy commentary are the main flaws, but it's by no means an out-and-out turkey. ***PCZ #62, 78%***

Just over a year ago *NHL 98* took the *PC ZONE* HQ by storm (*PCZ #57*, 94%), and rightly so. It proved to be the fastest, most visually stunning and downright playable ice hockey sim on the PC. Undoubtedly, the large doses of in-game violence played a part in securing its popularity with the gaming community in general and the Neanderthals lurking inside our office in particular. However, EA were always going to have their work cut out improving it – balancing the addition of enhancements with retaining the atmosphere and playability of the original. Fans wouldn't settle for just updated team rosters and a superficial lick of paint to the graphics.

Initially, playing *NHL 99* will prove slightly anti-climactic for *NHL 98* veterans, because on the surface it has an alarmingly similar look and feel, which can leave your rampant expectations slightly deflated. But, as time progresses, you'll realise that the feelings of déjà vu are in fact a testament to the brilliance of *NHL 98*, rather than a slur on this sequel. It's the subtle game mechanics that have been overhauled, and as such it's a while before the enhancements shine through.

The fun starts, in typical EA fashion, with an explosive FMV introduction and a faultless, easy to navigate front end. The first significant change is that all the team and player stats have undergone their yearly update. Undoubtedly this will only be of interest to Yanks and ardent hockey anoraks, but you can't argue with thoroughness, and EA no doubt paid bucketloads for the privilege of using all the names, facts and figures.

Among the usual plethora of options there's a handy practice

> **Initially, *NHL 98* veterans will find *NHL 99* slightly anti-climactic because on the surface it has an alarmingly similar look and feel, which can initially leave your rampant expectations slightly deflated**

mode which takes the stress out of learning puck control and gives the opportunity to rattle in a few penalties. Folk familiar with the previous incarnation will feel at home with the quick start, playoff, league, network and Internet tournament options, which serve to add much-needed variety to the basic game. Sim-heads will revel in adjusting the mountain of in-game features available, such as half length, player fatigue, injuries, fighting, fouls, shot aim – the list is as comprehensive as it is customisable. The rules can be tweaked too, by toggling offsides, icing, two-line passing and the crease rule. Those not familiar with the technicalities of the sport

will no doubt pick things up as they go along, and ignorance by no means spoils the fun as the gameplay proves entirely intuitive (passing, shooting, stealing and blocking are all achievable by a simple button press).

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU

The player graphics have been tweaked and refined, with motion-capture enhancing their appearance and movement, and making them more fluid and seamless than ever. The pucks have had surgery too, and move more gracefully, reacting to deflections in a subtle and appropriate manner – a case of grace and refinement rather than manic pinball, this time round.

The game engine continues to amaze and wooed me for hours, before I realised that I had 3Dfx support switched off. In accelerated mode the game loses its occasional tendency to jerk when things get hectic, improves the ringside graphics, and smoothes out the players a touch. The minor nature of these improvements is the best advert for EA's software engine and renderer; it recreates the frantic nature of the sport effortlessly, with alarming speed and from a myriad of diverse and genuinely useful camera angles.

There will no doubt be extended debate as to the usefulness of the various cameras, but because of the sheer speed of the action, a mid-range view proves the most practical for normal play, while a tighter, more in your face camera is better for set plays and punch-ups. Yes, the violence is back, but not in gratuitous proportions. There are some splendid, well-choreographed moments to be had barging and tripping the opposition, but try as I might, I couldn't readily initiate a decent punch-up, or an all-out fracas – which is a pity, because scrapping always provides a welcome diversion from the main action.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

The most rewarding enhancement is with the computer AI. The main criticism that was levelled at *NHL 98* was that the outfield action was too easy against all but the sternest opposition. Indeed, the glory of carving out openings against dumb-ass teams was the game's main attraction, but ultimately players were repeatedly frustrated by the telepathic, and near infallible computer goalies. Thankfully the situation has been somewhat reversed. Outfield computer players are now noticeably more aggressive, they play the angles better and pass intelligently, thus increasing the challenge and leaving you less goal scoring opportunities. Their goalies are fallible this time round – not that they've gone soft, but they're error-prone enough to give

> **The feelings of déjà vu are in fact a testament to the brilliance of *NHL 98*, rather than a slur on this sequel**

READY, STEADY, ACTION...

There are eight distinct ways to view the action, some more practical than others

OVERHEAD 1 CAMERA
Provides a sky-high view from one end of the rink.

OVERHEAD 2 CAMERA
A similar view, but tracking slightly behind the action.

ICE CAMERA
Similar view to the overheads, but closer to the action.

Last chance to get rid of your chewing gum before the action kicks off.
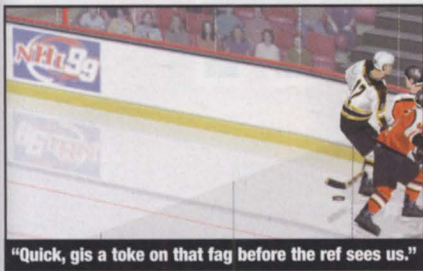
"Quick, gis a toke on that fag before the ref sees us."

"That ceiling really could do with a lick of paint."

The texture mapping is rather good.

The team and player stats have been updated.

Tense goalmouth action, *NHL*-style.

WALKTHROUGH

PAYING THE PENALTY

The matches are often too close to call, so it pays to master penalties (England footballers in particular take note). Perfect your technique and you could snatch victory from the jaws of defeat

1 The player steels his nerves and prepares for his run up.

2 The net waits, invitingly. The crowd holds its breath.

3 The goalkeeper nervously prepares for action.

4 Starting his approach. Time to keep a cool head.

5 He shoots, he scores! The crowd goes wild.

6 The puck nestles in the back of the net.

7 He peels off and celebrates his triumph. Hang on, where have the rest of the players gone?

---

even fledgling players hope. So although you're presented with fewer goal scoring opportunities, you should find yourself getting a better shot-to-goal ratio. This goes a long way to easing those previous frustrations and leads to tighter and more tension-filled matches, the atmosphere of which is enhanced by the free-flowing commentary. It is, in the main, as good as ever and keeps pace with the action well, proving both informative and relevant.

The negatives are few and minor: having scored, it would be nice for the commentator to acknowledge the fact instantly rather than leaving your team to celebrate in momentary silence. The puck's easy to lose in the heat of battle too, but that's a flaw inherent with the sport, not just the computer's interpretation of it. And the game should run with 3D support switched on by default. But, minor niggles aside, we're left with the most polished, playable and robust representation of ice hockey on the PC, and to miss out on it would be nigh on criminal. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** Blindingly fast action, with superb graphics and animation • Fluid commentary and immersive atmosphere • Well-balanced AI and progressive difficulty curve • Options galore for sim fans

⬇ **DOWNERS** It's easy to lose the puck in the heat of play

92 The best ice hockey game ever. Fact

SCOREBOARD CAMERA
This gives a mid-range view, tracking behind the action.

CHASE CAMERA
Views slightly above head height, tracking the action.

CLASSIC CAMERA
Similar to the chase camera, but tracks the puck, not the action.

PRESS CAMERA
Gives a side-on view of the game.

BROADCAST CAMERA
Lower than the press camera and from the opposite side.

DUNE 2000

⊕ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

**Dune 2 gets a facelift and Richie
Shoemaker is the one holding the scalpel**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 2Mb
video card **WE SAY** P133 recommended

ALSO CONSIDER

**DUNE 2 (Sold Out, £4.99 – coming
soon)** The game that started the
whole thing off. It's not a patch on
more modern efforts, but worth a
look if you want to see what strategy
games were like before you could
group units. **PCZ #1, 89%**

**C&C: RED ALERT PACK (Virgin,
£29.99)** You'll have to be quick if
you want to snap up this collection
of Red Alert and both its missions
packs. More colourful than Dune
2000 and certainly more fun.
PCZ #47, 94%

**TOTAL ANNIHILATION (Replay,
£12.99)** The current leader of the
pack is now available at a budget
price (see page 129). **PCZ #56, 92%**

As soon as Westwood
announced details of
Dune 2000, alarm bells
started ringing. Dune 2
was the first decent
real-time strategy game, and
without any hint of exaggeration
has shaped the genre as it stands
today. Without it, Total Annihilation
might never have been. Imagine
that. Sends a shiver down the
spine, doesn't it? Let's extend the
scenario to the world of first-
person shooters: what if
Wolfenstein had never happened?
It doesn't bear thinking about.
Anyway, the thought of a sequel to
Dune 2 sent saliva glands into
overdrive – until we read later on
that Dune 2000 wasn't really a

sequel, but rather a 'remake' of
the original classic.

Now, remakes can either be a
good thing or a bad thing. While
remakes of films tend to be big-
budget money-rakers with
nothing but special effects to sell
them, it's the new and improved
effects that make games remakes
better. The truth is, though, what
games publishers call sequels,
we call remakes. When they start
calling them remakes, you know
there's something fishy going on.

THE GOOD, THE BAD
AND THE UGLY

For those of you too young or too
stoned to remember Dune 2, it
was loosely based on the David
Lynch film Dune, but without the
pseudo-religious overtones. It
was a heady mix of resource
gathering, building and chaotic
destruction to the last man. The
resource was the spice melange,
the setting was the desert planet
Arrakis, and you had a choice of
three sides to choose from: the
Atreides were the good guys, the
Harkonnen the bad, and the Ordos
were mysterious, underhand and
downright ugly. (Actually they
were all pretty ugly, what with
everyone sporting a pair of
eyebrows even Dennis Healy
would be ashamed to display.)

For this '98 remix, the game
remains largely unchanged. All
Westwood have done is meddle
with the missions to make them
more balanced, film some FMV
and slapped it all into an

updated Red Alert box.
Consequently we have
multiplayer options, hi-res
graphics and the ability to group
units, rather than having to direct
them one at a time as you had to
do in the original. The only
evidence that this game is new
is a few graphical effects like
coloured lighting and smoke.
Even with these enhancements –
and certainly next to TA – Dune
2000 looks a year out of date.

Dune 2000's biggest selling
point is its simplicity. Against TA
or Dark Reign (PCZ #56, 89%), the
limited number of units available

Ooh, nice explosions. That's pwetty.

worn away, and the flat, beige
terrain soon makes you reach out
for something altogether greener.

HERE COMES THE SUN

Some die-hard Dune fans are
bound to find some redeeming

> **❝All Westwood have done is meddle with the
> missions, filmed some FMV and slapped it
> all into an updated Red Alert box❞**

make this game easy to get into.
While you're there, it's fun in a
back-to-basics kinda way.
However, playing through the
same missions with the same
units does little to bring back the
fervour with which the original
was played; in fact the experience
rather soiled the memory. In its
favour, the missions played quite
well, but there is absolutely
nothing new here that isn't in
1001 other real-time strategy
games. The novelty of building a
new base every mission has long

features (probably the worms),
but those of you who haven't will
just wonder what all the fuss was
about. Where the first game was
ground-breaking, this is just
another clone, albeit from the
originators. It's obvious that Dune
2000 is at best a stopgap before
Tiberian Sun appears; at worst it's
an excuse to print money.
Westwood may have once been
the bosom of creativity, but
Tiberian Sun will have to be
something special if they want to
regain their crown.

The paradox is that from a
developer of Westwood's
standing, Dune 2000 is
substandard. As an updated
version of Dune 2 it's fine. If
that was Westwood's aim in
developing the game, then they
have succeeded. But maybe they
should have aimed their sights a
little bit higher and created a
sequel. They've had long enough
to do that, after all. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

⊕ **UPPERS** Doesn't require a beefy PC •
High-quality FMV • Simple gameplay •
Improves on the original Dune 2

⊖ **DOWNERS** Graphically dated •
Essentially it's Red Alert with only
one terrain type and less units •
For Dune 2 fans only

62 C&C
Beige
Alert

Build a starport and you can import the machinery
you need quickly, without having to build it.

Beware the worms, they like things that vibrate.

Infantry absorb cannon fire better than tanks do.

Superb FMV, and a great
set of eyebrows.

Now you've got a base, it's best to defend it.

RING

● £44.99 • Cryo Interactive • Out November

The game of the... opera? *Paul Presley* **dons a penguin suit, settles down in the cheap seats and gets ready for a singalong**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Video card supporting 65K colours, 250Mb hard drive space **WE SAY** It'll chug a bit on a P133, but you should be okay with a P200 and upwards with 32Mb RAM

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

ALSO CONSIDER

ZORK: THE GRAND INQUISITOR (Activision, £39.99) An adventure that manages to mix storytelling and intelligent puzzles to an almost perfect degree. *PCZ #58, 88%*

STARSHIP TITANIC (Zablac, £44.99) Another adventure demanding a little intelligence from its audience, and one that's had a bit of a mixed reception. *PCZ #63, 91%*

RIVEN (Broderbund, £39.99) More maturity and 'style', but this time with far too little substance to go with it. *PCZ #57, 72%*

C ryo's latest adventure must be applauded for its subject matter, if nothing else. Do you remember ever having come across a game based around a piece of classical opera? No. And for that reason alone – for daring to try to drag some maturity and intellect into the PC games industry – *Ring* should be applauded. Why haven't more games been based on classic literature? Surely the plays of William Shakespeare would make for some *truly* great adventures? Alternatively, can you imagine taking on the role of Gulliver, striding through your travels? Or acting out Mr Christian on the deck of the Bounty?

DUM DA DUM DA DAAA...

Anyway, *Ring*, being based on Wagner's operatic meisterwork *Der Ring Des Nibelungen*, is an understandably daunting affair. Dealing with a (truly) epic tale of giants, dwarves, magic, greed, temptation and fate, Cryo have made a surprisingly good job of translating it into game form. You play the part of a character called Ish, a sort of explorer from a far-off future race, looking to piece together the knowledge of The Ring by living out the four main acts of the opera.

In game terms this means you get to jump into any of the four 'acts' at will, controlling in turns Alberich the tyrannical dwarf, Loge the fire spirit, Siegmund the son of a god, and Brunnhilde the Valkyrie. This gives you quite a good sense of freedom, and keeps boredom at bay.

Being 'based on the opera' seems to have meant more to Cryo than just including some of the music. All the while you're playing it, you get the feeling of really being caught up in some kind of lavish production. And the music helps, of course. Recorded by Sir Georg Solti just before his untimely death, it blends in well with the inherent drama on-screen. There are times when it cuts rather too jarringly from one piece to another – it would have been nice if Cryo could have found a way to have pieces merge into one another à la LucasArts – but on the whole it holds up well.

It falters slightly again in the actual adventure part. It's not too bad, to be honest, and in some areas is very nicely worked out and always seems to be a part of the story. It's just that at times it's also a bit too much like *Myst* (*PCZ #15, 67%*), even with the now seemingly obligatory 360-degree view control. It's a bit too vague and loose to really sit well. Plus the third section, Siegmund, is, frankly, a little dull.

DUM DA DUM DAAAAA!

Essentially, this is a really nice effort at transferring something with class, style and intellectualism to your computer screen. It's not perfect, but at least it makes a welcome change to just wading, guns blazing, through the latest in a long line of blood and gore shooting fests. Go on, give *Ring* a try. You never know, your brain may even thank you for it. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

⊕ **UPPERS** Maturity • It's based on a bloody opera • Good atmosphere
⊖ **DOWNERS** Cumbersome movement controls • A bit too obscure in places

85 Well how often are *you* going to get to the opera. I mean, really?

Brunnhilde the Valkyrie. And yes, it does have *that* piece of music when she appears.

Hurling... with gay abandon – one of your specialities...

Loge practices his Jimmy Hill impression during a quiet moment.

Mime, Alberich's brother and keeper of the forge that made The Ring. You get to slap him about a bit.

Robocop takes on an altogether more sinister look.

OPERA FOR DA KIDZ

Wagner made easy via the Web

Okay, Wagner can be a bit heavy, yeah? And, like, *Der Ring* is totally long and deep, ya know? With, like, all sorts of guys running around and singing and that. And in German as well. So, like, how's the average homie on the street gonna get his 'ead round all dat heavy stuff? Well word up: a totally banging website has translatified the W man's words into language you can totally sense, yeah? Here's, like, a sample:

"Three gorgeous babes are partying in the depths of the river. They are the Rhinemaidens: Woglinde, Wellgunde and Flosshilde. After a while, Flosshilde stops and warns her sisters about slacking off – there's work to do in the protection of their magic gold. What the hell, they're not the anal types, so she rejoins them in the fun. From a chasm below, along comes Alberich, a horny little Nibelung dwarf, who sees these nymphs and gets a major hard-on. He wants to join in, with the hope of getting lucky. However, seeing that he's butt-ugly and small (in more ways than one), the Rhinemaidens, instead of telling him to f**k off, decide to engage in a little prick-tease..."

This taster comes from www.geocities.com/Vienna/Strasse/8947/index.html. We suggest you check it out right now.

In the Creative dimension, you don't just hear sound, you know where it's coming from
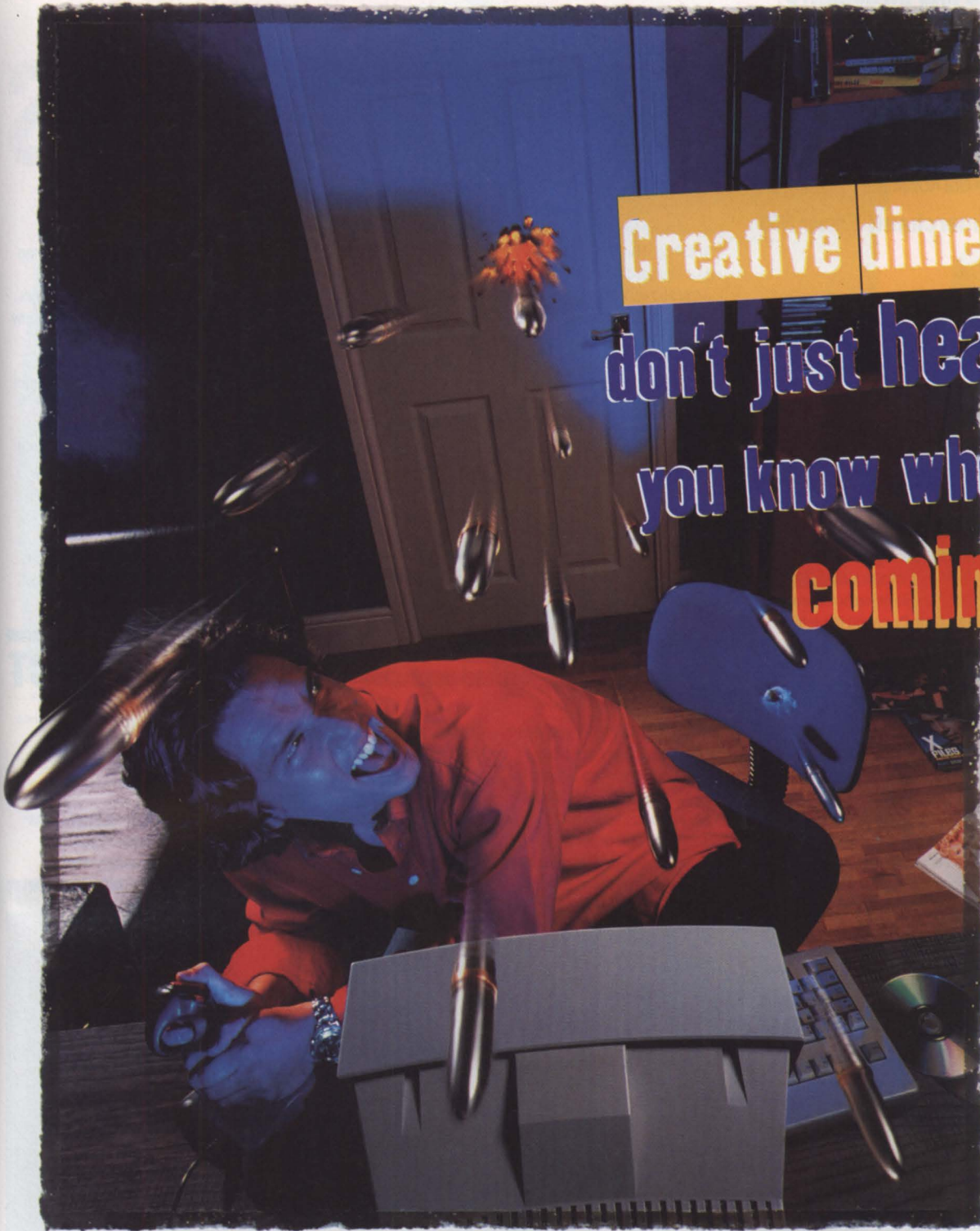
Imagine a place where games are so lifelike that it's hard to tell fantasy from reality. Imagine a place where the latest sound card and speaker technologies combine to deliver Environmental Audio - a new standard of accuracy and vitality in 3D sound.

Stop imagining. Enter the Creative dimension whenever you see the Creative name.

Your PC will never be the same again.

Call 01245 265 265 for more information.

Sound Blaster Live and FourPointSurround speakers feature Environmental Audio which delivers:

- Exceptional sonic clarity that is so lifelike, it feels like it is being played live

- Accurate 3D sound positioning and full Surround Sound support

- Realistic audio 'environments' that make the latest 3D games come to life

- Studio quality audio processing that takes PC music to a new level

Visit your local dealer or our website for more details.

CREATIVE

Your PC's key to another dimension

WWW.SOUNDBLASTER.COM

Sound Cards   **Graphics Cards**   **Speakers**   **PC-DVD**   **Video**

KNIGHTS AND MERCHANTS

⭐ £39.99 • Interactive Magic • Out November

Neither a knight nor a merchant, *Steve Hill* gets medieval

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 2Mb video card and Windows-compatible sound card **WE SAY** Just about

ALSO CONSIDER

SETTLERS II (Blue Byte, £9.99)
Progammed by members of the same team, it's more of the same. You might want to wait for *Settlers III* (reviewed next month).
PCZ #69, 85%

CAESAR III (Sierra, £34.99)
Mammoth city-building in a Roman stylee. Check this issue's review on page 98).

The real-time economic simulation cup currently runneth over, with this little oddity vying for a place on the rostrum alongside heavyweights *Caesar III* and *Settlers III*. Clearly, *Knights And Merchants* isn't blessed with quite the same heritage, although some of the developers worked on *Settlers II*. And it shows, as what we have is effectively *Settlers Lite*.

Set in around AD 1200, the game certainly starts with a bang, as the opening mission begins with your village ablaze and your people being butchered by invaders. Once you manage to run them out of town, it's a case of rebuilding, as well as creating troops with which to kick the living shit out of other communities.

The usual resource management business applies: farmers grow corn, corn feeds pigs, pigs provide skins, skins can be made into leather, leather can be fashioned into armour, armour is worn by recruits, and so on. But people need to eat, of course, so you set up a butcher's, a bakery and a vineyard, with villagers clearly shown sitting outside the inn scoffing and quaffing. There is no money as such, although there is a base unit of gold, which can be mined in later levels. Everything in the game has a value in terms of another resource: a hand axe, for example, is worth two planks of timber.

SERF CITY

All the buildings in the game have to be constructed from the ground up, requiring labourers, serfs and raw materials. This takes time, community has sprung up in your absence. This isn't quite the 'total immersion' that marketing skunks yearn for, and if we were being harsh we could describe the game as a glorified screensaver – you can even let it run in the background while you get on with some work. You can get away with tending to industries intermittently, and there is an element of the game playing you, rather than you playing the game.

But there's more to it than that, and with missions often exceeding the five-hour mark it can be a life-stealer. The action is

> **❝If we were being harsh we could describe the game as a glorified screensaver❞**

and although in theory you should be kept busy, there are often periods when you are simply left watching the action. It is literally possible to line up some instructions and go for a proverbial shit, shower and shave, returning to find that a thriving mainly combat-oriented, and battles are frequent and bloody. Your input is crucial here, and some kind of strategy is required to make progress, such as steaming in with axemen while your bowmen pick off any stragglers. It can become quite involved, and the game is essentially a constant challenge to stock the barracks with weapons and equip the soldiers, racing against time as the enemy does the same, particularly in multiplayer mode.

Given the competition, *Knight And Merchants* has too many annoying factors for it to be recommended unreservedly, but judged on its own merits it's a half-decent game. If you've got more money than sense, and really must own a real-time economic simulation set in the Middle Ages, then you need look no further. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

⬆ **UPPERS** Plenty of scuffling • Gives you time to make a brew

⬇ **DOWNERS** AI is occasionally moronic • Missions are a bit samey

76 Half-decent grass-roots resource management

Stop the cavalry. Incidentally, the death animations are among the worst seen in any game.

Some farmers, doing their farming thing. Clearly.

Everyone piling in as if their life depends on it.

Irksome terrain often makes scuffling difficult.

Well-planned roads ease the transportation of goods.

Still care about those nice vapour trails?

Visibility is impaired by flies on the windscreen.

F-16: AGGRESSOR

⭐ £TBA • Virgin Interactive • Out before Christmas

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium 133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All Direct 3D-compatible cards **WE SAY** Despite the claims, a fast processor is necessary to make the most of what this game has to offer. Ideally you want to go for a Pentium II 300 and 64Mb RAM

PC ZONE CLASSIC Flight simulators are supposed to let you pretend that you're really flying an aircraft. They do this in two main ways: they use very realistic graphics so you don't have to rely on your own imagination, and they provide a flight model which includes details on how good gravity is at dragging you down and how the plane works against it. It is tempting to bang on about the graphics quality of flight simulators, because it's the first thing that hits you and it's easy to make a judgement.

"Ooh," you say, "I can fly through the clouds"; "Golly, the vapour trail on that missile that just missed me is realistic"; "My, I'm blacking out because I've pulled up too fast." These features are just nice little extras compared to how realistic your vehicle flies. But *F-16 Aggressor* has all the posh effects plus a remarkably realistic flight engine. Virgin have whispered that they actually had to cripple the flight model slightly because some "people" would have objected to us knowing about certain special features.

Well, I've flown some real military aircraft in my time (back in 'Nam etc), and there's nothing as scary as filling your pants as an opponent locks on to you – even in an exercise – but *F-16 Aggressor* comes pretty close to the mark for a PC simulation. Unless you're the sort of 'character' who builds his or her own virtual reality jet in the spare room and knows all the ins and outs of the F-16 Falcon, this is as realistic as it gets. In real life you don't notice the quality of the paintwork on your opponent's plane, so feel free to turn down the detail if things seem slow. It should then run happily on something like a Pentium 100. In summary, then, it's realistic, it looks good, and it *is* good.

Simon Edwards

PCZVERDICT 92%

Better looking than *Settlers 2*. If only *Settlers 3* wasn't on its way.

ANNO 1602

⭐ £34.99 • Infogrames • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** It sounds good enough to us

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED Yet another strategy game featuring little people leading little lives in a big game environment. This one's more along the lines of *Settlers 2* (*PCZ* #69, 85%) than *Command & Conquer* (*PCZ* #28, 95%), but what sets *Anno 1602* apart from its illustrious counterpart is its incredibly detailed graphics. Zoom in on a game like this and you normally get to see why the game's artists would much prefer you *didn't* zoom in, raising questions as to why the zoom option was ever put there in the first place. Zoom in on *Anno 1602*, however, and you discover a delightful environment with highly detailed characters and buildings. Less surprising, perhaps, is the gameplay, which involves pretty much what all games of this type involve: you spend your time building structures to create food and tools and weapons of war, before setting upon anyone stupid enough to invade your territory.

A very comprehensive expansion tree makes way for a huge variety of buildings (you can even build pubs for your little people to get pissed in, for Chrissakes), and much of the fun to be had in this type of game comes from building massive territories with all kinds of structures in it and just, er, sitting back and watching everything happening.

Anno 1602 is a very enjoyable game in a comfortingly familiar sort of way. Unfortunately, *Settlers 3* is just around the corner, and we've been privvy to a sneak preview which suggests it's going to be rather special. Were it not for that, *Anno 1602* would have scored much higher. Once again the industry tries in vain to catch up with itself (sigh).

Chris Anderson

PCZVERDICT 80%

Warlords III this most certainly isn't.

CLASH

⭐ £29.99 • Midas Interactive • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 24Mb RAM will improve how the game runs, but not how it plays

What a great title for a fantasy war game. It evokes powerful images of shimmering swords and spraying arteries, flailing across foggy battlefields thick with the dead. In marketing terms it's a winner; in accurately portraying the game it's a good deal wide of the mark. How about 'Yawn' for a title, or 'Bore', or, at a stretch, 'Clash Of Boredom'. *(You're wasted here – Ed.)*

Clash is a turn-based strategy game along the lines of *Warlords III* (*PCZ* #55, 90%) or *Heroes Of Might & Magic* (*PCZ* #47, 87%). There are two sides for you to choose from, each almost entirely similar, and there are over 30 units available to each. The two available campaigns contain 30 missions, and apart from a few roaming beasties that's about it. Graphically it looks about five years old, and the voice-overs for the units are abysmal – the developers obviously propped some down-and-out drunk against a microphone and got him to say "yesssir" and "my leeej (hic)".

The thing is that once you get started in the game, it takes a strange, magical hold of you. It's one of those games that is very easy to get the hang of without having to wade through the manual. While it tries to appear complicated, it isn't. Then, when you finish your first hour of play and go to make a cup of coffee, the spell wears off. "God, that was *sooo* dull," you'll say while the kettle reaches critical mass. Anyway, the point is that *Clash* is a pretty crap game: crap graphics, crap sound and dull, uninspired gameplay. *Warlords III: Darklords Rising* – now *that's* the way to do it.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZVERDICT 43%

Ah, would you look at that beach?

Whatever you do, don't land on the elephant. They're sacred or something in Tibet.
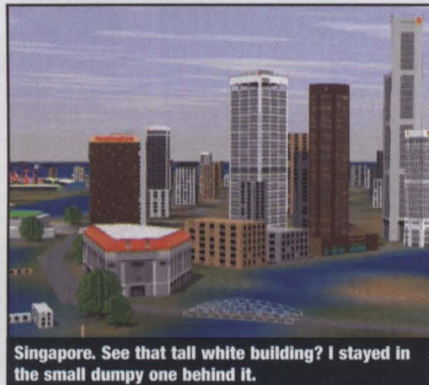
Singapore. See that tall white building? I stayed in the small dumpy one behind it.

FLIGHT SIM 98 SCENERY DISKS

⊛ £14.99 each • Lago • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** A copy of *MS Flight Sim 98* **WE SAY** If you have *Flight Sim 98* you already know if you can run it

The great thing about *Microsoft Flight Simulator 98* is its open architecture. It's like having a train set: you buy the basic package and then add bits to it as you want them. What we have here are three scenery packs from some of the more far-flung parts of the world.

The only one I can bring any personal knowledge to is *Scenery Singapore*, having spent a month there a couple of years ago. Frankly, I was a bit disappointed with it. I always remembered Singapore as quite an urban area, a packed and bustling metropolis with lots of greenery surrounding it. Here though, the downtown area seems very small, and not a lot of research has gone into the varied architecture. One or two buildings stood out, but I just seem to remember it all being so much bigger.

The Himalayas pack on the other hand, boasts Lago's largest ever scenery expansion, a whopping 2.5 million square kilometers and a fearsome range of mountains including Everest, which makes for some very tricky flying.

The most interesting of the bunch though has to be the *Bahamas And Bermuda Triangle* pack. As well as the usual packed dynamic scenery files for the whole 3,000-island archipelago, and a new plane in the shape of a TBM Avenger, the *B&BT* pack also adds something called 'active scenery': spot a helpless swimmer who's been shipwrecked in shark-infested waters, and once you land you find yourself in a small lifeboat, desperate to reach him before Jaws does. It's really just a bit of a novelty at the moment, but there is potential here for expansion and it makes for a nice extra.

Overall, you pretty much know what you're getting with these packs: nicely detailed scenery with a few extras thrown in for good measure. One or two of the packs could probably have included a bit more detail (it often seems as though Lago are afraid to push the 3D card support to the full), with *Singapore* especially being a bit of a personal let-down, but on the whole they're pretty good value.

Paul Presley

PCZVERDICT   **65%, 75%, 85% (in order mentioned)**

Vor Sprung Dürch Technik, as they say in Germany.

WARBIRDS

⊛ £19.99 • Interactive Magic • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 **Memory** 16 Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** Joystick **WE SAY** We'd recommend a Pentium 133 or higher, 32Mb RAM, analog joystick and D3D card

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED There are two breeds of flight sim fans: the anally-retentive types who play Microsoft's *Flight Sim 6* (with Air Traffic Control add-on pack), and the adrenalin junkies who just want to take to the skies and blast. *WarBirds* makes no bones of the fact that it is basically a jazzed-up arcade game with middle-of-the-road graphics. So why play it?

Well it's one of the few online games out there and it's pretty neat. Four teams battling it out for control of the game areas, and there are a shedload of aircraft available (fighters, fighter-bombers and heavy bombers).

The in-game graphics are fairly mediocre, even with a 3D card. But considering that you frequently have more than 150 people playing at the same time it's understandable. The flight engine model is realistic (blackouts, engine failure, limited ammo etc), and some of the pilots are very good.

Curiously, *WarBirds* has been around for over a year, but Interactive Magic have only just released a retail version. As well as all the online tomfoolery, you also get some single-player missions, but they're fairly dull and not worth bothering with. However, you also get 15 hours of free online game time, which covers the cost of playing. I-Magic plan to set up a European server, but at present the game is still US-based.

If your idea of fun is circling a replica of Heathrow Airport, don't bother. However, if you're a fan of realistic dogfights then this game is tops.

Dan Emery

PCZVERDICT   **85%**

Three CDs of dead easy puzzles won't keep you up long.

NIGHTLONG: UNION CITY CONSPIRACY

⊛ £34.99 MicroProse • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound cards **WE SAY** Sounds right

The only notable adventures recently have been *Blade Runner* (*PCZ* #58, 88%) and *The Secret Of Monkey Island 3* (*PCZ* #86, 92%). Unfortunately, *Nightlong* does nothing to change the situation.

The extremely forgettable plot revolves around a future where governments have been replaced by huge corporations that dominate the political scene. Think of it as a sort of *Syndicate* (*PCZ* #17, 92%) storyline, except without all the violence. You play one Joshua Reev, a fashionably weird cyberpunk. A paltry eight lines of the manual tell us he is an ex-soldier who owes a great debt to a Hugh Martens, the Governor of Union City. With this lack of information in hand, you're dumped on the roof of an apartment block and expected to find out why some mysterious terrorist group is trying to kill Martens.

Gameplay consists of wandering around Union City trying to sort out the mystery. The trouble is that the story is so generic and unexciting that you'll often find yourself almost falling asleep after a few minutes' play. This situation certainly isn't helped by the dire music, which consists of a series of six piano chords being repeated until you are forced to turn down the volume. The puzzles are also far too easy to accomplish – I finished all three CDs in less than seven hours of staid play.

If you're looking for a graphic adventure to play at the moment, then you'll have to wait a bit longer for something more exciting to happen. Otherwise it's back to trying to find yet another alternative ending for *Blade Runner*.

James Gorbold

PCZVERDICT   **43%**

The F-16's cockpit is all switches and monitors; stepping into the MiG is like getting into an old Mini 850.
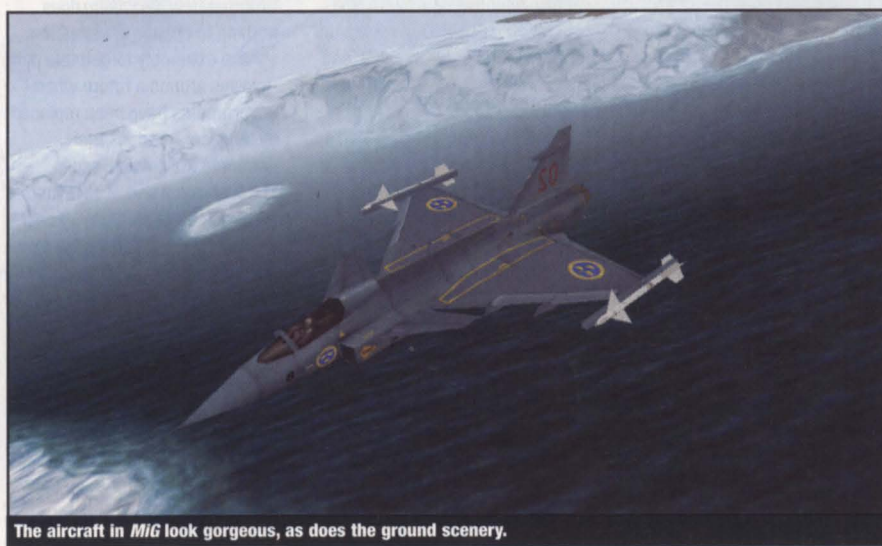
The aircraft in *MiG* look gorgeous, as does the ground scenery.

F-16 MULTIROLE FIGHTER / MIG-29 FULCRUM

⊙ £34.99 • Novalogic • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM
WE SAY P200, 32Mb RAM and 3Dfx card recommended

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED Two for the price of one. That statement is guaranteed to split people down the middle: cynical "you get nothing for nothing" types on one side, and the bargain brigade on the other. Novalogic are hoping to bridge this social divide by releasing *F-16 Multirole Fighter* and *MiG-29 Fulcrum* as a double pack. Two planes, two games and lots of link-up tomfoolery to be had.

The first thing that strikes you is that the graphics engine is rather nice. Gone are the old Novalogic voxels that really didn't do much for realism (other than to dispel any real feeling of it), and in comes a nice, clean visual style. The usual 3Dfx'd shaded and textured ground sits alongside the nicely detailed aircraft (zoom in close during a night sortie and see the glow of the HUD (through the canopy). The in-cockpit representation is good, but some of the instruments can appear a little fuzzy. This wouldn't be a problem if they were just there as dummies, but considering they're used to fly it can sometimes be a little tricky to determine what they say. Actually flying the aircraft enables you to feel the differences between east and west quite nicely. The MiG is unstable but highly manoeuvrable, while the F-16 is solid and dependable. The game enables you to undertake a choice of single missions or partake in a number of integrated campaigns and, utilising Novalogic's Integrated Battle Space and their NovaWorld Server, F-16 and MiG-29 pilots can take to the skies with up to 128 other like-minded jet-heads.

While by no means ground-breaking games, both *F-16* and *MiG-29* offer plenty of playability for your dollar. The shortcomings (such as oversimplification, with no real control over the campaign structure) are outweighed by the fact that they are multiplayer sims with a nicely balanced feel. Get a MiG up against an F-16 and I'm sure you'll come away thinking that you've got yourself a bargain.

Steve English

PCZ VERDICT **81%**

Great graphics, confusing game. Oh well.

RIVERWORLD

⊙ £34.99 • Cryo • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** P133 with 32Mb RAM is more realistic
----

3D real-time strategy games have yet to make an impact on the gaming world at large. Play *Riverworld* for half an hour and you'll find out exactly why. The interface appears to have been designed with the sole intention of confusing the player at every turn. If you're used to 2D strategy games in which multiple units can be selected in seconds and identified immediately no matter where they go to on the play area, you'll stare at *Riverworld*'s interface in dismay as you try to remember where the last unit you selected has wandered off to. To find out, you need to bring up sub-menus and then re-select the unit in question, or scour the main play area for the little sods.

Ah, yes, sub-menus: there are rather a lot of them in *Riverworld*, as it happens. There are sub-menus for all the different units and buildings in the game, and you *must* use them all to get on with most of the things you need to do. This gets more than a little irritating after, say, a couple of minutes.

Having said all that, it's got to be said that Cryo should be commended for attempting as ambitious a project as this. *Riverworld* has decent graphics, plenty of different tribes to choose from, and a research tree that any 2D strategy game would be proud to call its own. Sadly, all the individual elements in the game just don't come together to form a convincing whole, making *Riverworld* an initially entertaining diversion that ultimately fails to impress. If you're looking at the screenshot and thinking you'd like to have a bash at the game anyway, try to get hold of a demo before parting with any cash or it will all end in tears, mark our words.

Chris Anderson

PCZ VERDICT **65%**
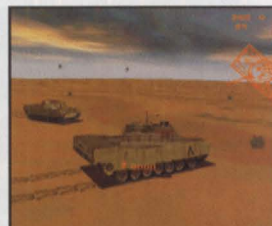
He we are, pinning back the Libyan army – obvious, innit?

SPEARHEAD

⊙ £34.99 • Interactive Magic • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** 3D card recommended
----

Spearhead is a tank sim set in North Africa. You side with the Tunisians and pin back the Libyan forces, who have support from various Islamic fundamentalist parties, and a few divisions of the Tunisian Army. The graphics aren't that good, and the story behind it is altogether a bit weak.

Although you drive a tank yourself, you have control of an IVIS (Inter Vehicular Information System) from where you can issue commands to other tanks. Although the training missions are enjoyable, the actual campaign is boring, and the multiplayer option won't keep anyone occupied for more than an afternoon because your tanks can only take about two hits. Interactive Magic claim that you will be surrounded in the "hyper-intense" world of tank combat. The truth is that you only get to drive two tanks throughout the whole game, one of which is too slow, and the other, although faster, has a slow-moving gun turret that makes targetting impossible.

On one of the missions your task is to clear the route from your starting point to a base at the top of the screen. After taking out about five enemy tanks, you persist towards the base until about another five tanks come out of nowhere to kill off the refugees you are meant to look out for. Seeing as you can't tell the refugees what to do, and you're too slow to get in front of the refugees' truck, it's almost impossible to stop them from dying, and therefore from failing the mission. This is typical of the high level of difficulty of the missions in general.

Spearhead is alright to start with, but after an hour or so, it really gets on your nerves.

Steve Dobbings

PCZ VERDICT **55%**

BUDGET ZONE

Goodbye summer *(What summer? – Ed)*, hello winter. Time to start spending more evenings in front of your PC and a warm fire, especially when money's short

⭐ **A LOW-BUDGET PRODUCTION BY** Chris Anderson, Richie Shoemaker and Paul Presley

With 3D terrain and true line of sight, *TA* remains the best RTS there is.

Total Anal Lotion, according to Charlie Brooker.

The range of units available is sometimes overwhelming.

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

⭐ £12.99 • Replay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P120 **Memory** 16Mb RAM

If you've been holding off from buying a real-time strategy game over recent months, in the hope that the next big thing would come along, then all you've been doing is stalling the inevitable. Why? Because *Total Annihilation* (*PCZ #56, 92%*) is still the best there is. Nothing in the year since its original release has come close to matching it. What else is there to do but to give in, count your coppers and go and buy a copy of *TA*?

From the 3D polygon units to the awesome soundtrack, *TA* dishes out atmosphere in spades. The sheer, almost bewildering variety of units available ensures that this game will keep you hooked for a long time to come. Single-player games are action-packed, especially skirmishes, and if and when you get to play online you'll find that the game has almost the same sort of following as *Quake* (*PCZ #43, 96%*).

The only problem with *TA* is that it's perhaps too dry. With a lack of any human units, it lacks soul. There's no blood, no "yessir"s, and the storyline follows a futile war that continues without purpose. Still, it's an action-packed game that looks awesome and plays superbly. You have no excuses not to own it. None.

PCZVERDICT 93%
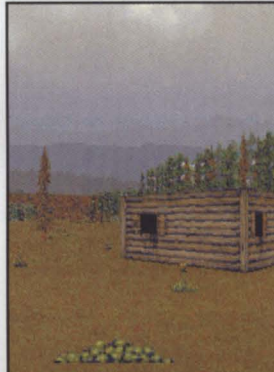
It looks awful, it *is* awful. There is no more to be said.

BETRAYAL IN ANTARA

⭐ £9.99 • Sierra Originals • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486/100 **Memory** 16Mb RAM

It seems that apart from *Final Fantasy VII* (*PCZ #66, 93%*), RPG fans aren't catered for as much as they were a few years ago. This looks like changing, however, with a clutch of promising new titles peeping over the horizon – *Baldur's Gate*, *Lands Of Lore III*, *Soulbringer* and *Ultima Ascension* all look like delivering the goods in '99. Now, though, we are still in the midst of a great depression, compounded by shit games like *Betrayal In Antara*.

On the rosy side of the hedge, the game is big, with a well-told story. Underneath, however, the whole game is a mess of thorns. You play a whining farm hand whose solo quest is to leave the bosom of your well-oiled family and hit the road in search of certain death and the meaning of life. Along the way, meaningless sub-quests conspire to drag the game out, and from the start you seem to get into pointless scrapes with monsters that look like turds.

Graphically it's jerky, muddy and flat; sound-wise it's grating; and the unceasing turn-based combat is the final straw in a badly woven basket of poo.

PCZVERDICT 38%

It's got the 3Dfx patch and everything!

APACHE LONGBOW

⭐ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **ALSO REQUIRES** 3dfx card

This was *the* helicopter simulation of its day, but even though it's now been bundled with a 3Dfx patch there's no way it can line up with the likes of *Team Apache* (*PCZ #65, 93%*) or *Longbow 2* (*PCZ #59, 92%*) and still hope to stay on top. Still, as budget games go, a 3Dfx-ed helicopter sim for a fiver is a pretty good offer, especially as the game itself offers a considerable challenge with an agreeable mix of missions and options. The graphics are certainly a bit flat, but the controls and level of realism more than make up for the game's dated look. If you're into this type of game there are far worse things to spend your money on.

PCZVERDICT 80%

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY

⭐ £14.99 • EA Classics • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM

From beginning to end, *Little Big Adventure 2* is one of the most challenging and enjoyable adventures ever to grace the PC (and certainly the finest game ever to come out of France). Our hero, Twinsen, constantly smiling and of egg-shaped cranium, must rid the planet of the extra-terrestrial Esmers, a race of sausage-like bipeds with dubious intent. You can guess already that the game is full of bizarre and colourful characters, and it goes without saying that each and every one of them has been given a huge injection of personality. Even the different islands and worlds have their own identity. And even though the game is certainly big, it's difficult to get lost.

LBA 2 is actually a lot more than a simple adventure. Throughout the entire game you are asked to test platforming skills that have perhaps lain dormant since *Manic Miner*. You're expected to drive a buggy, fly a jetpack, and even indulge in a spot of gambling; there are few places in the game where you aren't entertained. The storyline, though typically French, is full of bizarre and humorous characters, and the graphics are bright and boldly colourful. It's bloody difficult, hellishly addictive, and incredibly beautiful. C'est magnifique, as they probably no longer say in France.
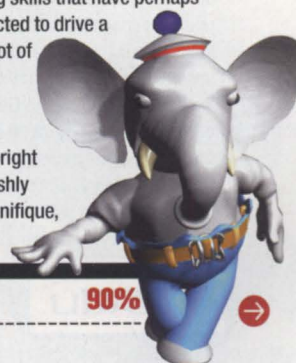
PCZVERDICT 90%

Enemy Unknown is no oil painting, but it's fiendishly addictive.

UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN
⭐ £4.99 • Sold Out • Out now

TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 386 **Memory** 4Mb RAM

PC ZONE CLASSIC This is the first game in the seminal *X-COM* series, and it's no exagerration to say it took the world by storm when it was first released in 1994. The graphics are nothing special, the sound's nothing special and the music is decidedly dodgy, but those of you willing to investigate the game's finer intricacies will be rewarded with one of the most addictive and satisfying game experiences ever. You play the commander of X-COM, a special unit set up to prevent aliens invading Earth. Gameplay is split firmly into two areas: resource management and combat. In the resource management section of the game, you employ ground troops, research better and more powerful weapons, and build facilities to defend your bases around the globe. Combat is turn-based and is affected by the decisions you made on the resource management screen, so any new weapons you've researched are available when you go into battle. Your troops gain experience with every successful mission they complete, and you'll find yourself developing a suitably anal relationship with them to the point where you get genuinely upset when one of them kicks the bucket. If you've ever played a turn-based strategy game and enjoyed it, and you've yet to sample the delights of the X-COM series, this game will be the best fiver you've ever spent.

PCZVERDICT **90%**
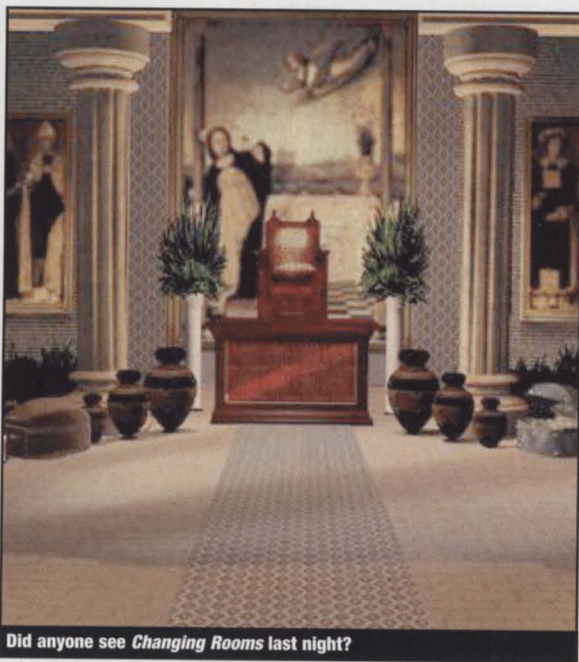
Did anyone see *Changing Rooms* last night?

Without a doubt the finest turn-based strategy game ever.

CIVILIZATION II
⭐ £12.99 • Powerplus • Out now

TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486/DX2-66 **Memory** 8Mb RAM

Even after all this time, *Civ II* is still regarded by many people as the best strategy game ever created, not least because of the depth of play it offers. Spanning the early dawn of civilisation through to the space age, the aim is to not only to keep your people alive, but also to be the first race to colonise outer space. To succeed you will have to master combat, trading, diplomacy and research. And even after you manage to 'win' there are still challenges aplenty by doing the whole thing over again. There aren't too many games that offer such a wide variety of confrontations, especially those such as this, without any multiplayer options tagged on the side.

Turn-based strategy has rarely been so well-handled. Even the graphics retain their original charm, and the atmosphere, guided by a suitably tribal soundtrack, still manages to cloud you in an epic battle for survival.

Next year will see the arrival of *Civilization – Call To Power* (essentially *Civ III*), and undoubtedly *Civ* mania will start all over again. You could save your pennies for that, but if you want to prepare yourself for the onslaught ahead, buying *Civ II* could be a very wise investment.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

PCZVERDICT **90%**

It's a dungeon. Keep it, why don't you?

DUNGEON KEEPER
⭐ £14.99 • EA Classics • Out now

TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 486DX66 **Memory** 8Mb RAM

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED Take control of your very own dungeon, make your very own monsters and defend them all from would-be bounty hunters out to steal your treasure. Such is the simple premise for Bullfrog's classic title. Well, we say 'classic' title (indeed we said it when the game first came out), but in truth *Dungeon Keeper* got a very mixed reception when it hit the shelves of retail stores all over the UK. Some people just found the gameplay a tad repetitive after about four or five levels, and this is mainly due to the fact that the gameplay *is* fairly repetitive; others thought it was so much fun they didn't mind doing the same thing all over again (build a dungeon, make some monsters, go and get the baddies etc). You may feel differently. Top tip: find a demo of the game from somewhere, play it five times in a row, and if you still feel you want more then go and buy it. Easy, innit?

PCZVERDICT **80%**

Some average things, yesterday.

OUTPOST 2
⭐ £9.99 • Sierra Originals • Out now

TECH SPECS
MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P60 **Memory** 16Mb RAM

Oh what an average war. *Outpost 2*'s biggest claim to fame when it first got a release was that it had absolutely *no* distinguishing features whatsoever – Mr Average McAverage of the Avingborne McAverages – and yet it scored 82 per cent. Ah, they were some wacky times, those 1997s. We'll never see their like again, mark my words.

Anyway, *Outpost 2* is back, and it's still managing not to burn up the tarmac. Only now it's (not) doing it for 25 quid less. Colonise a new world, then flee in stark, staring terror as it starts to tear itself apart.

All the usual resource management malarky is yours to play with, none of it in any way, shape or form remarkable. If anything it's become even more average with age. It still looks quite nice, and the basic premise is still pretty good, but there are just *so many* of this sort of thing out there, with the vast majority of them showing some signs of independent thought.

The only vaguely interesting thing about *Outpost 2* is still the easy-to-use Internet play. But, hell, who wants to play against other people these days? I mean, that's *so* 1997.

PCZVERDICT **45%**

PCZ SUPERTEST

JET SIMS

Fancy yourself in the cockpit of one of the world's fiercest jetfighters? Allow *Dave Mathieson* to sort the stragglers from the trail blazers

While Microsoft's classic *Flight Simulator* is the granddaddy of all PC flight sims, it only features civilian planes. Realistic it may be, but given the choice most of us would rather be blacking out from a turn registering in the red of G-force chasing MiGs than flying a 737 full of complaining, lobster-arsed holidaymakers home from Tenerife. Which is why there have always been military flight sims as well.

Since most of the PCs in the world are in America, and most of the meatiest jet fighters are made there, it's not surprising that most military flight sims feature Uncle Sam's hardware. While our cousins from across the pond lack a Royal Family and don't like football, when it comes to putting a vast, hi-tech war machine into action nobody does it better, whether against giant alien motherships or Sudanese paracetamol factories.

CAMPING IT UP

Current military flight sims fall into one of two camps: they're either based on planes that actually exist and have been used in real wars, or on the next generation of fighters not due in service until the next century. The latter have been in the majority lately, with the Lockheed F-22 the current fave, but opinions differ as to which make the best subject for a sim. Futuristic sims are probably a better bet from a games developer's point of view since the aircraft are open to interpretation, and there's more potential for different game scenarios. If you're not a hardcore realism fan, the prospect of flying something futuristic will

also go a long way towards fulfilling your childhood fantasies of commanding your own squadron of Angel Interceptors.

On the other hand, if you sat up all night during the Gulf War watching clips of laser-guided bombs blowing up Iraqi bunkers, regretting the fact that they don't let people over the age of 30 who spend too much time in the pub

> **"The prospect of flying something futuristic will go a long way towards fulfilling your childhood fantasies"**

fly multi-million pound F-15s, then something a bit more realistic is probably in order. Not for you some funny-looking, stealthy effort that virtually flies itself. You want your sims to accurately mimic the real thing, warts and all.

Whatever your preference, one thing about all flight sims really stands out – they're guaranteed to test your PC's hardware to the limit. It wasn't that long ago that they were about the only games that used 3D graphics, which

have always put a strain on less well-endowed PCs. But these days nearly every title uses some form of first-person perspective, so they're not particularly unique in this respect. The introduction of 3D cards has made any PC fitted with one more than capable of running most games, but flight sims pose a few problems that a £70 card can only partly resolve.

Basically, it all comes down to polygons. 3D objects are made up of lots of them, but in your average first-person shooter the number never gets too high, because most of the action takes place indoors. This obviously isn't the case for flight sims, and the number of polygons needed to create the terrain and other planes is a lot higher. These polygons have to be calculated by your PC's CPU before the 3D card gets a look in, so a fast processor is pretty essential.

The sims on test here demand quite a lot of your hardware, and although they all support

software-only 3D graphics, a 3D card is well-nigh essential to get the most out of them. The news isn't all bad, though, since they all have adjustable levels of detail, and we found that the majority proved highly playable on a P200MMX-based system with a Voodoo2 card.

PICK 'N' MIX

When selecting which flight sims to test, we eventually decided on a mixture between sims based on current and futuristic planes. In the former category, *Jane's F-15* is based around the McDonnell Douglas F-15 Strike Eagle, which saw service in the Gulf, while *F/A-18 Korea* and *iF/A-18E Carrier Strike Fighter* both model different versions of the US Navy's Hornet. Finally, *F-16 Fighting Falcon* puts you at the controls of everyone's fave Yankee fighter. On the futuristic front, *F-22: Total Air War* features the US Airforce's new baby, the F-22, due in service in 2004, while *Joint Strike Fighter* goes even further into the future with the X35 and X32.

THE MINI-RATINGS

The total score of each game is made up from combined ratings of the following five categories:-

GRAPHICS QUALITY Always important in flight sims, the quality of the view out of the window is all-important in providing a sense of realism. However, there's no point in having lovely graphics that crawl, so frame rate is all-important too.

AUTHENTICITY How real does it feel? Are the controls sufficiently complex? Are there plenty of weapons and targeting systems to get to grips with?

EASE OF USE How easy is it to get up and running? Is there a 'relaxed realism' flight-model for the novice?

ORIGINALITY Is the choice of plane original? What about the campaign scenarios? Are there any innovations that make it stand out?

GAMEPLAY You can have the most accurate sim in the world, but if the gameplay's boring you won't want to come back to it. Have these sims got what it takes?

Each category is rated out of 10; the main score is a percentag, which is followed by a summary comment. Got that? Good.

---

iF/A-18E CARRIER STRIKE FIGHTER

⭐ £29.99 • Interactive Magic • Reviewed *PCZ #70*

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 24Mb RAM **WE SAY** P200 – needs a Pentium II to be truly playable

Like *F/A-Korea*, *Carrier Strike Fighter* is based on the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet. The E version featured in *CSF* has been heavily redesigned though, and it's faster, stealthier and carries more advanced radar and weapons.

The game is split up into the usual categories, with training missions, single missions, and campaigns set in the Gulf and the Aegean Sea, and it's all put together with a commendable user interface. The main screen is a large picture of a naval base, with an aircraft carrier in port. Clicking on individual buildings takes you to different game areas, although the carrier is where the main action takes place, the inside of which is divided into further rooms complete with atmospheric sound effects.

CSF pays most attention to realism. There are plenty of keys to learn, plus an excellent mission editor if you're that way inclined. The on-board systems are pretty complicated, at least as much as *F/A-18 Korea*'s, and you get the distinct impression that Interactive Magic have done their homework.

Such realism should place *CSF* on a par with *Jane's F-15*, but it's badly let down by the in-game graphics. The objects themselves are acceptable, although not great, but the terrain is blocky and unconvincing. But the worst part is that the frame rates on our system were a lot lower than any of the other sims in our test, even with the level of detail turned down – bad enough for us to check whether or not the graphics had been set up to use hardware acceleration. They had. When you take into account that the visual quality of the graphics isn't that wonderful in the first place, there's no excuse for this poor frame rate. To be fair, our system falls towards the lower spec of what's recommended to play *CSF*, but you only have to look at *TAW* to see what can be achieved.

The dodgy graphics are a real shame, because the rest of *CSF* is very good. There's tons of atmosphere, with good cut-scenes during campaigns, and excellent still graphics in the game's interface. The flight model's also a lot better than the one in *F/A-18 Korea*, and the missions give you a great feeling of being part of a real war, plus it all takes place from carriers, unlike *F-15*. Roll on *CSF 2*.

In *Carrier Strike Fighter*, you fight strikes, but from an aircraft carrier.

PCZ VERDICT

Graphics	4
Authenticity	9
Ease of use	7
Originality	8
Gameplay	6

70 Very realistic, but badly let down by the graphics

F-16 FIGHTING FALCON

⭐ £29.99 (price of *Front Line Fighters* pack; also available on its own on budget for £4.99) • Digital Integration • Reviewed *PCZ #67*

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Pretty fast on a lower spec machine, as you'd expect from an older sim

There was a time when you couldn't get anything but F-16 sims for your PC (or Amiga or ST in those days). The F-16 is one of the most widely used fighters around; it looks nice, and it's pretty nippy, all of which make it a good choice for a sim.

F-16 Fighting Falcon is the 'sequel' to the excellent-for-its-time *Hind* (*PCZ #40*, 90%) chopper sim, itself a descendent of *Tornado* (*PCZ #6*, 93%), one of the best sims ever. This version comes with *Hind* and *Apache Longbow* (*PCZ #31*, 96%) as part of the *Front Line Fighters* pack, and includes the Afghanistan Campaign mission disk along with the existing campaigns in Korea, Israel and Cyprus.

F-16 is the oldest sim on test here, but it's recent enough to include 3Dfx support, although we had to download a patch to get it running with our Voodoo2 card. The in-game graphics look dated, but move quickly enough, and there are more ground objects than found in some newer sims.

F-16 comes with a nice variety of missions, although slightly more emphasis is placed on ground attack than dogfighting. The latter isn't particularly easy as there isn't a padlock view – which is pretty much essential fare these days. Still, the cockpit displays look pretty good, although as you'd expect there's no mouse control – all commands are made via the keyboard.

While it's not particularly up to date, *F-16* fares well in terms of gameplay, and the game world is realistic, with plenty of explosions and other stuff. The campaigns are pretty big, too, and the mission editor, while not as good as *Tornado*'s, enables you to make any required adjustments to waypoints and payloads. There's also a nifty 3D camera view that you can fly over the map to suss out the lie of the land.

Its age is its biggest problem, and it can't compete with most of the other sims here in terms of graphics. Unlike *CSF*'s, what they lack in visual quality they make up in frame rate, which is good news for owners of slower PCs. Still, it can't compete with the likes of *TAW* and *F-15*, even on slower systems. But if you don't have *Hind* either, the *Front Line* pack is good value for money, and if you want to fly F-16s there's not a lot of choice anyway.

Those old diesel engines are bloody dirty.

PCZ VERDICT

Graphics	6
Authenticity	7
Ease of use	7
Originality	8
Gameplay	8

80 Something for everyone. No, really
(mark for entire *Front Line Fighters* pack)

JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER

⭐ £12.99 • Eidos Interactive • Reviewed *PCZ* #58

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Pretty fast on our test system, but a P233 would speed things up at low level

If you compare *Joint Strike Fighter* to *Jane's F-15*, you'll find that it falls at the opposite end of the authenticity scale. While the F-22 is going to be in service before long, the X35 and X32 multi-role fighters in *JSF* are still at the shortlist stage, with the winner to be announced in 2001 and to enter service in 2008. While not exactly X-Wings (yes, we know that the *Star Wars* universe was a long time ago, but the point's still valid), these planes are pretty damn futuristic, and are designed to be small,

It looks like a bat, it flies like an eagle – but it's neither.

stealthy and manoeuvrable.

Of course, since these planes are so experimental and secret, it's safe to assume that *JSF* is less of an accurate combat simulation, and more an exercise in "what if…". But Eidos have done a pretty good job of making the weapons systems and avionics in *JSF* seem pretty authentic. Basically, both planes can carry a combination of air-to-air and strike weapons, both internally and on wing pylons, but with so much emphasis on stealth, radar-reflecting external stores are often avoided.

The cockpits in *JSF* are of the dynamic, mouse-activated kind, with the usual keyboard alternatives. Unfortunately, you can't activate the controls while the game is paused, and since the keyboard shortcuts can be a bit long-winded, things can get rather hectic. The displays themselves are very nice, and similar to those in *TAW*, with

different ones accessed via the numeric keypad and a nifty 3D scrolling effect as you move between them.

Since most of the action in *JSF* happens at low level, it's a real bonus that the landscape moves past at such a rate – it creates the best sense of speed at this level of any sim. Frame rates are good once you reduce the level of detail, too. While everything's very smooth, it's all a bit artificial-looking with a slight 'alien planet' feel, but maybe this far in the future this is what Earth will look like.

The game's structure is rather odd, with campaigns and instant action dogfights, but no training or single missions. This means that the only way to practice your ground attack skills is to start a campaign, fly to the target, and hope that you understand the instructions written in the manual. If you cock up at this point, you either get shot down

and have to fly the whole mission again, or you just quit out and have another go. Still, the weapons systems are all pretty straightforward, and the campaigns aren't bad. One final problem with *JSF* is that it's bloody hard, even on the easiest setting. If a bunch of rookie enemies can shoot down the US Airforce's latest hardware this easily, global capitalism could be in big trouble.

PCZ VERDICT

Graphics	8
Authenticity	5
Ease of use	6
Originality	9
Gameplay	7

85 Fancy a challenge? Look no further

F/A-18 KOREA

⭐ £29.99 • Empire Interactive • Reviewed *PCZ* #61

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** As smooth as can be on a P200 with 3Dfx

The sequel to *Hornet 3*, which was originally an Apple Mac game, *F/A-18 Korea* has a new scenario with totally new missions and a new, 3Dfx'd-up graphics engine. Based around the US Navy's all-round workhorse, the F/A-18, *F/A-18 Korea* features air-to-air and ground attack missions in what has always been a popular scenario for flight sims – a war between North and South Korea.

Like the F-15, the F/A-18 is very much a 'real' plane, with a long service history, and the emphasis is again very much on authenticity. This means a big set of controls to learn, and you'll need to get to grips with plenty of radar modes and guidance systems if you're to have a hope

against the computer-controlled North Korean forces.

Unlike *TAW* and *F-15*, the controls in *F/A-18* are operated purely from the keyboard. While this isn't as intuitive or realistic as using the mouse, it's quicker in combat, and the sensible layout means that it doesn't take long to get used to the system.

The biggest omission in *F/A-18 Korea* is the lack of proper campaigns. The sole campaign is simply a series of pre-defined missions – you get a choice of four at each stage, and completing one gives you the choice of four more, which get progressively harder. The missions are pretty good, but since you can fly any of them individually without affecting your

career, there's little incentive to see the campaign through to the end. However, once you complete the missions, there's a very easy to use mission editor, which extends the sim's life considerably.

The most impressive thing about *F/A-18 Korea* is the graphics. While the scenery isn't particularly detailed, with large, generic textures covering everything, the frame rate on our PC remained consistently high, which made for a smooth ride. But what *F/A-18 Korea* lacks in detail, the graphics engine makes up for in realism. The lighting is spot on, with lovely shading and nice distance haze, and sunsets in particular have never looked so good. Smoke and explosion effects are also very nicely done.

While it can't carry the sheer amount of weaponry of the F-15, the range of weapons is wide,

F/A-18 Korea has all the usual padlock and virtual cockpit views.

ranging from air-to-air missiles to laser-guided bombs and tactical nukes. Difficulty is pitched at just the right level too, and you initially spend a lot of time dangling beneath your parachute. The flight model seems a tad lightweight compared to the one in *iF/A-18E CSF* though, and the difference between landing on a carrier with a full load of bombs and one with an empty hold isn't as noticeable as it should be.

While it can't compete with *F-15* and *TAW* in terms of campaigns and that overall sense of 'being there', *F/A-18 Korea's* smooth graphics make it a real pleasure on a less well-endowed

PC, and it's worth considering if you want a reasonably realistic flying experience and don't mind creating your own missions.

PCZ VERDICT

Graphics	9
Authenticity	7
Ease of use	9
Originality	8
Gameplay	6

90 Low-end PC owners, this one's for you
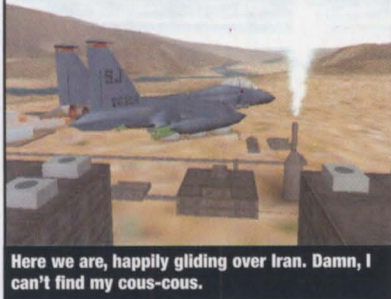
Here we are, happily gliding over Iran. Damn, I can't find my cous-cous.

The F-15 can carry shitloads of weapons, which can be extremely useful.
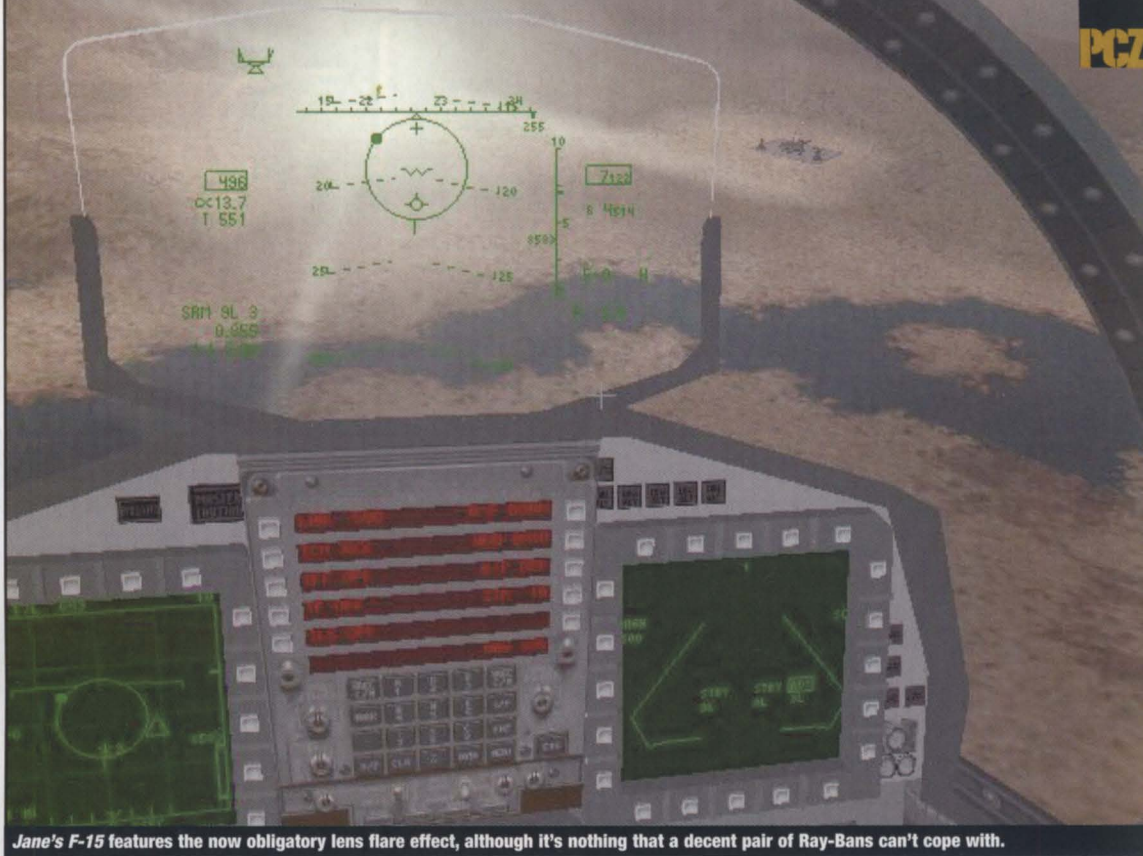
Jane's F-15 features the now obligatory lens flare effect, although it's nothing that a decent pair of Ray-Bans can't cope with.

JANE'S F-15

⭐ £39.99 • Electronic Arts • Reviewed *PCZ* #64

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Plays well on a P200 with a Voodoo2 card. If you want full detail though, get a Pentium II

The F-15 was originally designed as an air-superiority fighter to counter the perceived threat from planes like the MiG-25 back in the '70s. While this was an age ago in terms of things like taste and pop music, decent military planes can remain in service for decades, although they usually have to adapt to survive.

The F-15 that this game is based on is the E model that's used mainly for strike missions. Since it's also definitely not futuristic, the emphasis in *F-15* is completely different from *TAW*,

with its hi-tech, mainly air-to-air approach. This adds up to a game based on current technology and on a real war (the Gulf).

F-15 is probably the most realistic of the sims on test here, and there's a pretty hefty manual covering all aspects of the systems on board. Given the F-15's role, most of this technology is based around blowing up things on the ground using a large array of different weapons. Since it's so complicated, the F-15 is a two-seater, with the bloke in the back handling most of the

weapon-targeting functions. The game models this set-up accurately, and you can switch between pilot and co-pilot positions whenever you like. Like *TAW*, the cockpit controls can all be operated directly with the mouse. This isn't as quick as reaching out and pressing a button in a real cockpit, but you can operate everything while the game is paused. This is a bit of a cheat, but it's pretty helpful, especially as you're playing the part of two people.

The game is divided into the familiar system of single missions, training missions and campaigns, and the action takes place either in Iraq during the Gulf War, or over present-day Iran. As

you'd expect from Jane's, these campaigns are fully dynamic, so you're not simply flying pre-scripted missions, and there's a first-rate mission planner if you want further control.

F-15 is a close sequel to the excellent *Longbow 2* (*PCZ* #59, 92%), and uses a similar graphics engine, which means that plenty of attention is paid to low-level flying. Since most of the action takes place over the desert, there aren't many ground objects to gawp at, but the terrain itself is ever-changing, with no obvious repeating textures. The sense of speed is excellent too, which is important when you spend a lot of time at low level. With the detail turned down a bit, everything was pretty smooth on our test system, although things got a bit slower over built-up areas.

It's the sheer attention to detail that makes *F-15* such a great sim – everything feels just right. A typical mission involves flying several hundred miles over the desert at 100ft in the middle

of the night while keeping a cautious eye out for enemy fighters and SAMs, 30 seconds of intense action over the target, and then buggering off home avoiding missiles. Very atmospheric, and probably a very good impression of the real thing – not that we'd know.

Such accuracy may not appeal to everyone out there, and *F-15* isn't as good an all-rounder as *Total Air War*, but for sheer authenticity it beats the rest hands down.

PCZ VERDICT

Graphics	8
Authenticity	10
Ease of use	7
Originality	9
Gameplay	9

92 Stunning attention to detail

Ooh, look, a screenshot with a map and other things.

"Would passengers please return to their seats and observe that I have put on the 'no-smoking' sign."

F-22: TOTAL AIR WAR

⭐ £39.99 • Ocean/DiD • Reviewed • *PCZ* #68

SUPERTEST WINNER

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 **Memory** 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** DiD's recommended spec of a P200 and 3Dfx card is about right; the graphics will start to suffer badly on anything less

Although most flight sims have something going for them, it's not often that one comes along with all the right ingredients. The last sim to do so was probably the outstanding *EF2000* (*PCZ* #31, 97%), which had it all – great graphics, decent campaigns, a huge playing area and tons of atmosphere.

However, even with the 3Dfx support that was added as an upgrade last year it's looking a bit long in the tooth these days, which is why the sequel, *F-22: ADF* (*PCZ* #60, 93%), was so eagerly awaited. With new graphics and a new plane, all *ADF* lacked was a campaign, being limited to single missions. With *TAW*, DiD have rectified this

promotion you get more control over the enemy resources that are to be targeted using a fully-featured mission planner. Even better though, you can sit on board an AWACS plane and direct your forces in real time over the whole theatre. Click on the icon representing one of your planes on the map, and you get a miniature 3D view of what they're up to. Double-clicking on an F-22 in the AWACS screen jumps you into the cockpit of that plane.

The in-game graphics are the best around, too. The scenery is varied, with plenty of mountains (proper ones, not just slight undulations), deserts and green fields. Explosions and other effects are also top-notch, and

> ❝The best flight sim by quite a distance, and unless you're a fan of authenticity there's no need to look elsewhere❞

and instantly produced the best military flight sim by miles.

There have been so many F-22 sims released over the past year that you'd be forgiven for thinking that developers had forgotten that other planes existed. Needless to say, the F-22 is the US Airforce's next-generation fighter – it may be big and ugly, but it's fast, stealthy, packed with the latest avionics and costs as much as a small Premiership club. But this is money well spent if shooting down loads of baddies with the minimum of fuss is important to you, because the F-22 represents a big jump in technology over planes like the F-15 and F-16.

Since the F-22 isn't in service yet, it's hard to say how authentic the systems modelled in *TAW* are, but they feel pretty convincing. But even if it turns out that it isn't accurate it won't matter, because *TAW* is a lot more than a simple simulator of flight. The 'Total Air War' of the title is a comprehensive campaign engine in which you take command of the whole war in one of several different scenarios. At first you have to take the missions allocated to you, but as you gain

there's little more satisfying than flying through the debris of a recently wasted enemy fighter. The words 'top graphics' and 'flight sim' put together is usually an indication that you're going to need a new PC, but *TAW* ran surprisingly smoothly on our lowly P200. Things got a bit jerky over runways and when there were a number of planes about, but by reducing the level of detail it was always playable.

We've already said it, but *TAW* is currently the best flight sim available by quite a distance, and unless you're a die-hard fan of authenticity there's really no need to look elsewhere. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

Graphics	10
Authenticity	7
Ease of use	9
Originality	9
Gameplay	10

98

Hey, folks, it's the best bar none
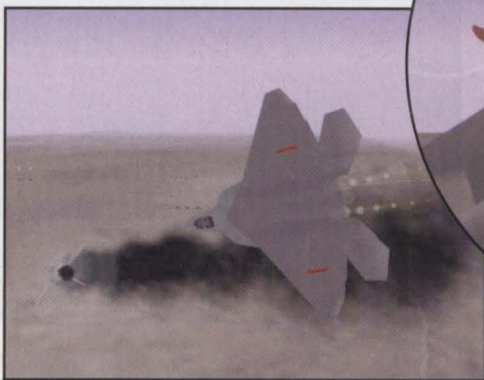
That's him stuffed. *TAW*'s lovely smoke effects mean that the deaths of your enemies always look pretty.

Paaaarrrrp. Oops, sorry, didn't see you were behind me.

The F-22 is big, ugly, and worth loads.
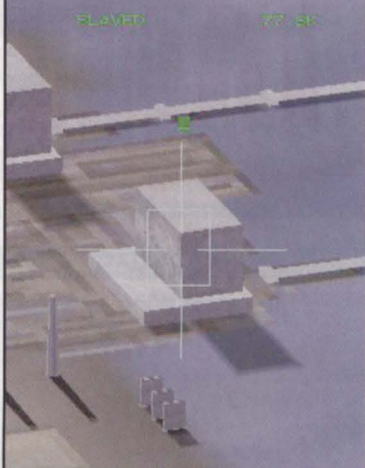
Ooh, look! It's just like the Gulf War. I hope this one is a military target, though.

TAW's padlock views keep you on top of those dirty commies and their tricks.

OUT NOW!

Five reasons not to go out this weekend and save your money instead. We take a look at and rate some of the latest cool hardware

⭐ **STAYING IN** Warren Chrismas and James Gorbold
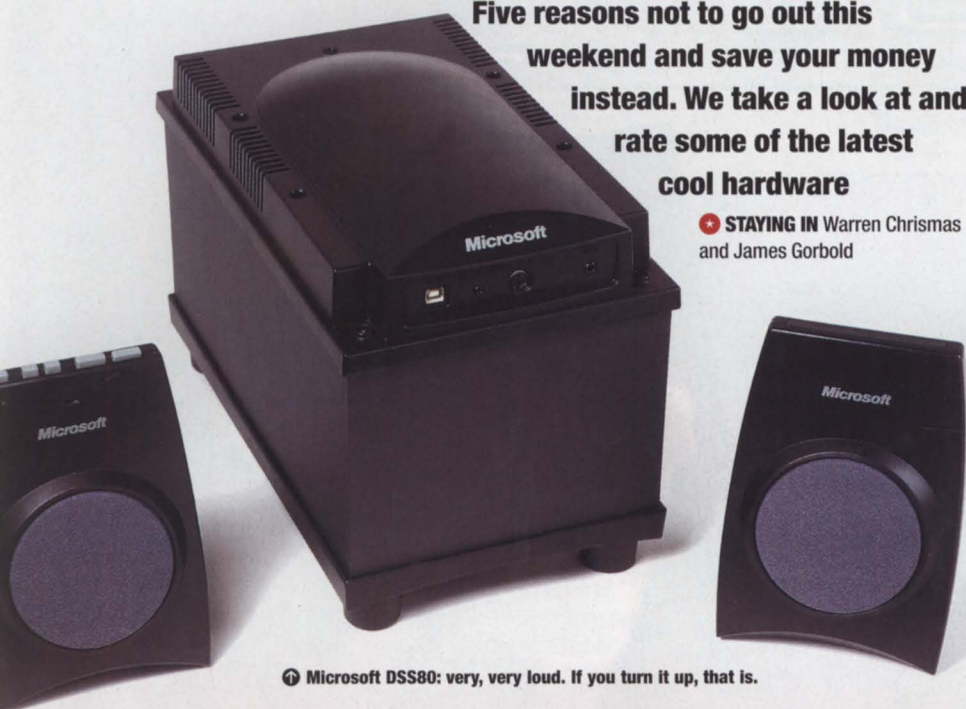
⬆ Microsoft DSS80: very, very loud. If you turn it up, that is.

MICROSOFT DIGITAL SOUND SYSTEM 80

⭐ £180 • Microsoft • 0345 002000 • www.microsoft.com

According to manufacturers of peripherals, the future of PC sound is digital. By utilising the USB (Universal Serial Bus) ports found on modern PCs, digital audio data can now be sent directly to digital speakers with integrated digital-to-analogue converters (and therefore bypassing a sound card), to produce clean, noise-free output.

One of the first off the block with such a set-up is Microsoft and their Digital Sound System 80 (for Windows 98 only). Produced in conjunction with Philips, it comprises two 16Watt satellite speakers (which have a frequency range of 60Hz-20KHz) and a reasonably-sized (7.3x8.9x12.8in) 44Watt subwoofer box (160Hz-40Hz) which, aside from having

a USB port, also has an input for connecting a sound card or other audio source.

We tested the system with a variety of sounds including CD-quality WAV files and *Grand Prix Legends* with its raspy engine noises and were impressed with the results. One thing's for sure: cranked right up – which you can do with little or no distortion – it's seriously loud. How loud? Enough to shake our PC's monitor. Enough to have our test room vibrating. Enough, no doubt, to divert the attention of those campaigning against the building of a second runway at Gatwick, who we're expecting to arrive at our offices any minute. It is, in short, *bloody* loud.

Adjustments can be made

with a ten-band software-based equaliser which includes presets for Games, Jazz, Rock and so on, but strangely not for Filthy Acid Techno. Still, you can set and save your own. There's also a Surround/Virtualizer setting, but we found this to be a tad disappointing, possibly because we're getting used to four-speaker set-ups. Impressive as the DSS80 is (hey, we'd be happy to keep it), it's the first digital system we've heard so it's a little hard to be totally objective. At around £180 it's hardly an impulse buy, so you may want to see what other manufacturers come up with.

PCZVERDICT **85%**

MAXI GAMER PHOENIX

⭐ £99 • Guillemot • 0181 944 1940 • www.guillemot.com/uk

PCZONE CLASSIC

The PCI-based Maxi Gamer Phoenix is one of several new 3D accelerators to have hit the market over the last few weeks (we'll be taking an in-depth look at all of them in our next issue, out Tuesday 17 November). This 16Mb board is based around 3Dfx's brand new Banshee chipset. Unlike 3Dfx's Voodoo chips, it processes both 2D and 3D images. As such, Banshee-based accelerators are designed to *replace* rather than supplement your existing 2D graphics card.

The Phoenix's 2D performance is excellent; second only to the mega-expensive Matrox Millennium G200, which is primarily aimed at high-end/business uses. It's with 3D games, however, that it really shows its mettle – particularly with those which use Direct3D. We tested the card using *Forsaken* at several screen resolutions, for example, and found it to be so fast that the

game itself couldn't keep up. Admittedly our test PC was a 300MHz Pentium II with 64Mb of RAM but this is still the first graphics card we've tested to blow through *Forsaken*'s own speed limit. Respect due.

If *Quake II* is more your scene, then the new chipset is more than capable of living up to its 3Dfx heritage. Using 3Dfx's proprietary (and well supported) Glide drivers – which the Banshee is fully compatible with – we achieved 61.2fps (frames per second) running *Quake II* at a screen resolution of 640x480. At 800x600 the rating was 44.3fps, while even at the super-demanding 1024x768 we got 28.4fps.

Dedicated Voodoo2-based 3D accelerators with their twin texture units are perhaps a better route for power gamers, but with this kind of performance it's hard not to recommend the Maxi Gamer Phoenix to those on a tighter budget – especially so when you consider that it will almost certainly out-perform your existing 2D graphics card.

PCZVERDICT **90%**
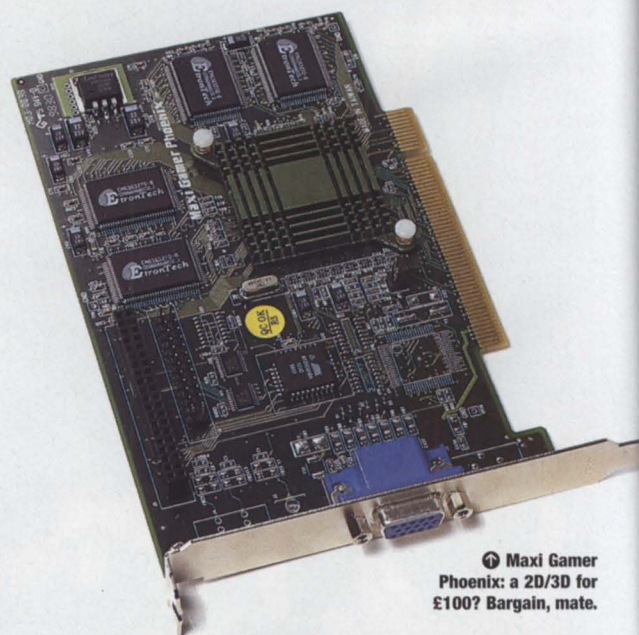
⬆ Maxi Gamer Phoenix: a 2D/3D for £100? Bargain, mate.

> **❝Quite where the "styled like an Olympic weapon" description of the Cyborg Stick 2000 came from is anyone's guess❞**

SAITEK CYBORG STICK 2000

⭐ £40 • Saitek • 01454 855050 • www.saitek.com

The client: Saitek. The designers: London-based design team Seymour Powell, previously responsible for styling Norton and BSA motorbikes, Casio Baby-G watches, Intercity 250 trains and, er, Tefal Freeline cordless kettles. The brief: design an ergonomic, fully-featured joystick which,

unlike many controllers, is suitable for both right- and left-handed gamers.

The result? The Cyborg Stick 2000. Very nice it is too; although quite where the "styled like an Olympic weapon" description in the product catalogue came from is anyone's guess (probably

CREATIVE SOUND BLASTER LIVE!

⊙ £150 • Creative Labs • 01189 344322 • www.sblive.com

So, then, Creative have finally delivered a PCI-based sound card. For those of you who have been asleep for the last few months, the high bandwidth of the PCI-bus (compared with an ISA bus) enables this new generation of 'audio accelerators' to deliver high-quality, 3D sound without putting a strain on your PC's processor. It also allows for the use of large, dynamic sample sets (in this case up to 32Mb) which are stored in the computer's host memory rather than on the sound card itself.

Whatever, the Sound Blaster Live! is the best example of the technology yet, with its powerful 32-bit, 256-voice EMU10K1 processor (said to offer the equivalent of having a P90 dedicated to audio work), capable

of applying complex – and very impressive – real-time reverb and chorus effects and 3D positioning to any sound source (CD audio, MIDI, WAVs etc), and outputting to either two or four (amplified) speakers or to a mind-boggling eight-speaker digital system (due from Creative in the future).

Simple-to-select Environmental Audio pre-sets are provided to enhance more than 40 existing games and to simulate various environments (arena, cave, underwater and so on), but the power of the board is only truly realised when a game directly supports Environmental Audio Extensions (EAX) – Creative's own extensions to Microsoft's DirectSound3D APIs – which seems to have wide-spread support around the

industry from Microsoft themselves, as well as the likes of EA, Activision and Eidos. The special (cut-down) version of *Unreal* supplied with the board is EAX-enabled and it sounds absolutely stunning. Other bundled software includes

Cubasis AV, Sound Forge XP 4.0, Mixman Studio and a host of audio utilities.

The Sound Blaster Live! is the best all-round sound card available right now – but at a price. If you're primarily interested in games, you may

⬆ **Creative Sound Blaster Live!: a smart card, but at a price.**

want to look out for the 'Value' edition, which dispenses with some of the features aimed at musos (including the gold-plated sockets and an extension board with S/PDIF I/O and MIDI ports) but should cost at least £50 less. Also worth keeping in mind is that new boards based on rival chipsets (Aureal's Vortex and the ESS Maestro-2E) are due imminently. We'll be rounding them all up soon.

PCZVERDICT   **89%**

DIAMOND VIPER V550

⊙ £153 • Diamond Multimedia • 0118 944400 • www.diamondmm.com

The Diamond Viper V550 is based around another new graphics chipset – in this case, nVIDIA's TNT. Again, the TNT (backed by manufacturers such as Creative, ELSA and STB), is part of the new generation of 2D/3D hybrid accelerators capable of a performance previously only attainable with a decent graphics board combined with a specialist 2D accelerator.

Our 2D tests showed the Viper V550 to be a bit slower than the Maxi Gamer Phoenix (reviewed above), but to keep that in perspective, as a 2D card it's still the third-fastest one we've seen. Running Acclaim's *Forsaken* with Microsoft's Direct3D graphics drivers, the Viper V550 didn't quite match the outstanding frame rate performance of the 3Dfx
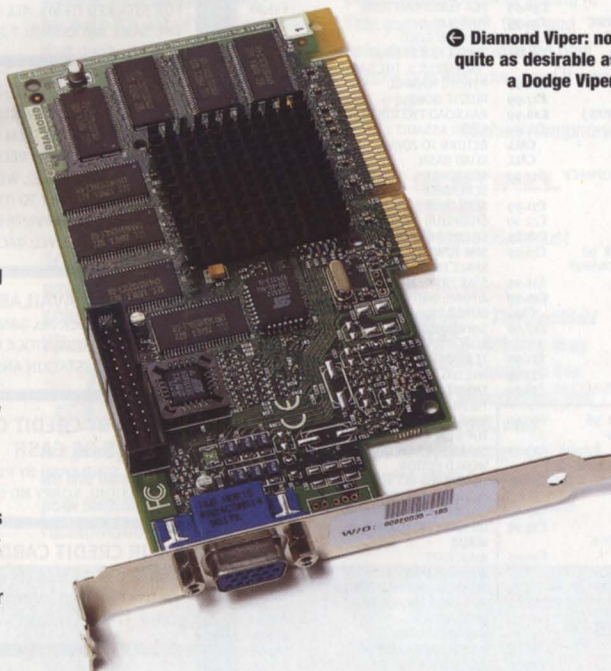
⬅ **Diamond Viper: not quite as desirable as a Dodge Viper.**

Banshee-based card but it still turned in a great performance.

The Viper 550 also supports OpenGL, the other industry-wide graphics standard which is commonly supported by 3D games. Running *Quake II* in

OpenGL mode it was narrowly beaten by the Maxi Gamer Phoenix at a low resolution of 640x480, although its score of 56.4fps (again, we tested on a 300MHz Pentium II) is still extremely impressive. It's a

different story at higher resolutions of 800x600 and 1024x768, where we obtained hugely impressive frame rates of 54.1 and 39.4fps respectively.

That these scores were more consistent across the board than those produced by the Maxi Gamer Phoenix shows that the Viper V550 has much more performance headroom at higher resolutions. The only real problem is the comparatively high price – over £50 more than the similarly performing board from Maxi and not that much less than a 12Mb Voodoo2-based card. Until the price comes down, we can only fully recommend it to those of you who are a little flush with cash or who insist on using ultra-high resolutions.

PCZVERDICT   **84%**

---

marketing speak). Whatever, the Cyborg Stick 2000 is a flightstick-style controller with a micro-switched trigger and three buttons, a directional (or 'coolie') hat and a throttle slider.

Using the supplied allen key you can adjust the tilt and angle of the thumb controller, move the

throttle controller to either the left or right side of the base and, very usefully, alter the position of the hand-rest on the shaft. It looks classy, feels well made and is comfortable to use. A job well done, in other words.

Those of you looking for a little more functionality should watch

out for the Cyborg 3D Digital – a fully-programmable digital version with extra buttons on the base unit and a 3D twist function – which is expected soon for around £10 extra.

PCZVERDICT   **88%**

➲ **Cyborg Stick 2000: designed by Tefal blokes.**

FEEDBACK

Is it wonderful, or woeful? Stiff, or stupendous? Excellent, or excrement?
We step aside to let you, the punter, voice *your* views on the games
PC ZONE has reviewed. *Richie Shoemaker* dives into the postbag

> **"Absolute shit. Do not buy it. I repeat: *Unreal* is shit. For every minute I played *Unreal* I was dragged back to *Quake II***
>
> **ROBERT MEDLOCK**

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 and address.

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.

MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS 2

REVIEWED Issue 65, July
SCORE 70%

What we thought

"As racing games go, it's a bit disappointing. The racing's slow-paced and dull (you never get much above 80mph), and the lack of a season option is a major oversight. It's got monster trucks. But it isn't particularly mad."

What you think

✪ "I own a Force Feedback joystick and I bought *MTM2* because it's one of the few games that support it. I was totally pissed off to find out that you couldn't crush cars! Insane! What is it you relate monster trucks to? Crushing cars – it's supposed to be total madness."

Paul Alan Stuhlfelder

VIRTUAL POOL 2

REVIEWED Issue 58, Xmas '97
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "Overall, the inner workings of *Virtual Pool 2* are pretty much faultless and, as the basis of an accurate pool simulator, come highly recommended."

What you think

✪ "Well what can I say, this game is the ultimate pool sim. First I started off with a little one-player game and immediately thought the controls would be like *Jimmy White's* (the annoying move-the-table when clicking-down garbage). Well I was wrong. What a great control interface Interplay have created. It's so simple yet it has everything.

"I have been practicing, only to find another great feature – tutorial videos that let you practice the shot after seeing it. This game is great. Guys and gals, don't bother with the new *Jimmy*, buy this now – and it was only £20!"

Michael Humphreys

THE SENTINEL RETURNS

REVIEWED Issue 66, August
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "*The Sentinel Returns* may laugh in the face of lucid description, but it's very different, very addictive, and very, very good. If you're after a refreshing challenge, this is the place to start."

UNREAL

REVIEWED Issue 65, July
SCORE 93%

What we thought

PC ZONE CLASSIC "Put simply, the *Unreal* menagerie just doesn't inspire terror. The creatures are sleek and well-animated, but they look more like people in rubber suits from a 1980's sci-fi epic than authentic alien butchers."

What you think

✪ "Absolute shit. Do not buy it. I repeat: *Unreal* is shit. I'm sorry to all its designers, but with an engine as powerful as this they should make a game that you want to play. For every minute I played *Unreal* I was dragged back to *Quake II*. Roll on *Ground Zero*, that's all I can say."

Robert Medlock

✪ "I finally completed *Unreal* and

What you think

✪ "When I played *Quake* too much I used to have dreams, sometimes pretty 'normal' ones, that had crosshairs in the middle. Now, after playing *Sentinel Returns*, I think they've gone out of control. It's brilliant."

Head Morely ("Medication time" – Nurse Ratched)

✪ "If anyone ever wanted proof that a primitive old classic can go through a technological tarting-up and emerge as a shiny, latter-day gem capable of shaming most modern games, the proof can be found in *Sentinel Returns*.

"Now let's see what a 3Dfx version of *Tetris* looks like."

Trappist

✪ "To be frank, *Sentinal* was crap the first time round. Why would it be any better now? I really hate this rehashing of old games. These games were only thought of as good in their day because of the limitations imposed by the hardware. Every single game which I thought was great when I was younger (including *Elite*) now looks and plays dreadfully. With the development of the industry, I have come to expect much more from games."

D Miller

I have to say that I thought it was a real up-and-down affair. The first few levels were excellent, the middle got boring for sure, but I stuck it through to the end and it really picked up. It's a great game, especially BotMatch – great for practicing those *Quake* skills before venturing online. The weapons were great as well, they just sound crap."

John Latham

✪ "I wish people would just stop slagging off *Unreal*. OK, so it's the most limp-wristed action game out there, so what? It's old news, move on, get real."

Up-Az

SPEC OPS: RANGERS ASSAULT

REVIEWED Issue 65, July
SCORE 88%

What we thought

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED "Soldiers getting stuck behind buildings and falling to their deaths may be one thing but the auto-targeting function also starts to annoy. However, the range of movement afforded to you makes up for these shortcomings – just."

What you think

✪ "I bought the game the day it came out, after being blown away by the demo, and I must say that it's brilliant. But, I have failed so many missions because I have had to go back and get my buddy who doesn't seem clever enough to walk around a tree.

"Yes I understand about the complexities of programming such a large scale playing area and how difficult it is to account for all the possible combinations of moves and routes etc, but walking around a tree is basic stuff. Let's not see Novalogics' *Delta Force* become an example of how *Spec Ops* should have been."

Peter Pipkin (Do you pick pickled peppers? – Ed)

✪ "*Spec Ops* – a cracking game, full of atmosphere. The sounds are amazing, they really help you know where the enemy threat is

The Sentinel Returns: downright genius, downright weird and downright spooky.

coming from. The game's a bit short though.

"*PC ZONE* got it right again, slurp slurp, lick lick."

Spooky

DOMINION: STORM OVER GIFT 3

REVIEWED Issue 67, September
SCORE 43%

What we thought

"The verdict here is damning and unequivocal: don't bother. *Dominion* introduces nothing new to an old and well-established genre… One has to wonder what the frag went wrong."

What you think

★ "Granted this is not the most original game ever made, but it's bloody good fun once you adjust to it. To give it a score of 43 when it pisses all over the other RTS games reviewed in the same issue is unbelievably moronic. I personally have encountered none of the AI problems your reviewer had. My units scatter when attacked, not bunch; they don't get stuck when crossing the map (which happens in both my other favourites, *StarCraft* and *TA*), and has a wonderfully intricate balance of unit support."

Tony Woolstencroft, Leicester

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR

REVIEWED Issue 68, October
SCORE 95%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "All we can say is, if you own *F-22 Air Dominance Fighter* you should think long and hard before you decide to buy *TAW*, because essentially you'll be paying a lot of money for something you already own."

"The best combat flight simulator there is, bar none."

What you think

★ "*F-22 Air Dominance Fighter* is an excellent sim, but it should never have been missing a dynamic campaign in the first place; there's not a single flight sim that comes out now which doesn't. "

Farouk Samad, London

★ "From the reviews that are now being published about *F-22 Total Air War*, it would seem that approximately 60 per cent of the game and code are the same as *F-22 ADF*, yet DID are asking a full £30 to £40 for this 'new' game.

"How can DID warrant this without giving existing owners of *F-22* some concessions or money back? Even the megalomaniac, power-crazy, world-ruling Microsoft offered a £10 cash-back for existing owners of their *Flight Simulator* when *FS95* came out.

"I am sure that *F-22 TAW* will be easily the best flight sim/war sim available, and I have always been a major fan and purchaser

F-22 Air Dominance Fighter: a new game, or a rehashed old one?

> **How can those bastards make people pay full price for an add-on?** *F-22 Air Dominance Fighter* is an excellent sim, but it should never have been missing a dynamic campaign in the first place

FAROUK SAMAD, LONDON

of their products, but this seems to be an outrageous attempt to double their money with an add-on product. The features in *TAW* were expected to be in the original release, but now we're nearly a year later and we are being ripped off because they haven't stuck to their word."

John Bampkin, Northampton

➔ *Make up your own mind by playing the demo on next month's CD. For more info, go to www.did.com/.*

WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING

REVIEWED Issue 67, September
SCORE 90%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "It's difficult to convince people to part with their money for a game that looks as seemingly old and outdated as this. However, rest assured that *Darklords Rising* is great fun and brilliantly designed – an ambassador for the turn-based strategy genre."

What you think

★ "Mallo, I just wanted to thank you for your review of *Darklords Rising*. It's not usually my sort of thing, but after your glowing recommendation I gave the demo a try and thought it not bad. Then I bought the full game on the day of its release and haven't stopped playing it since. Top addictive stuff. One problem though: there's never anyone at Red Orb Zone to try an online game."

John Brownsill

TOTAL ANNIHILATION: CORE CONTINGENCY

REVIEWED Issue 66, August
SCORE 87%

What we thought

PCZONE RECOMMENDED "It has more units than the entire *C&C* series. Many have been available for download for a while already, but with 70 extra vehicles and buildings for single and multiplayer games, you wonder what Cavedog could possibly do with the next add-on that

➔ *TA: Core Contingency*: the new units are "a blast", reckons Kimbo.

could make *TA* any better."

What you think

★ "Rather good. To me it seems like *TA* and a half. The review in *ZONE* sounded a bit doubtful, but I was impressed beyond reason. The new units are a blast (crap pun, I know), especially the Krogoth Bot, which sounds like a part of a women's anatomy you only ever hear about in sex education lessons (ho hum).

At times it is repetitive from the first installment of the game, and the *Battle Tactics* pack seems a waste of time after this one. Let's hope the new *TA* game follows in this lot's footsteps."

Kimbo

FINAL FANTASY VII

REVIEWED Issue 66, August
SCORE 93%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Right off the bat, *Final Fantasy VII* achieves the formidable task of making role-playing cool. This isn't just an illusion of cunning design, it really is a superb game."

What you think

★ "I read your review of *Final Fantasy VII* and agreed with you. It is a wonderful game, but – and listen carefully – *Final Fantasy VI* is better. Yes, better. But illegal (if you don't own a Super Nintendo), because the only other way to play it is by using an emulator. Despite the graphics, the storyline and gameplay of *FFVI* is superior to those of *FFVII*."

Phil Craig

THE X-FILES
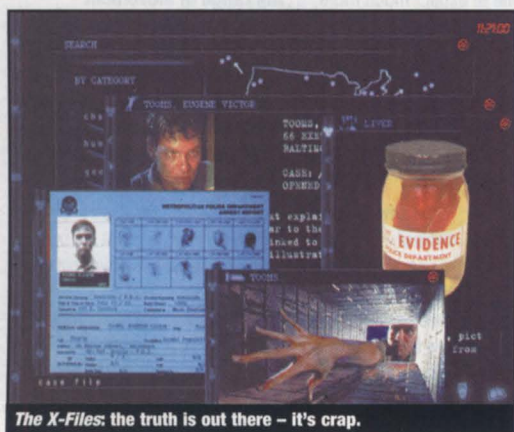
The X-Files: the truth is out there – it's crap.

REVIEWED Issue 68, October
SCORE 40%

What we thought

"To describe it, you could use 'arcade adventure', but it's actually more of an interactive movie, with all the signs and portents that description brings."

What you think

★ *The X-Files* has to be about the most boring game I have ever played – ever. I splashed out 40 quid, expecting a lot of Mulder, more of Scully, and

> **The end scene in particular made me want to peel my own face off**

BRANDON

aliens at every turn. Unfortunately I noticed a distinct lack of all three. The music is crap and the FMV is irritating. The end scene in particular made me want to peel my own face off.

"Although the transitions between game and FMV were absolutely seamless, I thought the acting was kinda stiff… Not even a cheat code that removed Scully's clothes would redeem this game."

Brandon

★ "I bought this heap of steaming toss on the recommendation of another magazine. I can't believe someone actually liked this game enough to try and get others to part with their hard-earned cash. Anyway, your review was spot on. I shall buy your magazine from now on. I'll get every issue laminated so I can wipe it clean after I've finished drooling all over it."

Ultimate Cock

Greg's sure to need more power. With Your:)Ware, he's sure to get it.

Your:)Ware,™ by Gateway, is a revolutionary new way to buy and configure PCs, and always have the latest technology. It works like this: right now the superb Gateway G6-450XL gaming machine we built for Greg is fully up to speed. We built in an Intel Pentium II processor, 450MHz, the fastest in the range. We added a massive hard drive, DVD drive, the best soundcard and speakers in our range plus a Voodoo2™ 3D graphics accelerator. But as soon as the next advance in technology comes along, Greg will want some of the action. Which is why he chose to pay for his PC through Your:)Ware. It allows him to pay for his PC, peripherals and software in flexible monthly instalments and after two years, he has the option of trading it in towards the cost of the newest Gateway. His next PC will be custom-built for him in exactly the same way. But faster.

CHOOSE YOUR GATEWAY

G6-333C SE

- Intel® Celeron™ Processor, 333MHz
- 128KB Full-Speed L2 Cache
- Intel® 440LX AGPset
- **32MB SDRAM, expandable to 256MB**
- 3.2GB 9.5ms Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 3.5 Floppy Disk Drive
- 13X min/32X max 90ms CD-ROM
- ATI Rage Pro Turbo 3D AGP Graphics w/ 4MB SGRAM
- Sound Blaster™ AudioPCI™ 64V
- Altec® Lansing GCS100 Speakers
- 56K Winmodem® — Internal▲
- **15" EV500 TCO-92 0.28dp Monitor†**
- ATX Mini Tower Case
- 105 Keyboard
- Microsoft® Windows® 98, MS® IntelliMouse™
- McAfee Anti-Virus Software, MS Internet Explorer 4.0
- MS Home Essentials 98ᵛ
- Choice of a Gateway Software Bundle: Arcadia, Source, Young Scholar

£699 (£821.32 inc. VAT)

FROM £39 A MONTH♦ (APR 18.9%)

Cash Price incl VAT & Delivery £855.40
Credit Limit £1170
Loan Value £855.40
26 monthly repayments of £39
Plus one final payment of £23.69
Total amount payable £1037.69

G6-350

- Intel® Pentium® II Processor, 350MHz
- 512KB L2 Cache
- **Intel® 440BX AGPset**
- **64MB 100MHz SDRAM, expandable to 512MB**
- 6.4GB 9.5ms Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 3.5 Floppy Disk Drive
- 13X min/32X max 90ms CD-ROM
- STB® 𝐼𝐼Vidia Riva 3D AGP Graphics w/ 8MB SDRAM
- **Epson Stylus 440 Colour Printer**
- Sound Blaster AudioPCI 64V
- Altec Lansing GCS100 Speakers
- 56K Winmodem — Internal▲
- 17" EV700 TCO-95 0.28dp Monitor†
- ATX Mini Tower Case
- 105 Keyboard
- Microsoft Windows 98, MS IntelliMouse™
- McAfee Anti-Virus Software, MS Internet Explorer 4.0
- MS Home Essentials 98ᵛ
- Choice of a Gateway Software Bundle: Arcadia, Source, Young Scholar

£999 (£1173.82 inc. VAT)

FROM £49 A MONTH♦ (APR 18.9%)

Cash Price incl VAT & Delivery £1207.90
Credit Limit £1470
Loan Value £1207.90
30 monthly repayments of £49
Plus one final payment of £36.62
Total amount payable £1506.62

G6-450

- Intel Pentium II Processor, 450MHz
- 512KB L2 Cache
- **Intel 440BX AGPset**
- **128MB 100MHz SDRAM, expandable to 768MB**
- 6.4GB 9.5ms Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 3.5 Floppy Disk Drive
- **Toshiba™ DVD-ROM III Drive and MPEG II Decoder**
- 16MB STB® 𝐼𝐼Vidia TNT AGP Graphics
- Sound Blaster AudioPCI 64V
- Boston Acoustics® 635 5W Speakers with 15W Subwoofer
- 56K Winmodem — Internal▲
- 17" EV700 TCO-95 0.28dp Monitor†
- ATX Tower Case
- Choice of a Gateway Software Bundle: Arcadia, Source, Young Scholar
- 105 Keyboard
- Microsoft Windows 98, MS IntelliMouse™
- McAfee Anti-Virus Software, MS Internet Explorer 4.0
- Choice of a Gateway Software Bundle: Arcadia, Source, Young Scholar

£1299 (£1526.32 inc. VAT)

FROM £59 A MONTH♦ (APR 18.9%)

Cash Price incl VAT & Delivery £1560.40
Credit Limit £1770
Loan Value £1560.40
33 monthly repayments of £59
Plus one final payment of £37.01
Total amount payable £1984.01

GREG'S GATEWAY

G6-450XL

- **Intel Pentium II Processor, 450MHz**
- 512KB L2 Cache
- **Intel 440BX AGPset**
- **128MB 100MHz SDRAM, expandable to 768MB**
- 13.6GB 9.5ms Ultra ATA Hard Drive
- 3.5 Floppy Disk Drive
- SuperDisk LS-120MB Floppy Disk Drive
- **Toshiba DVD-ROM III Drive and MPEG II Decoder**
- 16MB STB 𝐼𝐼Vidia TNT AGP Graphics
- **12MB 3Dfx Voodoo 2 3D Accelerator**
- Sound Blaster AudioPCI 64V
- Boston Acoustics MediaTheater™ 20W Speakers with 30W Subwoofer
- 56K Winmodem - Internal▲
- 19" VX900 TCO-95 0.26dp Monitor†
- ATX Full Size Tower Case
- 105 Keyboard
- Microsoft Windows 98, MS IntelliMouse™
- McAfee Anti-Virus Software, MS Internet Explorer 4.0
- MS Office 97 Small Business Edition 2†† plus MS Encarta® 97 (US version) and MS Money 97

£1799 (£2113.82 inc. VAT)

FROM £89 A MONTH♦ (APR 18.9%)

Cash Price incl VAT & Delivery £2147.90
Credit Limit £2370
Loan Value £2147.90
29 monthly repayments of £89
Plus one final payment of £83.58
Total amount payable £2664.58

††**MS Office 97 Small Business Edition 2** — MS Word 97; MS Excel 97; MS Outlook 97; MS Publisher 98; Financial Manager 98 and MS AutoRoute Express 98.

0800 973 135

Let's talk about your **Gateway**™

www.gateway.com/uk

Stuck on a game? Don't know whether you're coming, going or standing still? That pair of jeans you want doesn't come in your size? Girlfriend 'accidently' wiped your hard drive? Don't worry, here comes the *PC ZONE* team to the rescue, warming up their hands ready to measure your inside leg and sort you out

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

YOUR HOSTS

Warren Chrismas

Keith Pullin

Pete Davison

Adam Phillips

Phil Wand

CHEAT MASTER

Once again the Keithmeister welcomes you to a veritable feast of fun in the way of tips, cheats, hints and stuff-type stuff. Please feel free to experiment. And remember: nothing's sacred

⬤ **CHEATMEISTER** Keith Pullin

Need For Speed III: Bored of the same old cars already? Just cast your sleep-encrusted eyes over the new blisteringly long cheat list below.

ON THE CD

ON THE CD We've got over 1200 games solutions squeezed onto this month's CD. Check out the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser to track them down.

NEED HELP?

If your problem's game-related, get organised and...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/CheatMaster, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with **'Dear Keith'** or **'CheatMaster'** in the subject line.

WARGAMES
Fox Interactive

While you're playing the game, hit 't' to bring up a message box, and then type in the following bunch of codes:

Eyeofgod Enables extra level of zoom on lower level

Machinessaladtossed Choose any mission (enter the code, exit the game back to the Main Menu, press 'CTRL', 'H' and 'W' simultaneously, then click on Load and choose a mission)

Gimmiegimmie Can build everything, even without a Command Centre/Command Complex

Twobyfour 'xxx' Builds any unit (replace 'xxx' with unit name, for example, type 'twobyfour dragoon' for a dragoon tank)

Hermes Speeds up ordering of units

Donkeys Anything that shoots missiles now shoots Jeeps instead

Morningafter Removes the 'fog of war' from the entire map

Unclejohn God mode (your units can't be destroyed)

Chaching Adds $10,000 to your percentage

Mrmuscle Upgrades your armour percentage

Bigsofty Downgrades enemy's armour percentage

Coffee Upgrades your speed percentage

Beer Downgrades enemy's speed percentage

Shaft Upgrades your firepower percentage

Shank Downgrades enemy's firepower percentage

VANGERS
Interactive Magic

Vangers is a curious mix of genres. Sadly the game's fairly crap. All the same, a hint's a hint, so if you are trying to play it, maybe the following will assist you in some unremarkable way.

⬤ Use a Crotrig (once you have one) to dig a straight path from escave to escave.

⬤ Larvae show up on your mini-map as coloured blocks.

⬤ Each secret world has a purpose. They're not just there for you to travel through, they're there to tease your brain too.

⬤ Be careful when using artefacts you may have found; some of the best ones are cursed. For example, if you're carrying the Mech Messiah, you won't even be able to enter an escave. Bummer.

⬤ When you're wandering around the Lost Chain of Worlds, don't forget to return to Fostral for some easy beebs. When you return, hideouts that were empty before may now contain valuable goods.

⬤ Don't be fussy about using equipment. Try out various different mechos, rigs and wares. Some items work better than others on specific tasks.

⬤ Each escave has a number of Tabutasks to be completed. To get to the end of *Vangers* you have to complete at least one from every escave.

NEED FOR SPEED III
Electronic Arts

Go to any of the game's menus and type these cheats:

Rushhour Race during a rush hour

Empire Race on the Empire City track

Elninor Race using the El Nino car

Merc Race using the Mercedes CLK GTR

Gofast Your car goes at

supersonic speed during Single Race mode

Type the cheats to drive the non-player cars. Type in the one you want then race...

go01 Miata
go02 Toyota Landcruiser
go03 Cargo truck
go04 BMW 5 Series
go05 Plymouth Cuda
go06 Ford pickup with camper shell
go07 Jeep Cherokee
go08 Ford full-size van
go09 64/65 Mustang
go10 66 Chevy pickup
go11 Range Rover
go12 School bus
go13 Taxi – Caprice Classic
go14 Chevy cargo van
go15 Volvo Station Wagon
go16 Sedan
go17 Crown Victoria cop car
go18 Mitsubishi Eclipse cop car
go19 Grand Am cop car
go20 Range Rover cop car/Ranger vehicle
go21 Cargo truck (same as 03)

TAKE NO PRISONERS
Red Orb Entertainment
Press 'Shift' and '~' to activate the message console, then type in the following pronto:

Juggernaut God mode
Goldblum Fly mode
ode to jack Kill all creatures on level
impulse 911 Unlimited ammo and items
Wraith No clipping mode
Positions Show your position (x,y,z)
dir maps List available maps
map x Warp to map X (X = level name)
spawn x Create an item or creature
a_moveme x,y,z
    Move to the given co-ordinates

Or type in the following items:
w_saber
w_assault_rifle
w_crossbow
w_laser_rifle
w_gauss_gun
w_grenade_launcher
w_rocket_launcher
w_flame_thrower
w_chain_gun
w_plasma_generator
w_ptp_cannon
i_medical_kit
i_flak_jacket
i_body_armor
i_reflectarmor
i_heatshield
i_energyarmor
i_energyshield
i_molotov
i_gas_gren
i_claymore
i_float_disk
i_rocket_net
i_gas_mask
i_laser_sight

i_disk
i_enhancers
i_shuriken
i_implosion
i_fragger
i_radshield
i_ir_goggles
i_stealth
i_grav_belt
i_force_barrier
i_override
i_flare
i_demopack
i_energyshield
i_dome_device
i_dome_crystal

RAGE OF MAGES
Monolith
Just get your sorry backside into the console and give these a spin:

#Chicken Enables cheat mode
#modify self +god God mode
#modify army +god Second God mode
#create gold Gives you loads of gold
#killall Kills all enemy units
#pickup all Picks all sacks (excluding sacks in units)
#show map Reveals entire map
#hide map Hides map
#event x Shows conversations from units in the current level (X is any number)

CARMAGEDDON II (DEMO)
SCi
To drive any car (except the truck), edit the GENERAL.TXT file (in the data directory) and change the line 'EAGLE3.TXT' (it's right after 'Cars to use as defaults:') to anything you want. Names of the cars available are in the data/cars directory. Do not try and use the truck under any circumstances – if you do, expect the demo to crash. You can also try these codes:

Mpkfa God mode
Mppos Global position
Mpfps Frames per second

OUTWARS
Microsoft
We've found some updated codes for this one, so here you go. Type 'em into the communication box:

MACLEOD God mode
DIRTYHARRY Unlimited ammo
BUZZ Glider wings
FRAMERATE Adjust frame rate

PHANTOM Spy on creatures using the F11 and F12 keys
GOHOME Resets to start position
THRASHER Enemies appear on radar
WEAPONCAM Follows your fired weapons
SINGLETRAC Shows a message: "Singletrac Rules!"
KEYMASTER Gives you armour, health and ammo
JUMPOASIS Jump to oasis level
JUMPANUBIS Jump to anubis level
JUMPDEAD Jump to last level
TIMEWARP Remove mission timer
SHOWALL Shows entire map
SNIPSNIP Change gender of fighter
JUMPRAGNAROK Jump to ragnarok level
JUMPJUGGERNAUT Jump to juggernaut level PCZ

DEAR KEITH

Games grief? Please give an over-exuberant welcome to *Keith Pullin*, *PC ZONE*'s own Jerry Springer

PACK OF THREE
Q Do you know anything about this backpack trick in *Commandos*? Apparently you can stick a load of men in your pack and then carry them across water. I know it sounds ridiculous, but it could be true. Any ideas?
Paul Rafferty, Lyndhurst

A It wouldn't happen in a real war, but it does here. Yes indeed. You can carry fully-grown commandos in your backpack. First of all, open the inflatable on dry land and get your group to gather around it – but not too close. Order the men into the dinghy, and then quickly click on the diver and order him to pick up the boat. If you're fast enough, the diver will collect the boat just as the rest of the men are getting in. Miraculously, you now find that the rest of your unit are tucked into your diver's backpack. Adds a whole new dimension to *Saving Private Ryan*.
    Thanks to Mathew Ridley of Preston for sending in this little trick.

HEART OF GOLD
Q On *Heart of Darkness*, I get on to the second CD and reach a room where there are loads of flying creatures, crawling things and fireballs. Everything is attacking me at once and I just don't know how to deal with it. Somebody help me, please!
Gregory Willis, St Ives

A Oh come on, what's wrong with you? Think, boy. Think. All this stuff never stops, right? It's relentless. So what do you do? You run – fend off what you can, and as soon as you spot a gap in the onslaught make a break for it. Easy. Who's next?

STILL FIGHTING
Q I know this is an outdated game, but could you tell me how to access Acuma on *Super Streetfighter 2 Turbo*? I've asked a load of my mates but they can't remember.
Peta Coates, Stamford

A Oh, all right then. But only because I used to play this all the time. Ah, nostalgia… Anyway, to use Akuma, go to the player select screen and move the cursor over the following characters, pausing for two seconds on each: Ryu, T Hawk, Guile, Cammy and Ryu again. After you've moved back to Ryu and waited for two seconds, hit all three punch buttons at the same time. Akuma's picture should then replace the one of Ryu.

DOUBLE TROUBLE
Q I have recently bought *Diablo* and am struggling in the Dungeon. I used a cheat I found in your Troubleshooter that was supposed to duplicate items but it didn't work. I discovered that the cheat doesn't work because when the game is paused... blah blah blah [snip]
Anthony Williams, Exeter

A Yes, yes, all right, you got me. It appears there was a slight error when that cheat was printed, so here's the correct version. First, go to the town portal and place an item in front of it. Click on the item with the mouse, and step through the portal. When you reach the town, the item appears on your inventory. Now go back through the portal and the object will still be there. Okay? Oh, and sorry about the previous cock-up.

HEXED
Q Know of any way to get more money on *X-COM: Apocalypse*?
Wale Ekunsumi, Clapham

A Yes, but it involves hex editors and is complicated. What the hell, here goes nothing: simply load your non-tactical mission game file into a hex editor, go to location 33D40 and type FF FF FF to get 16.7 million credits. Make any sense? I hope so.

ALIEN INTERFERENCE
Q Is there something wrong with my version of *Hardwar*? I get about five days in and suddenly it changes to an outside view and refuses to give control back. What's happening please?
Chris Blake, Blandford

A If you'd hung on for a few seconds you would have regained control. Don't you understand that this is part of the game? That outside view was an alien spaceship taking control of your Moth. If I were you I'd read the in-game emails more often. They explain the plot.

WELL CRUSHED
Q How do I find the crushed television in *Starship Titanic*? I've asked the bellbot to throw the television down the well but he won't comply. Any help would be greatly appreciated.
G. Arakawa, Barnet

A The bellbot will not help unless you're in the Parrot Lobby. Summon the bellbot there and then ask him to throw the television down the well. Now take the elevator to the bottom of the well and collect your mangled TV.

A WORMY ENDING
Q I absolutely adore *Worms 2* and was wondering whether the rumour about a mega-cheat code is true. Apparently it gives you all the weapons including the secret ones. Please tell me – is it true?
Lans Francis, Isle of Man

A Yes, it is true. All you have to do is type in 'Team17MicroProse' as a team name. That delivers exactly what you're after.

FINAL FANTASY VII

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW: PART 1

If you're being tormented and haunted by dreams of massive swords and giant chickens, let *Pete Davison* help you get your head together

⭐ REVIEWED *PCZ* #66 **SCORE** 93%

The 'big plot' of *Final Fantasy* is not in itself that difficult to follow. However, the further you go into the game, the more freedom you get – you eventually reach a point where you can just ignore the storyline for a while. This guide tells you the best things to do in these 'in-betweeny bits', and also provides some general tips.

✪ *Next issue (on sale Tuesday 17 November) we'll be taking a look at how to beat the sub-games, how to slaughter Weapon, and a whole host of other cool stuff including where to find all the Enemy Skills.*

TIPS AND QUIRKS

Final Fantasy VII has its fair share of little bugs and cheats, and here are a couple

⭐ When racing Chocobos, hold your Pageup, Pagedown, Camera and Target buttons at the same time. Your Chocobo's stamina will slowly build up again!

⭐ Find the W-Item materia (found in the Shinra tunnels upon your return to Midgar at the end of Disc two). Pick an item you want more of and use it on someone. Now select the same item again, but instead of using it, hit CANCEL. You see that you have an extra one of that item. Repeat as necessary!

A chocobo: comes in five different colours.

GENERAL BATTLE STRATEGY

Put characters with ranged weapons on the back row, as they can dish out as much punishment from there but only take half damage. Give *everyone* a Restore/All materia combination – this means that anyone can cure the whole party if necessary. Also try to provide everyone with at least one offensive spell.

If you're facing several different types of enemy, take out the more vicious ones first. If there are two rows, knock out the front one first.

Never run away. Complete every battle to gain experience points, otherwise you'll be seriously underpowered come boss time.

Try to make sure that at least one of your characters is up and about at all times.

Creatures made of ice are invulnerable to Shiva's shards of cold stuff. Learn your spell effects!
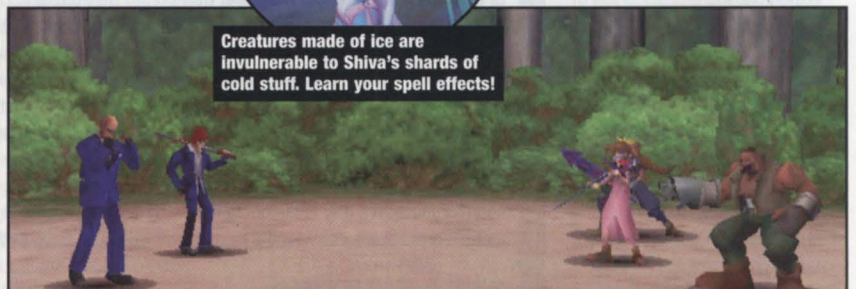
Try to spot the bosses' attack patterns. The Turks, for example, always have one in charge of beating the crap out of you and one in charge of curing.

LIMIT BREAKS

Limit Breaks occur when a character has taken a certain amount of damage. Each person has their own special moves – some offensive, some curative. To learn new Limit Breaks, one of two things must happen

✪ To learn the second Limit Break of a level, the character must use their first Limit Break of that level a certain number of times. This number diminishes with each Limit Level.

✪ To go up a Limit Level, the character must kill a particular number of enemies.

✪ The best way to force new Limit Breaks is to give the character you want to learn a Cover materia (so they take more damage), stick them on the front row and give them a Hyper potion to put them into Fury mode. Their Limit gauge will build at double the speed so you can use the techniques more.

✪ To learn the Level 4 Limit Breaks, characters must use their Extreme Limit Break Manuals (having found them first). The characters and their Extreme Limits are as follows:

CLOUD
Omnislash
See the Gold Saucer section below.

AERIS
Great Gospel
In Highwind or on a Chocobo, find a cave south of Midgar. In there is a sleeping man. If the number of battles you've had ends in two identical digits (eg 266, 133) he'll wake up and give you the item Mythril. Take this to the lonely Weapons Shop on the Central Continent and give it to the bloke. Open the safe upstairs for the manual.

BARRET
Catastrophe
Found in Corel Village after you've saved it from the train. Go into a tent in the top right of the village and talk to the woman. She'll give you the manual in memory of her husband.

YUFFIE
All Creation
Complete her subquest.

CAIT SITH
Doesn't have one.

VINCENT
Chaos
See The Hidden Characters panel overleaf.

RED XIII
Cosmo Memory
Obtained when you defeat Lost Number when trying to get Vincent.

TIFA
Final Heaven
Make sure Tifa is in your party and has her Level 3 Breaks. Go to Nibelheim. Play the piano in Tifa's house and tap out the Highwind theme by using these key combinations: CANCEL, SWITCH, MENU, PAGEUP+MENU, PAGEUP+SWITCH, CANCEL, SWITCH, MENU, PAGEUP+CANCEL, OK, CANCEL, SWITCH, CANCEL. Tifa will find the manual in her sheet music.

CID
Highwind
Found in the sunken plane. Use the submarine to find it – dive and explore until you locate the wreckage.

NAME Murphy BARRIER HP 625/ 695 MP 115 LIMIT TIME
Use offensive Limit Breaks wisely and don't waste them on tiny, weak enemies.

Mindblow
Non-damaging offensive Limit Breaks such as Barret's magic-point draining Mindblow shown here often don't work on boss-level enemies.

NATURAL MATERIA

Natural Materias are 'one of a kind' materias. You can spawn new copies by mastering the originals, though – get enough ability points and a new materia is born

Here's a run-down of the Natural Materia types:

Quadra Magic enables you to cast a paired spell four times. That includes Summon spells (except Knights Of The Round). This materia can be found in a cave on the southern continent, only accessible by Chocobo.

HP -> MP enables you to swap your maximum hit points with your maximum magic points. This is found in a cave north of Corel, across a river and in a little desert area.

Mime materia enables anyone to repeat the previous action at no cost to their magic points. Mime is found in a cave on the Western Continent.

Knights Of The Round is the ultimate Summon spell. Thirteen knights hit all enemies for between 5000 and 9999 points of damage *each*. To find the materia, take a Gold Chocobo over the sea as far northeast as you can go on the map. You'll find a round island with a cave on it. The materia's in here.
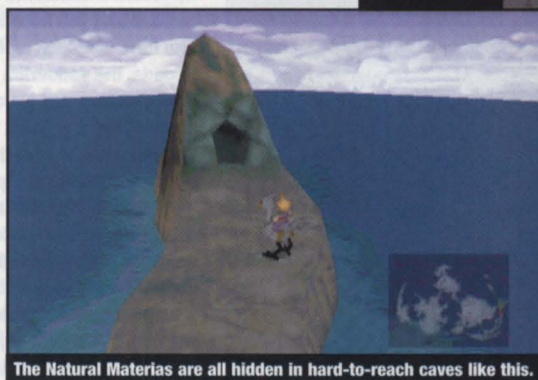
The Natural Materias are all hidden in hard-to-reach caves like this.
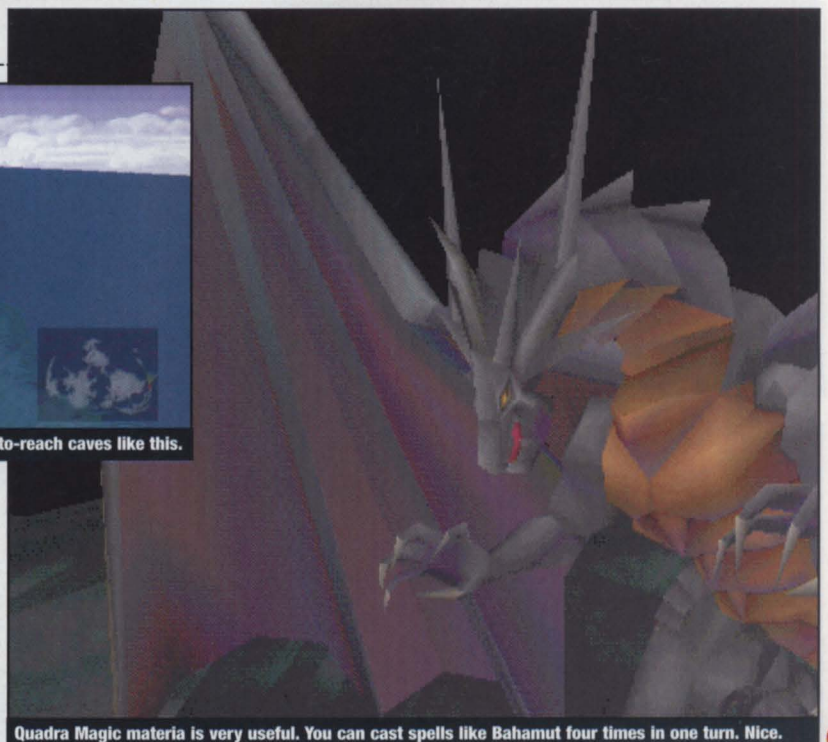
Quadra Magic materia is very useful. You can cast spells like Bahamut four times in one turn. Nice.

THE HIDDEN CHARACTERS

VINCENT VALENTINE

Getting Vincent is tricky – he's hidden in the Shinra Mansion in Nibelheim. Go to the Mansion, and into the alcove in the bottom-left of the first room, and read the note on the floor. Now, you can either try and solve the clues yourself (each clue points to something in the Mansion which has a number written on it) or take the easy way out – the combination to the safe upstairs is: right to 36, left to 10, right to 59, right to 97. The safe will open and… Oh no! A boss!

Lost Number is one evil bastard. One half of him does magic and the other does devastating physical attacks. The 'magic' side is vulnerable to physical attacks, and vice versa. We recommend you take out the physical side – if you don't, his special move Lost Blow will knock your party flat. So magic away until he throws off his butch side and proceeds to blat you with magic. Keep battering away and he'll be history.

Beating Lost Number gets you the Summon Odin materia and the key to the basement. Go to the cellar and walk into the wall at the top left of the passageway in the overhead view section. In there you'll meet Vincent in his coffin. Tell him about Sephiroth, ask who he is, then leave. He'll join you.

Vincent is cool. His ranged weapons can cause hefty damage but his Limit Breaks are a bit of a double-edged sword. Yes, he does turn into demons and horror movie stars, but he also goes Berserk, at which time you have no control over him whatsoever. This is good in normal battles, but bad in boss fights.

To find out some of Vincent's back story, take the submarine or a Chocobo to the pool and the waterfall in the middle of the Central Continent. Walk behind the waterfall on Disc one or two for an oh-so-revealing surprise… Return again on Disc three to get Vincent's best weapon and his Level 4 Limit Break manual.

Open the combination lock to reveal the boss Lost Number.

Defeat Lost Number…
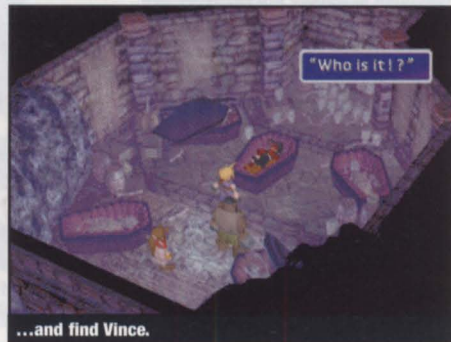
…and find Vince.

Defeat Yuffie in battle…
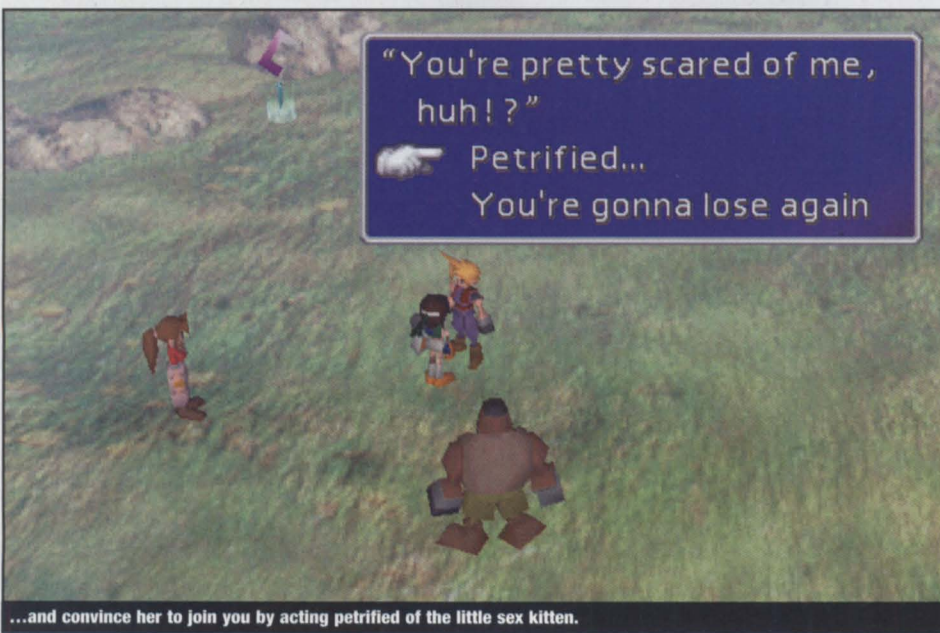
…and convince her to join you by acting petrified of the little sex kitten.

YUFFIE KISARAGI

Double-crossing, back-stabbing little bitch Yuffie is another hidden character. To get her, you need to have a number of fights in any of the forests on the World Map. Eventually you meet an enemy called Mystery Ninja. Beat her and you can talk to her. When she wants another fight, tell her you're "not interested". Talk to her again and use these responses: "Petrified…"; "Wait a second!"; "…That's right"; and "Let's hurry on". She'll join you.

When you're a higher level character, go to Wutai on the far Western Continent. Yuffie buggers off with most of your materia and you need to chase the little tart around Wutai. She turns up in several places: her father's house near the Pagoda, the doddering old man's house on the far right, the materia store, and inside the pot outside the bar. When you catch her, you go back to her house. She locks two of your party in a cage – pull the lever to release them.

Then go to the big gate near the Pagoda. It's open – ring the bell. A secret passage opens and you find Yuffie… accompanied by Don Corneo. Agree to co-operate with the Turks, and search the big statue for Don, Yuffie and Elena. When you find them, you have to fight an easy boss – without materia. Make sure you're in possession of plenty of Potions and the like, as it can do some nasty damage if it feels that way inclined.

Save Yuffie and Elena and you get your materia back – but in a messed-up order. Sort it out, put Yuffie in your party and go to the Pagoda. Beat up everyone all the way up the Pagoda until you reach Godo at the top. If you get shrunk and don't have a Transform spell handy, simply batter Godo with magic attacks and Summons. The other fighters can all be beaten with physical attacks and low-level magic.

Yuffie's a useful fighter. She uses ranged weapons so can be placed on the back row, no problem. Her Limit Breaks are a mixture of defensive and offensive, so they're a useful addition to your party.

ABOUT THE CHOCOBO

If you want to catch all the game's secrets, you're gonna have to breed chocobos. This is a long-winded process so be ready for it. However, your hours of work will pay off when you get your gold chocobo

Different colours of chocobo have different abilities. Here's a summary of what each can do:

YELLOW No special abilities
BLUE Can run over shallow water
GREEN Can run over mountains
BLACK Combines skills of blue and green chocobos
GOLD Can go *anywhere*

There are five types of chocobo to catch, and they're all yellow. If you want different colours, you have to breed them. The types are crap, average, walking, running and dashing. Crap and average ones can be caught on any of the tracks. Walking ones can be caught near Gold Saucer. Running ones can be caught on the South Continent near Mideel. Dashing ones can be caught on the Northern Continent.

Buy some chocobo stables at the farm. Chocobo Bill will explain everything. Catch a walking chocobo and a running chocobo – of different sexes, obviously. Now fly over the Northern Continent until you see an isolated house with a little patch of grass around it. Land and visit the chocobo sage, then wait outside on the grass until you have to fight a red dragon. Steal from it until you get a carob nut. Take this back to the stables and *save*! Breed the chocobo with the nut. If you don't get a blue or a green chocobo, reload and try again. If you constantly fail, feed them loads and loads of greens (the sage sells the best greens in the world) and race them at Gold Saucer. Win six races with each to make them Class A chocobos. Now save and try breeding them again.

Assuming that worked right, save and repeat the process until you get a chocobo of the other colour (green if you got blue already, or vice versa). Also make sure your blue and green chocobos are of different sexes! Now go and get another carob nut and loads of sylkis greens from the chocobo Sage. Feed the greens to your blue and

your green and race them until they're both Class A. Save and breed them. If you don't get a black one, reload and try again.

Finally, to get the elusive gold chocobo, go to Goblin Island (the island furthest to the north-east on the map display). Steal a zeio nut from the goblins there. Go and catch a dashing chocobo of the opposite sex to your black one. Save and make them shag. You should soon have a gold chocobo! This can be used to find all the Natural Materias in the world.

Feed the chocobo some greens before you start on the enemy.

On your way to victory in the chocobo races to get the best breeders. It's hard work but it's worth it.
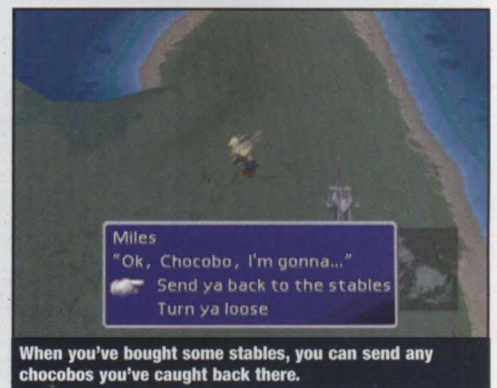
When you've bought some stables, you can send any chocobos you've caught back there.

GOLD SAUCER

Invest in a Gold Ticket as soon as you can afford it. There are loads of things worth doing at Gold Saucer

CHOCOBO RACING
See chocobo panel above.

BATTLE SQUARE
Equip your best character with any protection you can (preferably a ribbon if you've got one – these protect against all abnormal status) and keep fighting. Get as many points as you can. Get enough points and you get Cloud's Level 4 Limit manual and a materia called W-Summon which enables you to cast two Summon spells in one turn. Pull this off and try again – this time you fight bosses. Beat this and you get Final Attack materia – pair this with a spell and, as that character croaks, the spell is cast. The ideal thing to pair with this is Revive – that way, as the character swoons they're immediately revived.

THE SUB-GAMES
Any sub-games that you've already played in the game (motorcycle, snowboard and submarine) can be replayed at any time in Gold Saucer. The better you do, the more GP (Gold Saucer currency) you can win. Full tactics for the sub-games will be given next issue.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS
I wouldn't bother, unless you've got GP to burn.
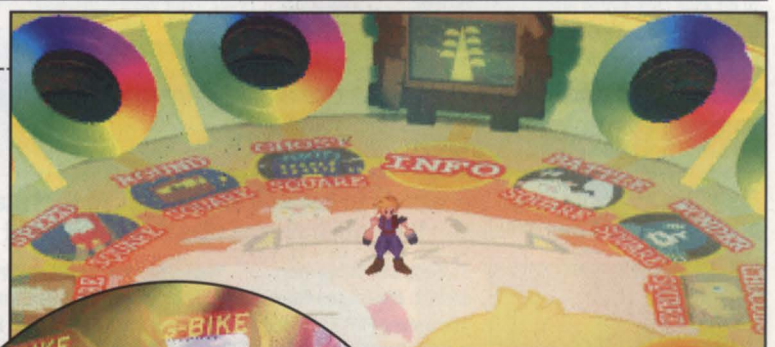
There's so much to do at Gold Saucer. Just go and have fun!

Wonder Square is where you can replay all the sub-games – either to win GP or for fun.
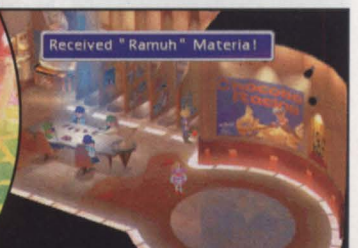
On your return to Gold Saucer, watch out for the Ramuh materia in the jockeys' room. This is your only chance to get it!

HARDWAR

A COMPLETE STRATEGY GUIDE
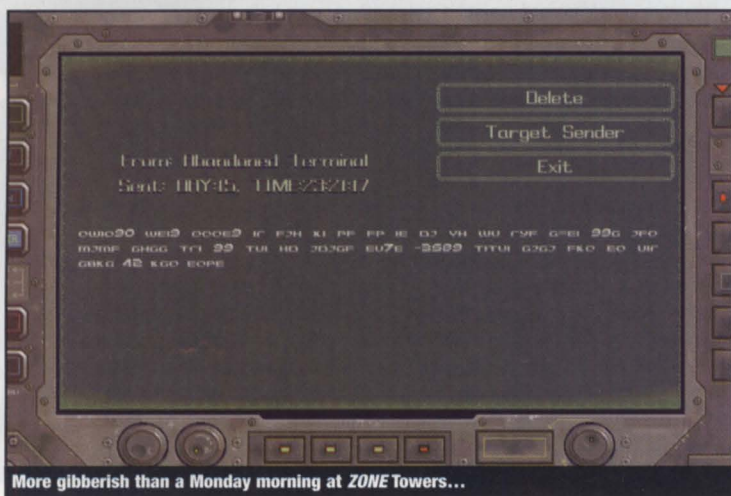
More gibberish than a Monday morning at *ZONE* Towers...

**Having trouble finding your way around Titan?
Well, luckily for you here's *Keith 'Skinner' Pullin*
with a definitive walkthrough and strategy guide**

⭐ REVIEWED *PCZ* #69 **SCORE** 85%

The main plot of *Hardwar* remains constant and you should find that there's a definite linear route through to completion. Of course, it's up to you whether you want to physically see the game right through till the end. You can drift through most of it, but we're sure you'd prefer to kick ass and save the planet instead. And that goes something like this...

EVENT 1
ALIEN SURPRISE
Wait for the email message entitled 'Cover up?'. Click on Target Subject and fly to the area specified. As you approach the scene, you will lose all control of your craft – you have been caught in an alien vessel's tractor beam. Don't worry, the alien ship soon explodes, returning control to you. Beware: if you pick up the debris of this alien ship you will be shot.

EVENT 2
SEEK AND DESTROY
Wait for the email message entitled 'Decoy required'. Click on Target Subject to fly to the mass driver in the Port area. As you

approach (probably through a hail of laser fire), you will spot a white arrow on your radar display; this is the mass driver part. Target it using the 'Y' key and destroy it (two shots). The atmosphere in the Port area will become lethal; get out of there ASAP or the severe climate will cripple your Moth. Once you've departed, a Klamp-G transport ship will nip in and steal the wrecked driver part. When the ship returns to HQ you'll receive a reward.

Note: The first in a series of peculiar 'garbled' transmissions will arrive at around this point. Hang onto this message and all subsequent garbled mail you receive. They will prove useful later.

EVENTS 3, 4, 5 & 6
GENERAL ACTIVITY
Pay close attention to your email and get on with your miserable life, citizen!

EVENT 7
COLLECTING THE CLOAKING DEVICE
An anonymous email entitled 'Important mission' will arrive. Fly to the mines crater and target the lightwell from the Local Services. As you approach it, you should be able to see a white arrow on your radar display – this is the mystery package. Target the package using the 'Y' key, and then use the salvage drone to collect it. As soon as you have the package, you'll receive an email from Psycho Bob telling you to report to his weapons mart. Fly to Psycho Bob's 1.

EVENT 8
FIND THE SECRET BASES
On arrival at Psycho Bob's, watch the video sequence detailing the mission that Bob wants you to undertake. The mission is a simple case of locating the secret bases. (You can see these locations on the map shown in the 'Titan's craters' panel on page 155.)

The Lazarus base is basically a red door in a rock with an 'L' logo painted on it. Target the door and press 'T'. The location is now logged. The Klamp-G base is a rough dome-shaped structure. Again, point

---

GENERAL HINTS

There are certain things you can do to keep on top in Titan. At first glance these tips may seem a bit obvious, but pay attention: they will help you stay one step ahead
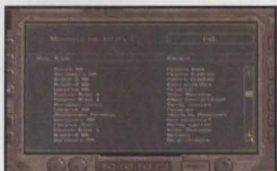
Keep checking your emails, or you'll miss important missions.

⭐ **Keep checking your emails.** Messages from 'Hardwarp FM' keep you updated on Titan life in general, while other messages lead you off on lucrative missions. You will also find that you will receive several 'garbled' transmissions throughout the course of the game. Don't delete them – you can decode them later, and they provide very useful clues.

⭐ **Make sure you keep upgrading your ship** with new weapons and defences. Trips to any of the many weapon shops will supply you with ample ammunition.

⭐ **Regardless of whether you're a trader, scavenger or aggressor,** fit a cargo pod and salvage drone to your Moth early on. Without these you simply will not be able to complete the game.

⭐ **Use the 'Lock' option on the navigation console as much as possible.** This little device is not only great for storing the locations of important buildings, it's also the perfect tool for tracking the movements of other pilots. However, as soon as you press 'Y' to select another target on radar, you'll have to relock your original target using the navigation console again.

"You too could have your very own hangar like this..."

⭐ **Buy your own hangar!** Downtown Estates is a good place to go for some quality homes. Think "Location, location, location!" – you certainly can't get more central than the Downtown Crater. Hangars are great; you can repair your Moth for free and set up as a trading post. This means you can earn money while you're out and about. All you have to do is keep taking goods back occasionally so you have something to sell.

⭐ Finally, SAVE OFTEN!

EVENT 8

SHIELDS
POWER

riverside

140

DAY:24, TIME:10:53:00
CASH: 2153
No New Messages

No Flares
No CHAFF
No Star Shells

Pulse Laser
Plasma Kannon
Tac-Nuke
Laser Turret

0 MPH

1311 FT

57 FT

Jeg Humpbrow
Cargo
Alcohol

No Weapon

Shield: 100%
range:-
10752 FT
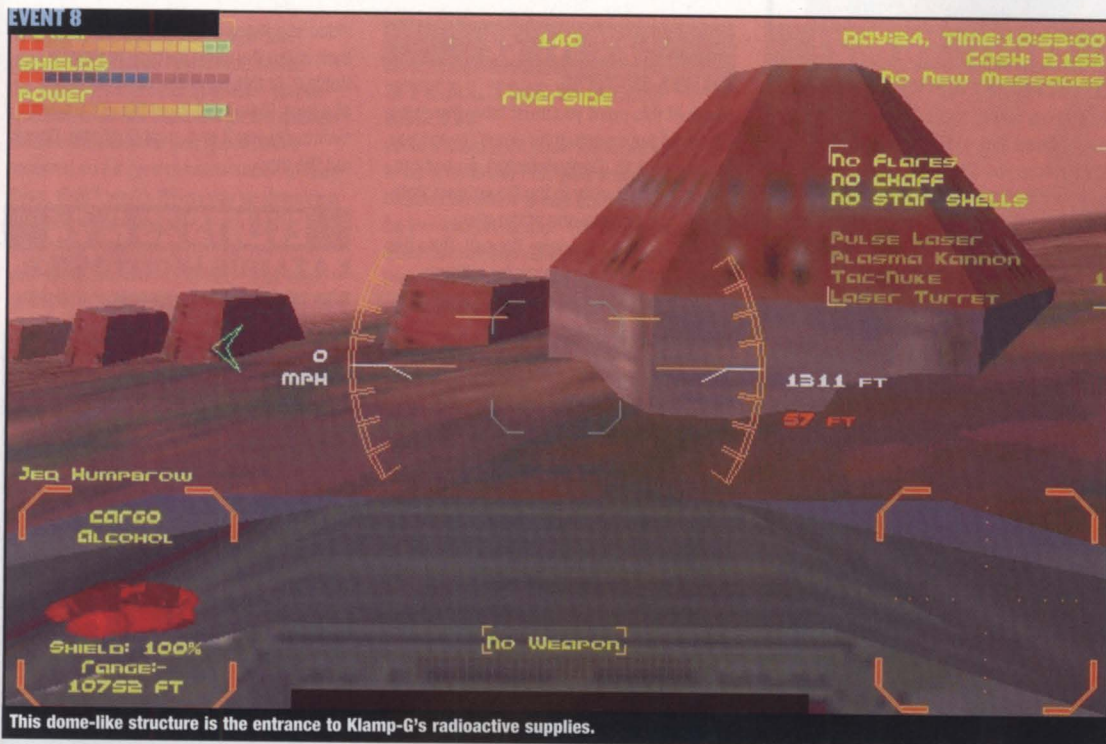
This dome-like structure is the entrance to Klamp-G's radioactive supplies.

EVENT 8

The distinctive-looking entrance to Lazarus' secret base.

straight at your target and press 'T' to lock the co-ordinates. Do this correctly and you will receive an email asking you to return to Psycho Bob's 1.

EVENT 9
GENERAL ACTIVITY

Klamp-G and Lazarus are still going at it hammer and tongs and are busy trying to annihilate each other. They've even started to use crude nuclear bombs that the aliens have been providing in exchange for human DNA. Oh yes. The plot thickens... But this isn't a cue to just hang around doing nothing – while all this is happening you should be trying to earn yourself some money, flyboy...

EVENT 10
PROCURING TRIGGERS AND MATTER

Back at Bob's, he wants you to help make a nuke. Go to the rocks that have blocked access to the Port from the Downtown area and wait until transports carrying triggers and matter appear. Kill 'em, grab the stuff you need and head straight back to Psycho Bob's 1. He'll need time to put together a prototype nuclear bomb for you.

EVENTS 11, 12 & 13
BOMB THE BASE

After a while Bob will send you an email to let you know that the bomb is ready to collect – go and get it. He'll tell you that he needs more radioactive material: you can find this at either secret base, but it's easier to pilfer it from Lazarus. Just fire your nuke at their front door, nip in, grab a bit of radioactive flashing stuff and get your arse back to Psycho Bob's 1 quick smart. Easy. Bob will then analyse the stuff...

EVENTS 14 & 15
GANG DEFECTOR

An email will arrive from either a Skinners or Scrubbers gang member. He wants you to help him escape to the opposing faction's HQ – dirty traitor! Go to the defector's hangar and wait until they emerge. Follow them along, making sure that both you and your subject stay alive; use your cloaking device if necessary. When you arrive at the relevant HQ, dock *after* the gang member and get ready for your generous reward...

EVENT 16
MORE TRIGGERS AND MATTER

Not long after the above mission, Bob will ask you to return. He has the results from the testing of the radioactive cargo you delivered to him, and wants you to get a couple more triggers and some more matter. Fly to the same tunnel as before and destroy the transport ships carrying what you need. You will receive an email from Bob when you have enough. Return to Bob's to find him dead (sob). His weird apprentice takes over from this point.

EVENT 17
PORT ABORT

Once the bomb is fitted, the apprentice will ask you to go to the tunnel leading from the Mines to the Port and blow up the blockage, thereby opening the whole area back up to the public. The bomb isn't powerful enough for the job – look out for a mail from Psycho Bob's asking you to return for a refit.

EVENT 10

SHIELDS
WEAPONS

PORT

078

DAY:24, TIME:18:52:30
CASH: 2153
1 New Message

No Flares
No CHAFF
No Star Shells

Laser Turret
Pulse Laser
Plasma Kannon

research Facility
Altitude 185 ft

0 MPH

595 FT

87 FT

Skinner Trans 17

SHIELDS DOWN
range:-
365 FT

Laser Turret - recharging

Hang around here to procure some important matter.

EVENTS 11, 12 & 13

"You were only supposed to blow the bloody doors off!" Oh, you did.

EVENTS 11, 12 & 13
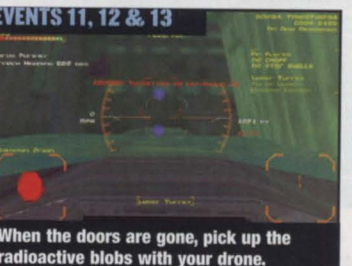
When the doors are gone, pick up the radioactive blobs with your drone.

EVENT 19

PSYCHO BOB'S BIGGER BETTER BOMB

Go back and pick up the bigger bomb. Return to the blockage and this time you will be successful. The blockage will be destroyed, opening the area back up to the public. Having done this, you will receive a mail from Bob's apprentice asking you to investigate Port.

EVENTS 20 & 21

ALIEN INTERVENTION

As soon as you enter Port, your Moth is immobilised and an alien ship swoops down, picks you up and transports you back to the relative safety of the mines. Do not attempt to go back into the mines yet. You will receive another email from Bob's apprentice. Head back immediately – she reckons she knows another way in...

EVENT 22

OUBLIETTE

Note: At this point you must have the powerful fusion cell. If for some reason you failed event 15 (Gang defector), go back to the research facility in the Downtown/Port tunnel and destroy one of the gang transport ships to receive the cell. Take it to the nearest Breaker Maker for a fitting.

Go back to Psycho Bob's and watch the video sequence detailing your next mission, then make the short journey to Psycho Bob's 2. At this point the plot takes a bit of a turn. Ride it out, read the emails, and eventually you'll end up at Oubliette. Check out the map.

EVENTS 23 & 24

LAZARUS HIGHTOWER

After talking to the imprisoned technician,

EVENT 22
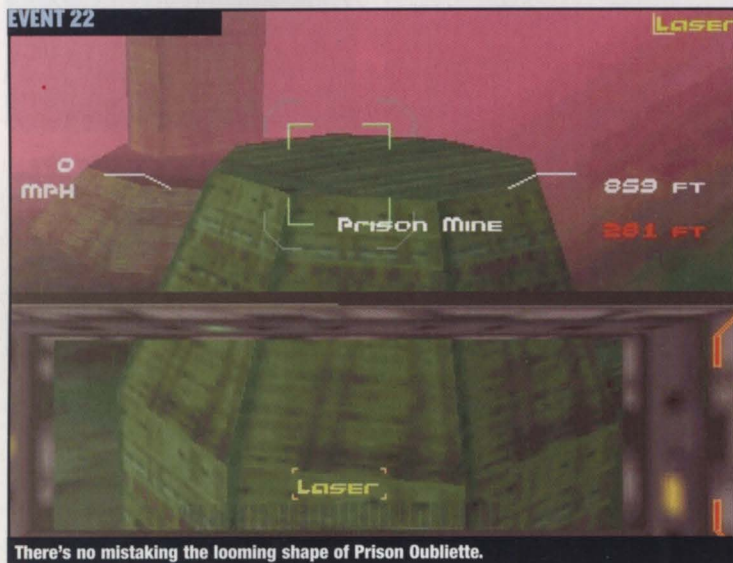
There's no mistaking the looming shape of Prison Oubliette.

EVENTS 23 & 24
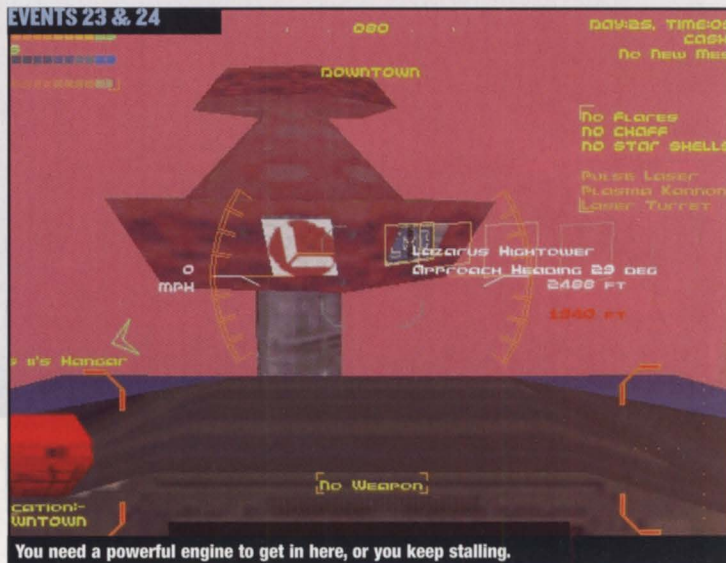
You need a powerful engine to get in here, or you keep stalling.

WARRIOR, MERCHANT OR SCAVVY GIT?

You can choose your destiny by selecting whether you want to be an aggressor, trader or scavenger. Actually, it doesn't make a blind bit of difference which one you go for – they are simply three different ways of making money

Being aggressive will ultimately put you on every wanted list on Titan.

AGGRESSOR

As an aggressor you'll need to visit police stations regularly to check the wanted list. Scroll through the list of fugitives to check out their bounty price. You might think that the higher the price on their heads, the harder they'd be to kill. Well, that's not strictly true, so the best thing to do is just go for the money. As long as you fight sensibly – in other words go in with full shields, full power, a couple of Sprat or Swarm missiles and preferably a laser turret – you should be okay. One other tip: try to corner your foe in a tunnel, as it gives them less chance to escape.

Wily aggressors will always target the pilots which are sought by many factions. If you manage to knock off a pirate who is wanted by the police, Lazarus, Klamp-G, Skinners and Scrubbers, you could be in line for a cool 5000 credit payday. Not bad for one kill...

Be on the look-out for messages asking for assistance in destroying Moths/buildings. You can earn good money doing this, but these kind of missions have a habit of deteriorating into a bit of a free-for-all with Moths, missiles, and laser shots pinging all over the place. Unless you're ultra careful you usually end up blasting some innocent trader out of the sky, which not only incurs the wrath of the police, but lands you with an annoying 4000 credit fine. Dammit.

TRADING

Trading can be a tough vocation as it's not always easy to work out profitable trade routes. The best thing to do is to watch out for messages, as it's always the best way of making your money. As soon as you receive a message of this kind click on 'Target Subject', head over there, get your merchandise, click on 'Target Sender' and make your way to the building asking for the goods, and then sell them.

Always read the needs list if you want to become a successful trader.

The 'needs' and 'sales' lists at any trade centre are also extremely useful and – conveniently – always focus on buildings situated in the crater you're currently in.

Note how the requirements of certain factions and companies change throughout the game. Early on you'll notice how much food is sought after. Later, as the arms race hots up, you'll see a considerable increase in the demand for fusion parts, radioactive matter and triggers. The cunning trader will always keep a careful eye on what's hot and what's not.

White arrows on the radar mean there's plenty of booty to pick up.

SCAVENGING

This is the best job in the game. Scavenging combines trading and fighting and can earn you ridiculous amounts of money, very quickly indeed.

Initially you just need to cruise around listening out for sounds of battle. When you do hear a bit of a ding-dong, use your radar to target the weaker Moth and keep tracking it until it's destroyed. Now swoop in, press the 'Y' key until the cargo or scrap metal is selected on your radar and press 'D' twice to launch your salvage drone. You must be extremely quick because other Moths home in on any battle leftovers like flies around muck.

Eventually you'll want to bag some of your own Moths. The best thing to do is check out the wanted list, find somebody with a pretty high bounty price on their head, close in on them and then stalk them until they get hold of some quality cargo, preferably narcotics or similar. Flogging ten tonnes of the good stuff will land you approximately 40,000 credits, and then of course there's the bounty reward on top of that...

Hardcore scavengers will hang out around lightwells. This is due to the fact that whenever a Moth gets into a bit of trouble they always head to the nearest lightwell to recharge their cell. It's easy: all you have to do is lie in wait until your prey limps into view and then you can blast the living daylights out of them. It's very cruel – and it will make you a lot of enemies – but it's ruthlessly effective and highly lucrative.

fly back to the Downtown crater and dock in the Lazarus Hightower. Watch the video of Xavier Lazarus; after you've watched it he will translate all the garbled email transmissions you should have received so far (you did remember to keep them, didn't you?). When you've done that and they all make sense, fly to Syd's workshop. Dock in the hangar, get out of your Moth and board the Neo-Tiger Moth sitting in docking bay #1.

EVENT 25
STEAL THE SHIELD MOTH

Once aboard your 'new' Moth, all you have to do is fly to the Port area and dock at the Unused Terminal in that crater. It shouldn't be too difficult to spot – there's a gigantic alien mothership parked right on top of it! Once you're in there, sit back and enjoy the end sequence. **PCZ**

EVENTS 23 & 24

| From: Abandoned Terminal | Target Sender |
| Sent: DAY:15, TIME:23:21:17 | Exit |

Human are ideal components to work. DNA flexible and simple. Beautiful machines you. Apologies for amount of raw materials we use, gifts go some way to ease loss?

This is what the original garbled mail looks like after translation.

TITAN'S CRATERS

Here's a complete layout of all eight craters, showing the top 20 essential locations

1. **PSYCHO BOB'S 1** — Your main man with the weapons and know-how.
2. **PSYCHO BOB'S 2** — Important later in the game.
3. **SOFTWARE SHACK 1** — Upgrade HUD software here, as well as autopilot and navigation facilities.
4. **SOFTWARE SHACK 2** — More useful upgrades.
5. **KLAMP-G HQ** — Find out who Klamp-G's enemies are. They're normally Lazarus patrol ships.
6. **KLAMP-G SECRET HQ** — Stores of radioactive material. You need a nuclear bomb to enter the base.
7. **LAZARUS HQ** — Lists Lazarus' most wanted. Most of them, unsurprisingly, are Klamp-G Moths.
8. **LAZARUS SECRET HQ** — More stores of radioactive stuff. You need a nuke to blow open the doors.
9. **DOWNTOWN MOTHS** — Best shop on Titan if you want to buy a new Moth.
10. **SCRUBBERS HQ** — Find out who the Scrubbers' most wanted are.
11. **SKINNERS HQ** — Likewise with the Skinners.
12. **POLICE HQ** — Check out the official police wanted list. Anyone on this list is normally pretty hot.
13. **OUBLIETTE** — You'll need to visit here to speak with an imprisoned technician.
14. **LAZARUS HIGHTOWER** — Xavier Lazarus' swanky penthouse hideout.
15. **SYD'S WORKSHOP** — Find a Neo-Tiger Moth in bay #1 (you'll need it at the end of the game).
16. **UNUSED TERMINAL** — Source of garbled transmissions.
17. **RECYCLING JOINT** — Best prices for scrap metal.
18. **SPECIAL ARMS CO.** — If you want some serious firepower, head here.
19. **RESEARCH FACILITY** — The best place to find triggers and matter.
20. **YOUR HANGAR** — It's up to you to mark this one on the map.
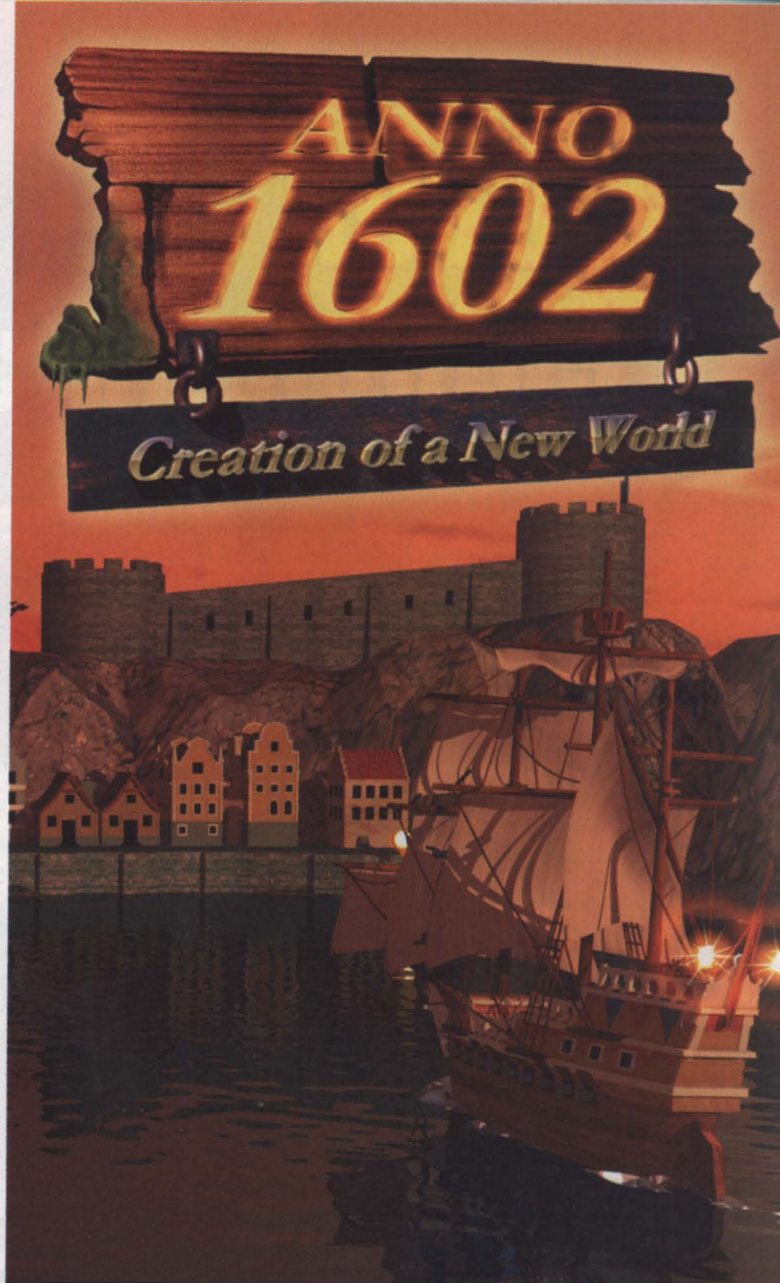
Over 200 PC product reviews in one magazine

DEAR WAZZA

Your techie queries answered in plain English (where possible)

⊗ **AGONY AUNT** Warren Chrismas

YOU NT-ER!

Q My friend has recently upgraded to Windows 98 and, as a lot of magazines are saying, it isn't that much different from OSR2 and IE4. However, I have read about the increase in speed you get from using NT. My question is can you still play the games designed for Windows 95 in NT? And can you use 3D-accelerator (I mean 3Dfx and PowerVR) cards with it?
Lee Gorringe, email

A Yes, as we ourselves said (see *PCZ #65*), Windows 98 doesn't offer *that* much more than Windows 95 OSR2 with *Internet Explorer 4.01* bolted on top. But Windows NT? For home use? For gaming? Nah, forget it. NT is not like some super-duper deluxe version of Windows 95 or 98 – it's a platform for business machines. Many games won't run, you'll have compatibility problems, trouble finding drivers… No, no, don't do it!

VOODUDE

Q I've had my computer for about a year and I want to upgrade it. What I really need is a 3D accelerator card but, as things change so often, I don't want to buy one then find it's useless in a few months. I've got a P166 MMX with 64Mb RAM, which I would say is just below average. Would you advise me to buy a 3Dfx Voodoo card (about £90 now, aren't they?), or buy a 3Dfx Voodoo2 card? Given that my processor is slow, wouldn't it be a waste of time getting a Voodoo2? If I get an old 3Dfx card, will new games support it? I hope you can help, and I'm sure there's loads of other people with the same problem as me.
Ian Grimes, email

A Yep, as you suspect – and as we've pointed out a number of times previously – a Voodoo2 card is wasted in anything less than a Pentium II-based machine (or equivalent). We suggest you go for a basic Voodoo board (which, incidentally, should cost you *much* less than £90) and start saving for a new processor (and motherboard if necessary). Don't worry about Voodoo-based accelerators becoming obsolete any time soon. They may not offer the speed, resolutions or advanced features of second-generation boards, but they'll continue to be supported for quite a long time yet.

TRASH TALK

Q After reading the How To Clean Up Your PC guide in your October issue [*PCZ #68*], I was wondering whether it's possible to get rid of unwanted stuff in my Windows registry. I mean, do you have to type something to get rid of stuff not needed, or is there a program I could buy that I can use to clear the rubbish out?
Fahad Mahmood, Rugby

A You *can* manually delete stuff from the Windows registry, but it's something best left to experienced users. Sounds bizarre, we know, but if you need to be told how to do it, you shouldn't be doing it.

Whatever, there are several programs on the market which will help you to keep your system in shape. The best-known are *CleanSweep Deluxe* (from Quarterdeck), *Norton Uninstall Deluxe* (Symantec), *WinDelete 97* (IMSI) and *UnInstaller* (CyberMedia). We wouldn't want to recommend one in particular because we haven't tested them all, but you'll find these and similar products in your local computer store, with prices starting at around £20. Of course, if you maintain your PC carefully, installing and uninstalling programs correctly, then your registry shouldn't be filled with crap anyway. Well, not too much.

RHYS OF LIGHT

Q In your August issue (*PCZ #66*), you said in the PlayStation Zone bit that there are two things a PlayStation has that a PC hasn't and one of these is a lightgun. But then, in the review of Sega's *House Of The Dead* in the same issue, you said that the game supports a lightgun. Can you use a lightgun with the PC? And if so can you use it with games like *Quake* and *Unreal*?
Rhys Thomas, London

A Just goes to show that you can never trust anything written in magazines, doesn't it? Some of us can actually remember playing the DOS-based *Mad Dog McCree* in the ZONE office with a crappy, unreliable, PC-compatible lightgun a few years back, but as far as we know it was never distributed in the UK. One thing is for certain: lightguns will only work with games designed with their use in mind, and that definitely doesn't include the likes of *Quake* and *Unreal*. Whatever, Rhys, you win this month's bonus £1000 prize.

Before you sit waiting for the cheque though, you might want to read the first line of this reply over again.

> ❝Can you use a lightgun with the PC, and with games like *Quake* and *Unreal*?❞
> **RHYS THOMAS, LONDON**

PORTS MIFF

Q A couple of issues back you mentioned the use of USB (Universal Serial Bus) ports in new computers, and I was wondering whether you knew of any joysticks on the market at the moment that use this standard. I'm asking because I've just purchased *M1 Tank Platoon 2*, only to subsequently discover that I need a joystick for it. My nice new Toshiba Pentium II 333 doesn't have a joystick port, instead it has just two of those bloody USB things!
Michael Brown, email

A Most major manufacturers are working on USB-compatible joysticks, gamepads and steering wheels, but you're unlikely to see a decent range until well into next year. At the moment, the only joysticks we know of with a USB option are the Cyborg 3D Stick from Saitek (01454 855050) and the TopGun from ThrustMaster (01276 609955).

V.SILLY

Q I thought I'd try out the new V.90 standard, so I upgraded my modem with the software provided. Now, whenever I connect to my server I get SCREEEEEEEEEEEECH!!!!!!!!!! (a 'vital organs bursting' kinda noise). I know that a modem makes a noise when you dial up, but only for a few seconds, right? When it communicates with my server, the modem keeps stopping and then resetting itself. As if that isn't enough, if I'm able to log in at all, the connection keeps terminating. Would you say that this is my PC, my service provider, or just V.90 in general? I have a 3Com X2 56K modem and my service provider is Force9, who have been brilliant.
Paul Beaucahmp, Beccles, Suffolk

A If the modem was working okay before you attempted the switch to V.90, then I think it's probably safe to assume that something went wrong with the flash ROM upgrade. The upgrade software should have given you the option to back up your original X2 settings. If you did, the obvious thing to do is to restore those settings and test the modem again. If you didn't, you should speak to 3Com's technical support people (the number will be in the manual) and seek their advice. It would obviously make sense to speak to Force9 too.

CREDIT DUE

Q Do you know if there is an ISP (Internet Service Provider) that accepts direct debit ➔

or cheque payments? Also, what payment methods are available for Wireplay (eg: could the Wireplay charges I rack up be added to my phone bill)?

Changing the subject, I'm currently building a new PC. Would it be possible for your magazine to do a section on building the ultimate gaming system?

D Long, Headington

A You shouldn't have *too* much of a problem finding an ISP that will accept a cheque, although you may have to pay for a year's subscription up front. We suggest you search around for a good provider (asking friends and other users is always a good idea) and *then* investigate what payment plans they offer. You shouldn't be forced to use a credit card unless you sign up for some kind of quick-start account, via a CD-ROM, or on the Net itself.

The Wireplay payment options are covered in *PC ZONE* every month in the Newswire pages (see page 182). As Richard Warren of Wireplay explained in our October issue (*PCZ* #68), if BT allowed Wireplay subscription charges to be added to your phone bill, they'd have to allow all kinds of other companies to charge for services in the same way. Of course, if you use the pay-as-you-play option there are no subscription charges anyway.

As for a section in *PC ZONE* on building the ultimate gaming system, it's something we've actually been toying with, and we'd be interested to hear readers' thoughts on the subject. For example, would you like to see us put together the fastest and most expensive games machine around, or build something with components which are more likely to be within the typical gamer's budget? Your comments, please, to Richie at richie.pcz@dial.pipex.com. **PCZ**

£50 WINNER!

FAT CHANCE

Q When I click on the properties of my hard drive it tells me that I have used up 990Mb of space on a 1Gb drive. Yet when I highlight everything that is inside the C drive (including hidden files) it tells me that I am using 830Mb. Where the hell is the rest of it and how do I get it back?

David Burkitt, Retford, Notts

A *Excellent* question, David. Your inquisitiveness wins you £50, if only because this phenomena is something that a lot of readers have probably noticed but merely passed off as 'one of those things'.

And the answer? Well, it's all down to the fact that files are stored on hard disks in what are known as clusters. The problem is that only one single file can sit in any one cluster. If a file doesn't use 100 per cent of a cluster, the rest of that cluster becomes unusable, therefore wasting disk space. As you've found, on a big drive with a large number of files this can mean a *lot* of wasted space.

The size of a cluster is determined by the size of the drive (or partition, but more on that in a minute). With FAT16 (the File Allocation Table system used by DOS and the original version of Windows 95), a drive of up to 128Mb uses 2K clusters, a 128-255Mb drive uses 4K clusters, a 256-511Mb drive uses 8K clusters… and so it goes on until you get to drives greater than 2047Mb, which use 64K clusters.

The latter in particular is hugely inefficient, as even the tiniest of text files, which might only be a couple of kilobytes in size, are each going to steal 64K of disk space. And, of course, *every* file larger than 64K is going to waste some space too unless it just so happens to be of a size exactly divisible by 64.

So what's the solution? Well, with big drives in particular, the obvious thing to do is partition the hard drive so that DOS or Windows treats the one hard disk as a series of smaller logical drives using smaller clusters. To do this you need to use the DOS/Windows utility FDISK and reformat the drive/s (in which case you lose all your data). Or you can use a specialist utility such as PowerQuest's PartitionMagic 3.0 (see www.powerquest.com) which enables you to partition a hard drive without reformatting. We wouldn't bother partitioning in your case though David, as it doesn't make sense to split a relatively small drive into tiny areas, and the 16K clusters used by a 1Gb drive aren't *that* big. The simple fact is, you're always going to be wasting some space.

Worth noting, however, is that OSR2 (OEM Service Release 2) version of Windows 95 enables you to format a hard disk to use a far more efficient file system called FAT32. Windows 98 also supports it and, rather handily, includes a utility which converts a drive (larger than 512Mb) to FAT32 without the need for reformatting (you'll find it under System Tools in the Accessories folder). How much more efficient is it? *Very* – the cluster size for a drive of up to 8Gb using FAT32 is a mere 4K. The only real downside is that older disk utilities (and some drivers) designed for FAT16 won't operate and you won't be able to dual-boot to run DOS and earlier versions of Windows.

READER REPLIES

RE: RIGHTEOUS BROTHER

In our October issue (*PCZ* #68) we ran a letter from William McElhinny who was experiencing lock-ups with *Quake II* and *Unreal* when using his Orchid Righteous 3D accelerator. We threw it open to you lot and got loads of responses, with readers offering all sorts of different advice (thanks to you all – you're smashers). Here are some of the more plausible solutions, which others may also find useful.

Orchid Righteous 3D accelerator: lock-up problems with some games.

A William mentions that he is using an S3 ViRGE video card. There is an incompatibility with older S3 chip-based boards and the Righteous 3D card. If he downloads the S3FIX patch file from the R3D drivers section from www.orchid.com, this may cure his problem. He should also make sure he downloads version 3.01 of the R3D drivers.

If this doesn't fix his locking up problem he should, if he feels comfortable, move his R3D card from whichever slot it is currently in to PCI Slot 1. This overcomes the PCI 'steering' problems on some motherboards which can cause the R3D card to crash the PC.

Tejinder Tagar, email

A There's a chance that Mr McElhinny has got a Righteous 3D from the batch which had dodgy memory chips. These should have disappeared from the shelves by now, but some may still lurk in dark corners of high street stores. Orchid will replace faulty boards free of charge.

> **"There's a chance that Mr McElhinny has got a Righteous 3D from the batch which had dodgy memory chips"**
>
> JOHN ROUND

As I remember, the faulty cards would lock up frequently, as the memory chips couldn't stand the strain. The more demanding the software, the more frequent the lock-up. This would explain why *Quake II* and *Unreal* crash, whereas *Forsaken* doesn't. You can identify the dodgy cards by the code on the memory chips. I suggest he rings Orchid's tech support line again and asks them specifically about this issue.

John Round, email

A I had similar problems for a while but discovered a fix. It appears that most of these cards are clocked to run at 50MHz by default, but a few seem to overheat at this speed. Change the clock speed down (to, say, 45MHz) and this should solve the problem. You can put a line in your autoexec.bat file like this: SET SST_GRXCLK=xx (where xx is the clock speed). The lower speed doesn't really make *that* much difference to a game's frame rate (*Some might argue with that – Ed*). I know a lot of people go on about overclocking their cards – that is, upping the clock speed – but some just can't seem to take the heat.

Andy Moore, email

RE: JOY-STUCK

Also in our October issue, 'The Frew' was having problems getting his PC to recognise that his SideWinder gamepad was connected. We haven't tested it, but here's a possible solution from another reader.

A I had the same problem as 'The Frew' with regards to the Microsoft SideWinder gamepad. I have an Opti 931-based sound card with a standard game port, and was also getting a "not connected" message. I looked up Microsoft Technical Support on the Web and found a program called configsw.exe which matches the interrupt rate of your gamepad with the sound card. Run this and you should have no problems. The program is available from Microsoft direct (www.microsoft.com) or from a mirror site at www.cyf-kr.edu.pl/ftp/softlib.

Paul Collins, email

HOW TO...
MAKE USE
OF YOUR
WEB
SPACE
PART TWO

Last month our online guru showed you how to build a little one-room maisonette out on the Web. This month he guides you through adding a second floor, en suite bathroom and double garage with electric sliding doors

⭐ **WORDS** Phil Wand

WHO GIVES YOU WHAT?

Here's a little look at how many megabytes the major ISPs dish out to their customers. As you can see from the list, figures range from a measly 5Mb (poo) to unlimited (wahay!)

ISP	CONTACT ADDRESS	WEB SPACE
VIRGIN NET	www.virgin.net	10Mb
DEMON INTERNET	www.demon.net	15Mb
GLOBAL INTERNET	www.globalnet.co.uk	20Mb
PRESTEL	www.prestel.co.uk	Unlimited
DIRECT CONNECTION	www.dircon.net	20Mb
BTINTERNET	www.btinternet.com	10Mb
PIPEX DIAL	www.dial.pipex.com	5Mb

If you were here last month, you'll know that we created a whole new website from scratch: we made ourselves a groovy logo, a spiral background, a dapper front page and some links to other areas. And bugger me if it wasn't the greatest work of art since Titian's portrait of Charles V at the Battle of Muhlberc. Ahem.

This month we tackle the problem of setting up a mailing list – very much de rigueur for new sites – and gathering together a library of nifty downloads to attract visitors. We also create a file page spad a news page, and finally we upload everything to the server for the whole world to see. If you simply can't wait, you can see all the waffle and theory put into practice right now at **www.sillyware.com**. Hurrah!

THE MAILING LIST
As mentioned last issue, electronic mailing lists are a fantastic way to keep in touch with your visitors. Until recently, though, they were a pain in the arse to set up and a bitch to maintain. The majority were complicated UNIX utilities that only fat men with beards could understand; the rest were expensive Windows NT applications that required you to go on a month's training course in Lisbon before you were qualified to remove the shrink-wrapping. Nowadays there are a number of Web-based outfits who provide mailing list services for free through a simple online interface. And they work rather well.

But before we continue, there are two different types of list you need to know about. The first is a *discussion* list, where messages from subscribers are addressed to the list server and then propagated to all other list members. This type of list is very useful for mail-based chat and provides a good forum for monumental arguments. The second type is an *announcement* or *distribution* list, where the moderator (ie you) sends a single mail which then gets forwarded to all subscribers.
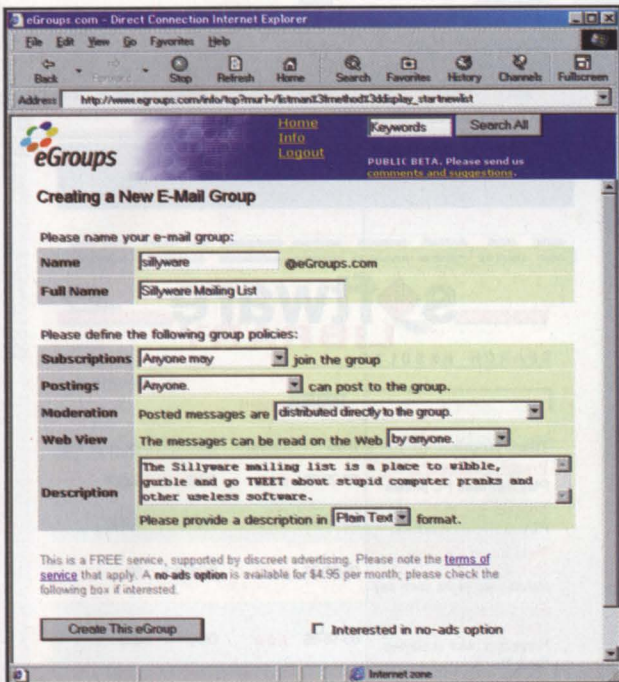
Fig 1: Welcome to the wonderful world of FindMail.

```
<form method="GET" action="http://www.findmail.com/subscribe">
<input type="hidden" name="listname" value="sillyware">
<table bgcolor="#CBE609" width="100%">
<tr align="center"><td align="center">
<font face="Times New Roman" size="2">
Wanna subscribe to the <strong>Sillyware Mailing
List</strong>?</font><br>
<input type="text" name="emailaddr" size="16" value="your email">
<input type="submit" name="SubmitAction" value="Uh-huh!">
</td></tr>
</table>
</form>
```

Fig 2: The template HTML code for the Sillyware mailing list form.

Fig 3: *FrontPage Express'* HTML code-editing screen.

"After time, when you've got yourself a nice fat goodie bag of downloads, remember to separate them into different sections. This makes navigation easier, and also makes it look like you have a bigger selection than is actually the case"

This is useful for keeping people abreast of the latest news and site updates.

TOP TIP *Think carefully about which list you need. Discussion lists are fun but less popular, as they can generate a lot of unwelcome traffic – if you have 100 people on your list who each send each other a message, the possible number of replies is... um, a lot. Announcement lists are often the best option, enabling you to talk to a captive audience about something you know they're interested in. Needless to say we've decided to go for the first option.*

One of the more popular places for free lists is a place called FindMail (also known as eGroups) at **www.findmail.com** – you can set everything up and add some initial subscribers in about 30 seconds flat. The FindMail interface will even generate raw HTML code for you to cut and paste into your own site, which is what we did (plus a little bit of style tweaking).

First, open up your Web browser, connect to the Net and then surf along to the FindMail home page (if you're using *Internet Explorer 4*, all you need do is type 'FindMail' in the Address box and the software will do the rest). Once there, follow the links to Start Your Own List and you are presented with a log-in box **(fig 1)** – if you're new to the system, you need to

register. Otherwise, enter your email address and password to sign in.

At the top of the List Creation screen, enter the name of the list you want to create. In our case, we're going to keep the name of the site and call it Sillyware, but you can in fact call it anything you like. Next we need to supply the list's full name – this is the three or four words that will appear in mail programs next to the message. 'Sillyware Mailing List' is as good as any, so we'll use that.

The Group Policies box decides how the list actually works. The first and perhaps most important option determines who is allowed to subscribe and take part. At this point we could decide to make it so that only the moderator adds people in manually, but that'll severely limit the size of the list. So unless you wish to restrict the participants to a specific bunch of people (ie to your friends or family), the best option is to allow anyone to join in.

Next we get to decide who's allowed to post to the group. If we select 'Only the moderator', it becomes an announcement list; in other words, only you can send messages out to your subscribers. If we opt for 'Only members', this ensures that people subscribe by providing their email address before they're allowed to post to the list. And if we select 'Anyone', it means that any old charlie can post to the list simply by sending a mail to sillyware@findmail.com. Given the subject matter and the nature of our list, we'll opt for the most chaotic of the three options.
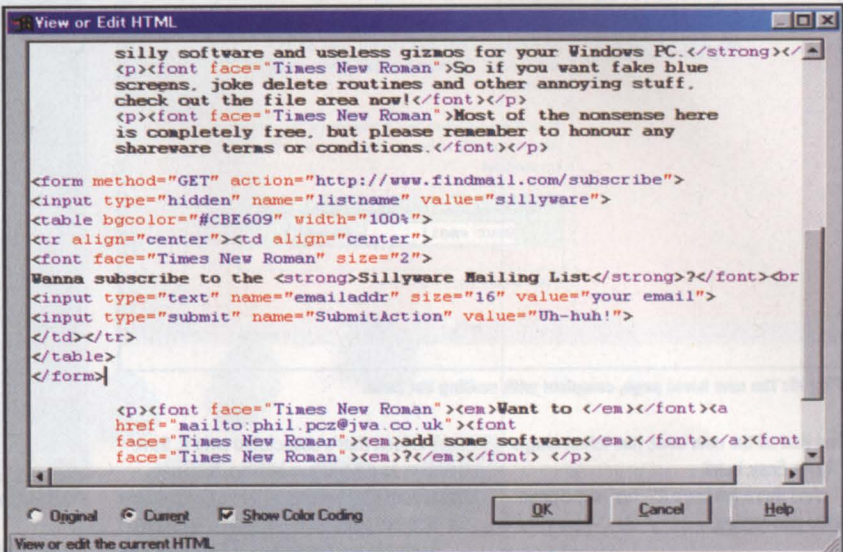
After hitting the Create button, your list is instantly active with you set as moderator and the lone participant. The next screen enables you to add initial subscribers by hand and to swipe some HTML code for your own website. Basically, this code is a chunk of text that instructs the Web browser to display a dinky form on the page – people enter their email address in the text box, and then click on OK to subscribe.

Like the HTML code we used on the Sillyware site **(fig 2)**, a lot of HTML reads like plain English, so even if you're unfamiliar with 'browserspeak' you should be able to work out what's going on without too much trouble.

To insert the mailing list form and the button, copy the code from the FindMail site, open up *FrontPage Express* (or whatever Web-editing package you've got the hots for) and click the 'HTML' option on the View menu **(fig 3)**. If you're unaccustomed to raw code, don't panic – what we're about to do is very straightforward.

Right. We now need to find the location on the page where it says 'terms and conditions', as this marks the end of the paragraph after which we wish to insert our new form. Page down and scan through the text, then press CTRL + V on your keyboard to paste in the code we copied earlier. Don't worry if the formatting looks a bit weird, because *FrontPage* will sort that out for us behind the scenes. Hit the OK button at the bottom of the page, and you should →

USEFUL BOOKMARKS

A useful set of links for anyone interested in setting up their own website

FINDMAIL www.findmail.com
Enables you to set up, manage and moderate your own mailing list for free. Includes a nifty Web-based interface, together with full list management and moderation tools.

ICONFORGE www.cursorarts.com
Top-notch icon creation, extraction and editing tool. Don't be put off by the Mickey Mouse interface, it's a lot more adaptable than its rivals.

ZDNET HOTFILES www.hotfiles.com
Great place to start when looking for freeware, shareware and commercially available demo software.

WINFILES www.winfiles.com
Previously Windows95.com, WinFiles is still one of the best places to go for all manner of online applications.

FTPX www.ftpx.com
Our FTP program of choice because it does the job. Other contenders include *Bullet Proof FTP*, *Internet Neighbourhood* and *WS FTP*. All are available from any good file mine.

USP NETWORKS www.usp.net
The nice folk who got us the Sillyware domain and hosted all our files. You can search, register and pay for new domains from the comfort of your armchair.
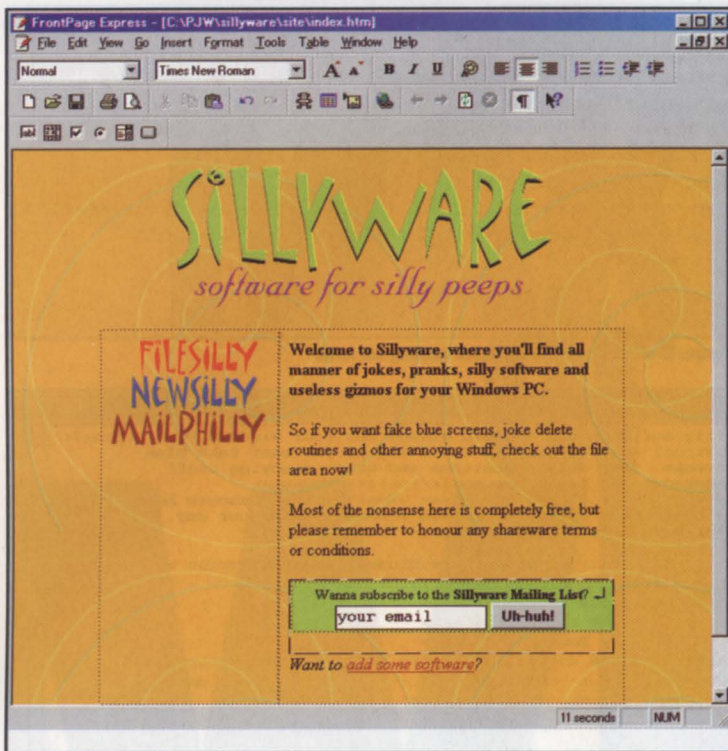
Fig 4: The new home page, complete with mailing list form.

Fig 5: ZDNet's Hotfiles page is a good place to look for all manner of software online.

find that all the new code has taken shape (**fig 4**). Easy, huh?

And there we have it – our home page done and dusted.

THEM FILES

We want Sillyware to be a gathering place for all manner of stupid stuff from all over the Internet, and one thing that's sure to lead to success is a wide variety of files. In our example, we've used just ten jokes, pranks and games; in reality you need a lot more than that. Once your site is up and running you can keep adding to it, refining it, and acting on suggestions from visitors, so don't be too concerned about having a massive library of stuff at this early stage.

To start our collection off, we burgled some of the major search engines for good links (using words like 'computer', 'joke' and 'prank' as the primary search terms). We also had a look through the huge file libraries at **www.hotfiles.com** (**fig 5**) and at **www.winfiles.com**. You should do the same for your site, as not only are search engines and file mines an invaluable source of content, they also reveal what kinds of

out the icon that's associated with it. Save the icon as a Windows bitmap, then use *Paint Shop Pro* to convert it to a GIF suitable for Web browsers.

To create the bones of the Sillyware files area, we followed the same sequence of events that we used in making the home page. We made a new page, saved it as files.html in the same directory as index.html (ie the home page from last month's tutorial), and set the various colours and text options by right-clicking and selecting Page Properties from the pop-up menu.

TOPTIP *Don't mention the day you last changed the site unless you really have to. Doing do instantly dates your pages and may deter people from paying a return visit.*

We kept the same background for consistency, and again put the logo at the top of the page using drag-and-drop. Then we added a small row of links to other areas of the site – you should do the same,

to making that section in a moment); and for the contact link type 'mailto:' followed by your email address.

If you want to use graphics instead of text for links, simply create some buttons in your paint package, drag-and-drop them on to the *FrontPage* screen, and then click the Create or Edit Hyperlink button.

TOPTIP *After time, when you've got yourself a nice fat goodie bag of downloads, remember to separate them into different sections. This makes navigation easier, and also makes it look like you have a bigger selection than is actually the case.*

Now we'll create the main table. Underneath the links you created, choose Insert Table from the Table menu on the *FrontPage* main screen (**fig 6**). In the case of Sillyware, we know that we have ten applications to add, so we'll create ten rows. We also need a couple of columns – one for the icon, the other for the description. We want the default alignment to be Centre, we want a single-pixel Border around the edge, and we want both the Cell Padding (the gap between the contents and the wall of the cell) and the Cell Spacing (the gap between individual cells in the table) to be five pixels. Finally, we want the entire table to be restricted to 500 pixels wide – this keeps it within the margins of the home page, which also has a 500-pixel table on it.

As you can see, this gives us a nice 'padded' look. If you need to add more rows, simply click in one of the cells and

choose Insert Rows or Columns from the *FrontPage* Table menu.

Now we'll add in those files and file descriptions. Make sure all your 'downloadable' applications and graphics are stored in a sub-directory beneath the Web page you're currently working on – this always saves a lot of bother later on – and then just drag-and-drop the icons into the cells in the left column. Right-click on the cells, choose Cell Properties, and then specify a width (in the case of Sillyware, we're using 60 pixels) to close up the gap around the image.

For the right column of cells, type in the name of the application you wish to link to (always include a file size as well), then provide a description underneath. To save on bandwidth, we used the standard Windows Wingdings font to create the red and white score blobs – they're simply the letter 'l' with different font colour settings applied to them.

> "Once your site is up and running you can keep adding to it, refining it and acting on suggestions from visitors, so don't be too concerned about having a massive library of stuff at this early stage"

things other people are getting up to. Learn from the mistakes of rivals and you'll soon be stealing their traffic!

For the file page, we used a useful shareware tool called *IconForge* to extract icons from all the applications we downloaded. This makes the page look a whole lot more interesting than if we used plain text. All you have to do is point the little tool at your application and it'll yank

as it's very important to provide people with a simple and accessible navigation system. Simply type the names of the pages you wish to link to, double-click on the individual words, and then click the Create or Edit Hyperlink button on the main *FrontPage* toolbar. To link back to the home page, just type 'index.html' (the filename of the main page); to link to the news page, type 'news.html' (don't worry, we'll get on

Fig 6: Tables can be daunting, but practice and you'll soon get the hang of it.

Get it on!

Fig 7: Linking to downloadable files is exactly the same process as linking to other pages.

TOP TIP *Ratings are important, as they give an air of authority to any site. People are much more likely to come back for a return visit if it seems like you're a master of your wares and have taken the time to assess and grade each file.*

To make the hyperlink active to a file, highlight the name and then click on Create or Edit Hyperlink on the *FrontPage* toolbar **(fig 7)**. Enter the filename of the application (if it's in a sub-directory, remember to include that as well) and press Enter. This process is exactly the same as for linking to other pages in your site – the Web browser still loads the file you specify, except that because it isn't an HTML file it asks the user if they want to save it to their hard drive.

THE NEWS PAGE

A news page is a very useful way for other people to track the changes you make. It should be a diary of updates and information, not a place for you to vent spleen. Make it entertaining and controversial by all means, but keep it relevant. The Sillyware news page **(fig 8)** follows the theme of the other pages, and

again uses a two-column table in the centre of the page. By now you should have the skills to set up this page by yourself – so go on, get on with it.

UPLOADING

Once you're satisfied that you've done all you can and are ready to roll, you need to gather all your files together and upload them, one by one, to your website. It's impossible for us to describe the exact procedure for doing this, as it varies enormously from provider to provider, so check with your ISP for the specifics. 'Must-have' information is the host address of the Web server (ie where to put your files), as well as any special procedures for logging in. You should find a step-by-step guide on your ISP's home page.

If you haven't done so already, you also need to go grab yourself a decent FTP program, because although your site will end up on the Web, you transmit your files

> **"To wrap things up, you should register your site with all the major search engines"**

to the server using the FTP protocol. Don't worry about the jargon; essentially all you're doing is copying files between two computers.

Click Connect in your FTP client **(fig 9)** and then drag-and-drop your files on to the remote server window. After the upload has finished, your files are 'live' – in other words, they're available to anyone. At this point you may well have to revisit the ISP's uploading guide to find out how to access your pages from your browser. Virgin, for example, have a separate user area called Freespace at **freespace.virgin.net/your-username**, and Demon use **www.your-**

username.demon.co.uk. Sometimes it's just not possible to guess the address, so if in doubt, ask!

TOP TIP *Remember that most ISPs restrict the amount of space you can use on their servers – don't go uploading terabytes of files without first checking what your limit is.*
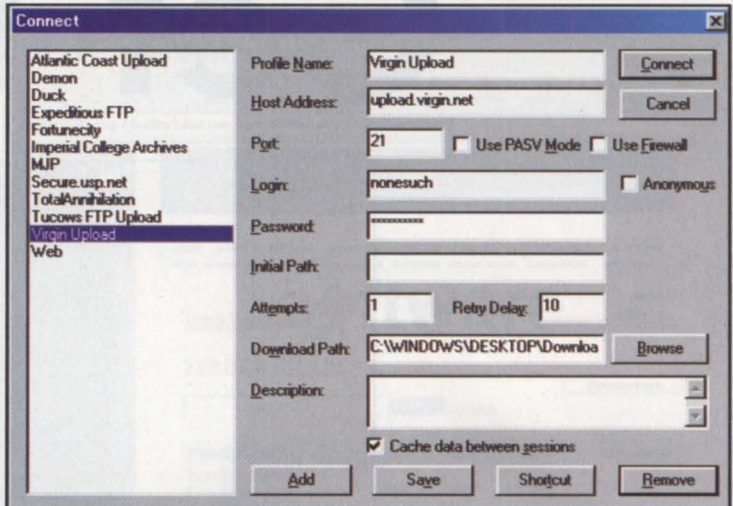
Fig 9: To give you an idea, these are the relevant FTPx settings for Virgin's free Web space.

AND AWAY YOU GO...

To wrap things up, you should register your site with all the major search engines – you do this by visiting each search engine in turn, clicking on their Add URL link, and then providing the address of your home page. It normally takes at least a week for your stuff to be added to their database, so don't worry if you can't find your page later the same afternoon.

Right. Off you go, and good luck. **PCZ**
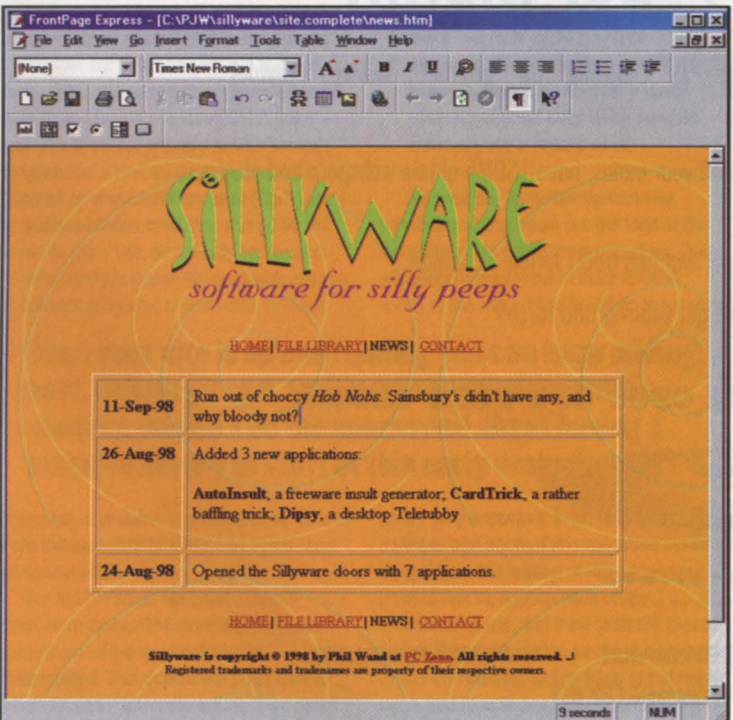
Fig 8: Use the news page in conjunction with the mailing list to keep people up to date.

WHAT YOU NEED

The software tools of the trade

Making pages is just like adjusting the inlet valve clearances on a Chevy small block – a remarkably straightforward affair, as long as you have the correct tools. For our Web page we need three types of product – one, a page creator to generate the HTML code; two, a graphics package to manipulate the images; three, an FTP program to upload the files

WEB PAGE CREATORS

FRONTPAGE EXPRESS £FREE http://windowsupdate.microsoft.com/
Quick, efficient and great to use if you already know *Word* or *Excel*.

FUSION 3.0 £176 www.netobjects.com
Enables precise placement of images and text – great for wannabe designers.

HOMESITE £79 OR COLD FUSION STUDIO 3.1 £295 www.allaire.com
HomeSite is for mortals; *Cold Fusion Studio* is for the nuts who dig raw code.

GRAPHICS PACKAGES

PHOTOSHOP 5 £414 www.adobe.com
Undisputed king of the PC graphics packages, with only the price tag to deter you.

PAINT SHOP PRO 5 £99 www.jasc.com
If you can live with the interface, *PSP*'s functionality is alongside that of *Photoshop*.

CORELDRAW! £258 www.corel.com
Generally referred to as the poor man's *Photoshop*, but almost as capable.

If you're just going to stick with a personal page on free Web space, there's not much point in forking out £414 for a copy of *Photoshop* and £176 on *Fusion*. Stick with *FrontPage* and *Paint Shop Pro 5* – both excellent products – and you won't go wrong.

FTP PROGRAMS

FTPX £22 www.ftpx.com
Great utility with an *Explorer*-like face. A bit out of date but it does the job perfectly.

BULLET PROOF FTP £22 www.bpftp.com
The FTP program of the moment, with a staggering number of features.

INTERNET NEIGHBOURHOOD £20 www.knowareinc.com
A neat FTP program that integrates seamlessly with your *Windows* desktop.

WATCHDOG

Complained? Argued? Shouted? And yet still feeling ignored by the industry you support? Relax. Let *PC ZONE* take care of your consumer worries

⭐ **ANSWERED BY** Adam Phillips

DOH!

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've got a techie problem, write to Dear Wazza (page 157).

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'.

❝**I am writing to you as a last resort before I arm myself with weapons of mass destruction and unleash them on the offices of US Robotics**❞

PAUL HANNA

A DIG AT DID

Q From the reviews being published about *F-22: Total Air War* (*PCZ* #68, 95%) it would seem that approximately 60 per cent of the game and code is the same as *F-22: Air Dominance Fighter* (*PCZ* #60, 95%), yet DID are asking a full £30 to £40 quid for this 'new' game. How can they warrant this without giving existing owners of *F-22* some concessions or money back? Even the megalomaniac, power-crazy Microsoft offered a £10 cash-back for existing owners of their *Flight Simulator* when *FS95* came out! DID's official line on this is that it would cost too much money to administer if they raised a similar offer!

I'm sure that *TAW* will easily be the best flight/war sim available, and I have always been a major fan and purchaser of their products, but this seems to be an outrageous attempt to double their money with mainly an add-on product. The features in *TAW* were expected to be in the original release (*ADF*) but due to the amount of work involved, DID told us that they did not want to delay *ADF* any more so they would release *TAW* as an add-on product. Nearly a year later and we're being ripped off, because they have not stuck to their word.

I'll buy *TAW* because I like the strategy element as much as the actual sim side of things. But DID will be pushed all the way from what I have heard about *Falcon 4* and various other sims due out soon. There is no room for complacency in the computer games industry, no matter how good you are. They need to look after their supporters, not turn their heads in another direction.

John Bampkin

A In our review we agreed with some of the points you've raised. Watchdog spoke to Don Whiteford, Development Director at DID, and gleaned the following response.

"As the reader rightly points out, *F-22: Total Air War* has been in development for almost a year. For companies building products on proven technology with a fairly large team, this is a reasonable time frame for a full product. Subsequently, its status and pricing as a full product are not unreasonable. An upgrade comparable to *TACTCOM* for *EF2000* would have taken less time and money, and would have been priced accordingly.

"Originally, some of the features in *TAW* were planned for an upgrade, but we decided to make it our most comprehensive flight simulation ever. I don't believe we have done anything wrong in this respect, as we are constantly inundated by customer requests to pack more features into our simulations. It might have been a mistake to suggest that *TAW* would be an add-on, but we believed the end result would be much more appreciated.

"With respect to rebates, DID have never officially stated that it would cost too much to administer. While the granting of rebates is not a decision for DID, I would like to add that our publisher Infogrames have the best interests of our company at heart, and seek to ensure our security as a developer of premium flight simulation products. We can only thank them for that.

"In our opinion, and the opinion of many players and journalists who have seen *TAW*, the development cost and extensive feature set easily justifies its status as a full product – *TAW* plays in a radically different way to *ADF*."

X-FILES: THE TRUTH

Q My friend and I both bought *The X-Files* thinking that we couldn't go wrong with something that's seven CDs big. Imagine our horror when he completed his copy in two days and I did mine in a week. Needless to say we were very displeased that the CDs were basically filled with nothing but video and frustrating puzzles. So angry, in fact, that we complained.

My friend emailed Fox Interactive and has yet to get a response. I decided to phone and was congratulated by the technician on completing the game before anyone in his office. He then told me to start the game again and look at all the pretty pictures on the walls in Willmore's office. I hung up.

I tried complaining again using a different helpline and was told: "Just because you completed it in a week doesn't mean we can give you a refund. Sorry, but there's nothing we can do."

Please help us. For two 15-year-olds, £40 each is a lot of money for one week's gameplay.

Michael Mixer and
Barney Kistruck

A Ah, if only the world was a perfect place – no war, famine, pestilence or death; a world where punters who buy a game they don't like can take it back and demand a refund. Unfortunately, back in the real world, we have to put up with ropey games, dodgy interactive movies, and TV shows hosted by Dale Winton.

Your problem is exactly why magazines like *PC ZONE* exist. Don't go into a shop and fall for the packaging or the number of CDs a game has. As you said, £40 is a lot of money, so it pays to do your research. If you'd spent a mere £2.99 on our fine publication, you could have saved yourself four crisp tenners, because we didn't think much of the game either, and gave it only 40 per cent.

Ultimately, your *X-Files* woes illustrate the problem with 'consumer choice': once you've made your choice, you have to live with it.

QVIEW QUERIES

Q One of the reasons I bought a PC was to indulge myself in the Internet gaming scene, especially with *Quake* and *Quake II*. I signed up with U-Net as my Internet provider and used it in conjunction with Gamespy.

Recently though, after much plugging by your mag, I decided to swap over to Wireplay as they support a lot of games and seemed very user-friendly. Wrong! I've got all the latest software up and running correctly, including the latest

Mission Selection

F-22: TAW is a superb flight sim – but it's also a lot of money to shell out if you already own F-22: ADF.
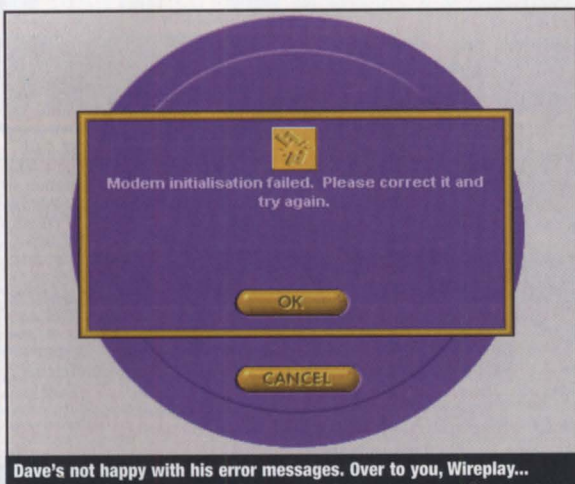
Dave's not happy with his error messages. Over to you, Wireplay...

version of *QuakeWorld* and *Quake II*. Unfortunately, at the point where you launch the game, I'm greeted with an error box – "QVIEW – failed to create an empty document" – and can't get any further. So I rang the Wireplay helpline several times and the response was: "Oh yes, we've heard about this a few times but we are not sure how to sort it out." So I left my number, hoping for a response. But to no avail. I am very frustrated at not being able to get back to playing *Quake* and fragging the world. Please can you help a desperate man?

Dave Stephens

A We got in touch with Wireplay and they told us: "The error message is a problem that lies with Qview, and not Wireplay. Furthermore, this is a known problem that happens on the Net.

"When the customer rang it is very unlikely we would have said that we would call him back, simply because there was no known fix for the problem at the time. We do apologise, however, if we gave the impression that we would call back with a fix.

"Since the Qview problem surfaced, it has been suggested to us that installing *Internet Explorer 4* apparently overwrites some DLLs, and that this could be a potential fix for the Qview error. However, this is only a suggestion, and not a guaranteed solution."

Not the answer you probably wanted to hear, Dave. Watchdog believes that if Qview is causing some Wireplay users problems, then Wireplay should perhaps consider using alternative software or creating their own for inclusion on their start-up disk. We'd like readers to let us know their views on this.

USR R RUBBISH?

Q I am writing to you as a last resort before I arm myself with weapons of mass destruction and unleash them on the offices of US Robotics. You see, I have a pretty decent PC (233MMX 64Mb etc) and so saw it only fitting to attach a fairly decent modem to it – currently a US Robotics 56k Sportster Flash.

However, the problem lies with my connection speed – I've never connected above 28,800bps! I have written to my ISP, who assures me that the problem lies elsewhere, and to BT, who insist that their lines are capable of reaching higher speeds.

I've also written many letters to US Robotics about the problem, but not a single one has ever been answered. This leads me to think they're either incompetent or cannot solve the problem and have decided to deny receiving any of my letters. This has been bugging me for nearly a year!

Paul Hanna

A Watchdog passed on your comments to 3Com, the folk behind US Robotics, who promptly sent back a list of checks for you to carry out. They told us they have since been in touch with you, so we won't be regurgitating their tech info here. If any other readers are experiencing similar problems, call 3Com's tech line on 0870 844 4546. As for the wait, 3Com "apologises for any inconvenience you may have experienced." Well that's alright then. [PCZ]

BITES & PIECES

Q You said yourselves that PowerVR is "truly mass-market stuff". So how come *Incoming* supports every 3D graphics card except the PCX2s? Is it a marketing scam, or what? I know *Incoming* works with PowerVR, but is there a patch to make it look nicer?

Ricci Potts

A While PowerVR isn't as flexible in certain areas as other cards, it's still a highly worthy card for those who haven't got the cash to be able to buy a 3Dfx.

As for *Incoming*, Ian Moran, its lead programmer, told us: "*Incoming* uses features such as additive blending and z-buffer manipulation that the large majority of current cards can handle. Where a card lacks a capability, we have done our best to emulate or make a special exception code path, such as for the older Matrox cards."

Ian also pointed out that Rage have found different levels of image quality from driver to driver with PCX2 technology, and that you might want to try a later driver – point your browser at www. matrox.com for downloads.

SPEC SNOB

Q I was amused to read the letter from Nick Norton in your Watchdog section (*PCZ* #67) complaining about *Unreal* needing massive-spec machines. His 'fast' machine is a P133. Get real, you can't even buy them any more! In fact, you can buy PII 400s – and they're three-plus times faster than what he's got! He has 32Mb of RAM – you can double that for £20. He has a Voodoo card – the newer Voodoo card has now been out for some months. In other words, his machine is now obviously outdated, and if *Unreal* is going to use any of the functionality and speed of a recent machine, his is going to look like shit. Next he'll be complaining that *Quake* never came out for his Spectrum.

Samael

A My my, Samael, what a smug little git you are. Indeed, he could upgrade to a kick-ass PC, a new Voodoo2 card, and buy more memory. But it all costs money, and he's a student – a breed not usually known for having wads of cash. Thankfully, we found out that he can play *Unreal* using his current set-up, so his comments weren't a complete waste of time. Unlike yours.

CD ROM GAMES

FREE GIFTS WITH EVERY ORDER
EVERY TIME YOU PLACE AN ORDER YOU MAY CHOOSE A PIECE OF SOFTWARE FROM OUR FREE GIFT LIST OF SOFTWARE AND ACCESSORIES. THERE IS A LIMIT OF ONE FREE GIFT PER WEEK BUT NO MINIMUM ORDER VALUE TO QUALIFY. SECONDLY, YOU WILL ALSO RECEIVE OUR LATEST CATALOGUE PACKED WITH MORE OFFERS!
PLEASE REMEMBER TO ASK FOR YOUR FREE GIFT LIST WHEN ORDERING!

1943 EUROPEAN AIR WAR	£29.99
3D ULTRA MINI GOLF	£13.99
3D ULTRA PINBALL 3	£14.99
3 MEGA GAMES: WING COMMANDER 4, PRIVATEER 2 & CRUSADER NO REGRET	£18.99
3RD MILLENIUM	£17.99
688I HUNTER KILLER	£29.99
7TH LEGION	£17.99
ACTUA GOLF 2	£14.99
ACTUA SOCCER CLUB EDITION	£9.99
ACTUA SOCCER 2	£14.99
ACTUA SOCCER 3	£25.99
ACTUA TENNIS	£25.99
AD&D BLOOD & MAGIC	£9.99
ADDICTION PINBALL	£13.99
ADVENTURES DATA DISK FOR WARCRAFT 2, DIABLO, MIGHT & MAGIC 2 & DAGGERFALL	£8.99
AGE OF EMPIRES	£22.99
AGE OF EMPIRES RISE OF ROME DATA DISK	£19.99
MORE EMPIRES DATA DISK	£13.99
AH64-D LONGBOW 2	£29.99
AMIGA EMULATOR CD (100s of Amiga games)	£14.99
APACHE LONGBOW & HIND DOUBLE PACK	£12.99
ARMOURED FIST 2.0 (WIN '95)	£13.99
ARMY MEN	£26.99
ATLANTIS	£25.99

BATTLEGROUND
AMERICAN CIVIL WAR COLLECTION - ANTIETAM, BULL RUN, GETTYSBURG & SHILOH £21.99
NAPOLEON COLLECTION - NAPOLEON IN RUSSIA, PRELUDE TO WATERLOO, WATERLOO & AGE OF SAIL £26.99
THE FOLLOWING ARE ALL JUST £9.99 EACH!!!
ANTIETAM, ARDENNES, BULL RUN, GETTYSBURG, NAPOLEON IN RUSSIA, PRELUDE TO WATERLOO, SHILOH, WATERLOO.

ATOMIC BOMBERMAN	£17.99
BALLS OF STEEL	£20.99
BATTLEGROUND EASTERN FRONT/WESTERN FRONT	£24.99
BATTLE ISLE 4 - INCUBATION	£21.99
INCUBATION DATA DISK: THE WILDERNESS MISSIONS	£14.99
BATTLETECH MECHCOMMANDER	£28.99
BATTLEZONE	£17.99
BEASTS & BUMPKINS	£19.99
BLACK DAHLIA	£28.99
BLADE RUNNER	£27.99
BRIAN LARA CRICKET	£20.99
BRIDGE MASTER CLASSIC WITH OMAR SHARIF	£29.99
BROKEN SWORD 2	£19.99
BUBBLE BOBBLE & RAINBOW ISLAND	£19.99
BUST A MOVE 2	£16.99
CAESAR 2	£25.99
CARMAGEDDON	£12.99
CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP	£27.99
CATZ	£14.99
CATZ 2	£14.99
CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER '97/'98	£17.99

CHESSMASTER 6000	£27.99
CIVILISATION 2 + SETTLERS 2 + SIM CITY 2000	£24.99
CIVILISATION 2 + COMMAND & CONQUER	£21.99
CIV 2, MAGIC THE GATHERING & APOCALYPSE	£26.99
CIVILISATION 2 DATA DISK: FANTASTIC WORLDS	£13.99
CIVILISATION 2 MULTIPLAYER	£13.99
CIVIL WAR GENERAL	£28.99
CLOSE COMBAT 2: A BRIDGE TOO FAR	£21.99
CLUEDO	£18.99
COLIN MCRAE RALLY	£21.99
COMMAND & CONQUER (WIN '95)	£13.99
C & C RED ALERT COLLECTORS PACK	£28.99
RED ALERT	£17.99
COMMAND & CRAFT DATA DISK FOR C&C	£8.99
COUNTERSTRIKE - OFFICIAL RED ALERT DATA DISK	£13.99
AFTERMATH - OFFICIAL RED ALERT DATA DISK	£13.99
COMBAT FLIGHT SIM (MICROSOFT)	£30.99
COMMANCHE 3.0 GOLD	£24.99
COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES	£27.99
CONFLICT FREESPACE	£26.99
CONSTRUCTOR	£27.99
CREATURES 2	£26.99
CROC	£28.99
CRUSADER NO REMORSE	£12.99
DAIKATANA (DUE NOVEMBER)	£27.99
DARK COLONY	£18.99
DARK FORCES 2: JEDI KNIGHTS	£24.99
JEDI DATA DISK - MYSTERIES OF THE SITH	£16.99
DARK OMEN: WARHAMMER 2	£19.99
DARK REIGN	£14.99
DEATHTRAP DUNGEON + FREE MOUSE MAT	£17.99
DEPTHS OF DOOM TRILOGY - DOOM 1, ULTIMATE DOOM, DESCOS IV & 3000 MASTER LEVELS	£15.99
DESERT STRIKE & JUNGLE STRIKE	£12.99
DIABLO	£21.99
DIABLO HELLFIRE - OFFICIAL DATA DISK	£13.99
DIABLO: THE GREEN PORTAL TOOLKIT & CHEAT PACK	£7.99
DIE HARD TRILOGY	£13.99
DOGZ	£7.99
DOGZ 2	£14.99
DOMINION STORM	£27.99
DUKE NUKEM 3D	£12.99
DUKE NUKEM IN THE CARIBBEAN	£15.99
DUKE NUKEM KILL-A-TON COLLECTION	£17.99
DUNE 2000	£29.99
DUNGEON KEEPER	£12.99
DEEPER DUNGEONS DATA DISK FOR DUNGEON KEEPER	£13.99
EA COMPILATION - ULTIMA UNDERWORLD, ULTIMA 7, SHADOW CASTER, WING COMMANDER ACADEMY, POPULOUS 2, MAHJONG PRO, SPACE HULK, 7 CITIES OF GOLD	£9.99
EXTREME POWER PACK 2 TOMB RAIDER, FIFA '97	£14.99
F1 RACING SIM (UBISOFT)	£27.99
F15 (JANES)	£29.99
F22 A.D.F. (TFX3)	£17.99
F22 RED SEA OPERATIONS DATA DISK	£13.99
F-18 HORNET	£22.99
FA-18 KOREA	£17.99
FA-18 KOREA & FLYING CORPS GOLD	£24.99
FA PREMIER LEAGUE FOOTBALL MANAGER	£29.99
FALCON 4.0	£28.99
FALLOUT	£22.99
FIFTH ELEMENT	£28.99
FINAL FANTASY 7 + FREE MOUSE MAT	£29.99
FLIGHT UNLIMITED 2	£19.99
FLUPPERMANIA - PRO PINBALL THE WEB & TIMESHOCK	£18.99
FLYING CORPS GOLD	£17.99
FORGOTTEN REALMS AD&D ARCHIVE - EYE OF THE BEHOLDER 1, 2 & 3, MENZOBERRANZAN, DUNGEON HACK + 7 OTHERS	£19.99
FORMULA 1 (PSYGNOSIS) WIN '95 & D3D/3DFX	£14.99
FORMULA 1 '97	£19.99
FORSAKEN	£19.99
FRAGILE ALLEGIANCE	£14.99
GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN	£19.99
GANGSTERS: ORGANISED CRIME	£27.99
GEX 2	£25.99
GLOBAL DOMINATION	£28.99
GOOSEBUMPS	£26.99
GOOSEBUMPS - ATTACK OF THE MUTANT	£25.99
GRAND PRIX 2	£17.99

MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIM '98 & WORLD OF FLIGHT	£36.99
MICROSOFT SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DATA DISK	£23.99
SCENERY DISK 98 - BRITISH ISLES 1 & 2, CHINA ...EACH	£19.99
SCENERY DISK V2 - EUROPE 1, 2 OR 3	£29.99
FLIGHT SHOP V2 - NOW FOR FS5.1 & FS6	£35.99
FLIGHT SIM FSFX V2 - CONTAINS EXTRA PLANES, SCENERY, SOUNDS ETC FOR FS5.1, FS6 & FS98	£24.99
BOEING/BUSINESS JETS/AIRBUS/GREAT AIRLINES ...EACH	£23.99
PERFECT FLIGHT 2 ROUND THE WORLD DISK FOR MS FS 5.1 & 6	£21.99
GRAND PRIX LEGENDS	£27.99
GRAND THEFT AUTO	£23.99
GRIM FANDANGO	£28.99
GUTS N GARTERS	£12.99
HALF-LIFE	£28.99
HARDBALL 6	£29.99
HARDCORE 4X4	£9.99
HARDWAR	£25.99
HEART OF DARKNESS	£24.99
HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC 2 & DATA DISK BUNDLE	£24.99
HEXEN 2	£12.99
HOLIDAY ISLAND	£21.99
iM1A2 ABRAMS	£12.99
IMPERIUM GALACTICA	£9.99
INCOMING	£19.99
INDEPENDENCE DAY	£14.99
INDUSTRY GIANT	£26.99
INTERNATIONAL CRICKET CAPTAIN	£22.99
INTERPLAY STRATEGY ARCHIVES - INCLUDES MAX, JAGGED ALLIANCE 2, CIVILISATION, DARK COLONY, HEROES OF MIGHT & MAGIC, RAILROAD TYCOON, UFO & CONQUEST	£24.99
INTERSTATE 76	£9.99
IPANZER 44	£22.99
I WAR	£19.99
ISRAELI AIR COMBAT	£29.99
JAZZ JACK RABBIT 2	£16.99
JIMMY WHITE'S SNOOKER 2	£28.99
JO LOVER BYTES	£16.99
JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER	£13.99
JOURNEYMAN PROJECT 3	£19.99
KINGS QUEST COLLECTION	£18.99
LANDS OF LORE 2	£23.99
LAST EXPRESS	£19.99
LEGO ISLAND	£19.99
LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7	£25.99
LEMMINGS PAINTBALL + NO MORE LEMMINGS + LEMMINGS 2	£12.99
LINKS LS	£13.99
LINKS LS '98	£19.99
LINKS LS '99	£28.99
LINKS COURSES: VALDERAMA/OAKLAND/DAVIS LOVE/ETC.	£16.99
LORDS OF MAGIC	£25.99
LORDS OF THE REALM 2	£25.99
LORDS OF THE REALM 2 ROYAL EDITION	£19.99
LUCAS ARTS ARCHIVE VOL 1	£29.99
LUCAS ARTS ARCHIVE VOL 3 - DARK FORCES, THE DIG, MONKEY ISLAND 1 & 2, FULL THROTTLE, AFTERLIFE	£24.99
LULA - THE SEXY EMPIRE	£24.99
LULA - VIRTUAL BABE	£10.99
M1 TANK PLATOON 2	£18.99
MANX TT	£23.99
MDK	£12.99
MEGAPAK 9 - CIVILISATION 2, INTERSTATE 76, DESTRUCTION DERBY 2, DISCWORLD 2, F22 RAPTOR, JACK NICKLAUS 5, PRO PINBALL TIMESHOCK, MENACE, AREAL SEA BATTLES	£27.99

MEN IN BLACK	£16.99
MIA	£9.99
MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99	£28.99
MICRO MACHINES 3	£17.99
MICROSOFT RETURN OF ARCADE	£17.99
MICROSOFT REVENGE OF ARCADE	£17.99
MICROSOFT MOTOCROSS MADNESS	£28.99
MIGHT & MAGIC 6	£26.99
MONACO GRAND PRIX RACING SIM	£28.99
MONKEY ISLAND 3	£24.99
MONOPOLY/TRIVIAL PURSUIT ...EACH	£21.99
MONSTER TRUCKS	£14.99
MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS 2	£33.99
MONTY PYTHON DOUBLE PACK	£24.99
MORTAL KOMBAT 4	£27.99
MOTORHEAD	£17.99
MYST	£24.99
MYTH: THE FALLEN LORDS	£17.99
NAM	£19.99
NASCAR 2	£10.99
NBA LIVE '98/NFL MADDEN '98/NHL '98 ...EACH	£14.99
NETWORK Q RALLY	£13.99
NEED FOR SPEED 3: HOT PURSUIT	£29.99
NIGHTMARE CREATURES	£18.99
NUCLEAR STRIKE	£13.99
ODDWORLD: ABE'S ODDYSEE	£12.99
ODT	£28.99
OPERATIONAL ART OF WAR	£26.99
OUTLAWS	£24.99
OUTWARS	£28.99
PACIFIC GENERAL	£18.99
PANDEMONIUM 2	£22.99
PANZER GENERAL 2	£24.99
PGA TOUR PRO	£17.99
PGA NIPPENBURG EURO DATA DISK	£6.99
PHANTASMAGORIA 2	£17.99
POD GOLD (INCLUDES EXTRA TRACKS)	£18.99
POLICE QUEST COLLECTION 1-4	£18.99
POLICE QUEST SWAT 2	£27.99
POLITIKA (TOM CLANCY)	£19.99
POSTAL	£14.99
PREMIER MANAGER '98	£15.99
PRO PINBALL: TIMESHOCK	£14.99
QUAKE RESURRECTION: QUAKE, Q ZONE & MALICE	£16.99
QUAKE 2	£26.99
QUAKE 2 DATA DISK: JUGGERNAUT	£14.99
QUAKE 2 DATA DISK: GROUND ZERO	£19.99
QUEEN: THE EYE	£24.99
QUEST FOR GLORY 5: DRAGON FIRE	£24.99
QUEST FOR GLORY ANTHOLOGY	£18.99
REAH	£28.99
RED BARON 2	£22.99
RESIDENT EVIL - 3DFX VERSION	£22.99
RESIDENT EVIL - POWER VR VERSION	£22.99
RISING LANDS	£19.99
RISK	£19.99
RIVEN (MYST 2)	£27.99
SCRABBLE	£24.99
SENSIBLE SOCCER WORLD CUP '98 EDITION	£22.99
SENTINEL RETURNS	£26.99
SETTLERS 2 GOLD & SEVEN KINGDOMS BUNDLE	£19.99
SETTLERS 2 GOLD	£13.99
SETTLERS 2 MISSION DISK	£13.99
SETTLERS 3	£26.99
SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE	£14.99
SHADOW WARRIOR	£14.99
SHANGHAI DYNASTY	£19.99
SIERRA PRO PILOT DOUBLE PACK	£28.99
SIERRA SPORTS: GOLF/BASEBALL '98/SKI RACING ...EACH	£22.99
SIM CITY 3000	£29.99
SIM CITY 2000, SIM TOWN, MARTY & TROUBLE WITH CHEESE AND PINBALL '95	£18.99
STREETS OF SIM CITY	£28.99
SIM GOLF	£12.99
SIN	£28.99
SPECCY CD '97 (3000 SPECTRUM & C64 GAMES)	£24.99
SOLDIERS AT WAR	£24.99
STARCRAFT	£24.99
STARCRAFT DATA DISK: STELLAR FORCES	£13.99
STARCRAFT DATA DISK: INSURRECTION	£14.99

STARSHIP TITANIC	£30.99
STARSIEGE	£28.99
STAR TREK: BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION	£29.99
STAR TREK: BORG	£16.99
STAR TREK: CAPTAIN'S CHAIR	£26.99
STAR TREK ENCYCLOPAEDIA	£26.99
STAR TREK GENERATIONS	£11.99
STAR TREK KLINGON HONOR GUARD	£29.99
STAR TREK OMNIPEDIA	£12.99
STAR TREK: STAR FLEET ACADEMY	£25.99
STAR WARS MONOPOLY	£27.99
STAR WARS SUPREMACY	£25.99
STEEL PANTHERS 3	£25.99
SUPER TETRIS & 3 GAMES	£9.99
TEAM APACHE	£27.99
TEX MURPHY OVERSEER - UNDER A KILLING MOON 2	£12.99
THEME HOSPITAL	£13.99
THEME HOSPITAL & SIM CITY 2000	£25.99
THE GOLF PRO	£19.99
THIEF: DARK PROJECT	£28.99
TIE FIGHTER V X WING	£21.99
TIE FIGHTER V X WING DISK: BALANCE OF POWER	£13.99
TIGER WOODS '99 GOLF	£29.99
TOCA TOURING CARS	£24.99
TOCA TOURING CARS 2	£21.99
TOMB RAIDER & UNFINISHED BUSINESS	£13.99
TOMB RAIDER 2	£19.99
TOMB RAIDER 3	£28.99
TOP GUN 2	£24.99
TOTAL AIR WAR	£28.99
TOTAL ANNIHILATION	£12.99
TOTAL ANNIHILATION DISK: CORE CONTINGENCY	£18.99
TOTAL HEAVEN: CIVILISATION 2, SIM CITY 2000, SETTLERS 2	£24.99
TOTAL INSANITY: PGA EUROPEAN TOUR, NETWORK Q RALLY, STAR TREK TNG A FINAL UNITY	£14.99
TOTAL SPORT: LINKS LS, SAMPRAS TENNIS, FIFA '97	£16.99
ULTIMA COLLECTION	£29.99
ULTIMA ONLINE	£32.99
ULTIMA ONLINE SECOND AGE	£29.99
ULTIM@TE RACE	£19.99
ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER '98	£23.99
UNREAL	£26.99
URBAN ASSAULT	£29.99
V RALLY	£26.99
VIRTUAL POOL 2	£19.99
VIRUS	£9.99
VR POWERBOAT RACING	£12.99
WARCRAFT 2 + 50 EXTRA LEVELS + HINT BOOK	£21.99
WAR GAMES	£19.99
WARHAMMER: FINAL LIBERATION	£25.99
WARLORDS 3	£24.99
WING COMMANDER PROPHECY	£17.99
WIPEOUT 2097	£12.99
WORLD CUP '98	£18.99
WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '98	£24.99
WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP (NETWORK Q 2)	£15.99
WORMS 2	£18.99
WORMS ARMAGEDDON	£24.99
WORMS COLLECTION: W2, W UNITED, WPBALL	£24.99
X COM: INTERCEPTOR	£19.99
X FILES: THE GAME	£31.99
X FILES: UNRESTRICTED ACCESS	£18.99
Z	£9.99
ZORK GRAND INQUISITOR	£26.99

We also carry an extensive range of games hint books and other tutorial books. Please ring for details.

Welcome to the *PC ZONE* Top 100. Here you'll find the games that in our expert opinion are the current top PC games in their field, as well as a few extras you might like to consider if you're a big fan of the genre

ACTIONGAMES

QUAKE II   PCZ #59 • 97%
The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "*Quake II* is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700

JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II   PCZ #55 • 94%
It's not *Quake*, but then it doesn't even try to be. But it is a compelling, technically superb blend of action and exploration neatly wrapped up in the *Star Wars* universe. Altogether most impressive.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255

FADE TO BLACK   PCZ #31 • 94%
The unofficial sequel to the excellent *Flashback*, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical precursor to the fantastic *Tomb Raider*, it's a classic in its own right.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING   PCZ #44 • 94%
The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin which used live action in a positive way. Absolutely packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442

TIE FIGHTER   PCZ #18 • 94%
TIE Fighter is still rated by many as the finest space combat sim ever to be released. It succeeds because it successfully blends all the kudos of *Star Wars* with a wicked new engine for super-fast TIE on X-Wing fisticuffs.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255

TOMB RAIDER II   PCZ #57 • 94%
The first game broke the mould, but the sequel even improves on the original. *Tomb Raider II* sports a curvier Lara, massive new levels to explore and a tidier control system. The game comes with native 3Dfx support and looks better than ever.
PUBLISHER Core/Eidos • 0181 636 3000

FORSAKEN   PCZ #63 • 94%
Descent is dead and *Forsaken* is now king of the tunnel-based shoot 'em ups. With huge, varied levels, heaps of graphical effects, weapons and a fantastic multiplayer LAN-based game, it's up there with the best of 'em.
PUBLISHER Acclaim • 0171 344 5000

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD   PCZ #68 • 94%
At last, the *Star Trek* universe gets its first decent game with this 3D shoot 'em up. Not only that, but it's also a *Quake* clone, using the *Unreal* engine. And it's better than *Unreal*. And it's got Klingons in it, and everything. And lots of cool weapons.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

DUKE NUKEM 3D   PCZ #40 • 93%
The debate rages on, and there are still a lot of people who rate *Duke* over *Quake*. It's not as technically impressive, but brags gameplay by the bucketload in one-player mode and when played over a network.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

INCOMING   PCZ #63 • 90%
Rage's awesome all-action arcade epic is quite possibly the best-looking action game we've seen this year. If you've got the hardware and want to get your hands on non-stop action and a dose of strategy, this is a must-buy.
PUBLISHER Rage • 0121 452 8400

ALSO CONSIDER

V2000 Grolier Interactive• PCZ #69 • 92%
TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX Take 2 • PCZ #69 • 90%
UNREAL GT Interactive • PCZ #65 • 93%
QUAKE Activision • PCZ #43 • 96% **BUDGET**
SPEC OPS: RANGERS ASSAULT Take 2 • PCZ #65 • 88%
JEDI KNIGHT: MYSTERIES OF THE SITH LucasArts • PCZ #62 • 95%
MDK Interplay • PCZ #50 • 90%
LAST BRONX Sega • PCZ #62 • 87%

RACING GAMES

CARMAGEDDON II
PCZ #69 • 95%

NEW ENTRY It's *that* game again, this time with full 3D pedestrians. More blood, more cars, more tracks – and now with added missions. If you liked the first one, you'll love this one. If you don't, you can just bog off.
PUBLISHER SCi • 0171 585 3308

FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2
PCZ #36 • 95%

The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. Will run on a 486DX2 but you'll need a Pentium to run the hi-res mode.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

COLIN MCRAE RALLY
PCZ #68 • 93%

Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* has become the new benchmark in rally simulations. With car customisability and a heap of multiplayer accessibility, this game should be top of everyone's rally games heap.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MONACO GRAND PRIX
PCZ #69 • 92%

NEW ENTRY Essentially it's *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. It looks beautiful, plays even better, and the AI is second to none. You need a hefty machine to have it looking its best though.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 0181 944 9000

GRAND THEFT AUTO
PCZ #58 • 92%

This is the game that took over from *Carmageddon* as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. *Micro Machines* on acid.
PUBLISHER BMG • 0171 973 0011

NEED FOR SPEED III
PCZ #69 • 91%

NEW ENTRY Some arcade racing games are fun, but if you like a bit more than just just racing around a few tracks then you should seriously consider *NFSIII*. Why? Because if avoiding the law isn't fun, what is?
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

MOTOCROSS MADNESS
PCZ #67 • 91%

An astoundingly addictive game. Loads of game and race options and tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. Soon available with the pad for around 50 quid. A must-buy.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000

MICRO MACHINES 3
PCZ #64 • 90%

The manic miniature racing game gets the 3D treatment and loses nothing along the way. The new power-ups might not please the purist, but *Micro Machines 3* is still one of the finest two-player games around.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

MOTORHEAD
PCZ #63 • 90%

With drop-dead graphics and a blistering frame rate, this is a ridiculously fast, fab-looking, intense racing experience. Add a great LAN-based option (Local Area Network) and *Motorhead* is the ace of arcade racers.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

GRAND PRIX LEGENDS
PCZ #69 • 90%

NEW ENTRY Papyrus, the makers of *NASCAR* and *IndyCar*, have put the danger back into Formula 1. If you fancy a challenge and the chance to go back to 1967, then buy this. You'll need a steering wheel though.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100

ALSO CONSIDER

INDYCAR 2 Cendant• PCZ #34 • 90% **BUDGET**
SCREAMER 2 Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% **BUDGET**
DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 Psygnosis• PCZ #46 • 86% **BUDGET**
INTERSTATE 76: NITRO RIDERS Activision• PCZ #63 • 87%
TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP Europress • PCZ #59 • 86%
ULTIM@TE RACE PRO MicroProse • PCZ #62 • 88%

SPORTS GAMES

LINKS LS
PCZ #43 • 94%

The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

NHL 98
PCZ #57 • 94%

Another year, another *NHL*, but this one isn't just the best ice hockey game, it's one of the best sports games we've ever seen. Super 3Dfx-ed graphics, fantastic animation and awesome presentation make this a sports title not to be missed.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF
PCZ #69 • 93%

NEW ENTRY Beautifully presented, as always, and sporting a speedy enhanced graphics engine, this latest in the *PGA* series also gets star endorsement by young Tiger Woods. The best golf game yet.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97
PCZ #53 • 92%

This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132

WORLD CUP 98
PCZ #65 • 91%

The best football game available for the PC. Graphics and detail to die for, a creative control system that allows for awesome moves and goals, extremely competent AI and excellent presentation make this a must-have, even though it lacks a custom tournament mode.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

SENSIBLE SOCCER EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION
PCZ #69 • 90%

NEW ENTRY It's still top-down, and it's still simple, fast and fun. *World Cup '98* may be prettier, but it can only dream of being this instantly playable.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791

NBA LIVE 98
PCZ #60 • 90%

With even better graphics and commentary than before, it's one of the best-looking PC sports games. This version sports 'realistic' faces and players of different heights – it's by far the best basketball game available.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442

VIRTUAL POOL 2
PCZ #58 • 90%

Okay, 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

ACTUA SOCCER 2
PCZ #59 • 90%

Instantly accessible footie action in this latest instalment of Gremlin's high profile *Actua* series. Great graphics, easy control and a hidden Super Furry Animals team confirm *Actua 2*'s 'must have' status.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

THE GOLF PRO
PCZ #62 • 90%

If you're bored with either *PGA* or *Links*, then this is the best of the 'mouse-swing' bunch. Good course design and some excellent tuition means there's loads of gameplay, though the putting lets it down a tad.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337

ALSO CONSIDER

There's always a swell of different sports game types depending on the current sporting season. These are worth having a look at...
JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL Virgin Interactive • PCZ #68 • 88%
MADDEN NFL 98 EA Sports • PCZ #59 • 87%
TRIPLE PLAY 99 Electronic Arts • PCZ #64 • 90%
TROPHY BASS 2 Cendant • PCZ #50 • 84%

ADVENTUREGAMES

ALONE IN THE DARK 3   PCZ #21 · 95%
Better than the previous *AITD* instalments, *Alone 3* is a tense, ambient tale of Navajo Indian magic and reincarnation that unfolds in the usual *AITD* manner. This is now available as part of a compilation budget pack.
PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199

BIOFORGE   PCZ #25 · 95%
Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SYSTEM SHOCK   PCZ #20 · 95%
This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the genre. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is still invigorating.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

DISCWORLD II   PCZ #44 · 93%
Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld II* is a universally appealing adventure game.
PUBLISHER Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000

INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS   PCZ #37 · 93%
Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255

LBA 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY   PCZ #54 · 93%
Twinsen is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area in *LBA 2*, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great-looking and hugely atmospheric adventure. A must for adventure fans.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442

SAM & MAX   PCZ #11 · 93%
The hilarious dog/rabbit duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a point-and-click fan.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255

THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND   PCZ #58 · 92%
The third game in LucasArts' classic *Monkey* saga delivers the goods big-time, much to the relief of adventure fans everywhere. *The Curse Of Monkey Island* is the new benchmark for point-and-click adventure games.
PUBLISHER VIE • 0171 368 2255

STARSHIP TITANIC   PCZ #63 · 91%
Douglas Adams' epic adventure is an innovative piece of software filled with everything that's right about adventure games. With its lush visuals and an innovative user interface, *Starship Titanic* is a must-buy for adventure fans.
PUBLISHER Zablac Entertainment • 01626 332233

ECSTATICA II   PCZ #48 · 91%
We dubbed it "an adventure with balls". It's hard, but it's one of the most rewarding adventures we've ever seen. It constantly surprises and is sure to keep even the most battle-weary adventure fan busy for weeks.
PUBLISHER Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000

ALSO CONSIDER
FULL THROTTLE Virgin • PCZ #27 • 92% BUDGET
THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE Virgin • PCZ #43 • 92%
TOONSTRUCK Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% BUDGET
GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN Cendant • PCZ #36 • 88%
LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE Electronic Arts • PCZ #21 • 93% BUDGET

ROLE-PLAYINGGAMES

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS   PCZ #1 · 94%
This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442

FINAL FANTASY VII   PCZ #66 · 93%
Fearsomely addictive gem of a game of truly epic proportions. Great graphics, plenty of hidden surprises and massive levels will keep you totally absorbed if you forgive the risible dialogue and turn-based combat.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive •0181 636 3000

REALMS OF THE HAUNTING   PCZ #47 · 93%
Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it back in issue 47. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap, *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601

LANDS OF LORE: GUARDIANS OF DESTINY   PCZ #56 · 92%
Four long years in the making, Westwood Studios' mammoth new adventure proved more than worth the wait. Sumptuous visuals and a tremendous atmosphere combine to make it an instant classic.
PUBLISHER VIE • 0171 368 2255

FALLOUT   PCZ #61 · 91%
This surprised everyone in the office, proving to be both addictive and well conceived. Give it a chance and you'll discover that *Fallout* is a rewarding RPG which'll keep you entertained for hours. Not quite on a par with the mighty *Ultima* series, but then what is?
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666
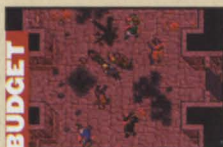
ULTIMA VII   PCZ #3 · 89%
Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Check out the *Ultima Collection* for a real treat.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442

DIABLO   PCZ #48 · 88%
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.
PUBLISHER Zablac/Blizzard • 01626 332233
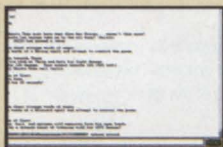
TERRIS   PCZ #44 · 88%
A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but it's so addictive that we're still playing it. The various quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.
PUBLISHER AOL • 0800 279 7444

MERIDIAN 59   PCZ #45 · 86%
This ground-breaking on-line RPG enables thousands of people to interact with each other in the same fantasy universe at the same time. Garish and horrible graphics aside, *Meridian 59* remains one of the best online multiplayer RPGs around.
PUBLISHER 3DO Company • 0181 296 1949

ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS   PRE-PC ZONE
This took role-playing games away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442

ALSO CONSIDER
These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat to other game types over the last couple of years. However, also bear in mind...
DIABLO: HELLFIRE Cendant • PCZ #59 • 82%
ULTIMA COLLECTION Electronic Arts • PCZ #62 • 90%
RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET Mindscape • PCZ #25 • 78%

STRATEGY GAMES

DUNGEON KEEPER **PCZ #53 · 96%**
A game with a genre almost impossible to define, *DK* takes *SimCity 2000*, *C&C* and *Ultima Underworld* and remoulds them into one hell of a title. Fantastic gameplay, and a lifespan on a par with the Queen Mother.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

SYNDICATE WARS **PCZ #43 · 95%**
BUDGET
One of the best strategy games of all time gets a sequel, and what a fabulous sequel it is too. *Syndicate Wars* houses a wealth of intricate levels, gorgeous graphics and enough gratuitous violence to keep anyone happy.
PUBLISHER EA/Bullfrog · 01753 549442
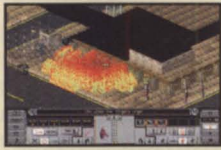
X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE **PCZ #52 · 95%**
A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.
PUBLISHER MicroProse · 01454 893893

PUZZLE BOBBLE **PCZ #50 · 94%**
BUDGET
We can't agree exactly where *Puzzle Bobble* fits – should it go in here, with the *Civs* and *Sims* of the PC gaming world, or in the Action section? But it most certainly deserves to be in our Top 100 section. Totally absorbing and addictive puzzle game.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive · 0171 258 3791

AGE OF EMPIRES **PCZ #54 · 94%**
Imagine *Civilization II*'s great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.
PUBLISHER Microsoft · 0345 002000

TOTAL ANNIHILATION **PCZ #56 · 92%**
With a ridiculous number of units and its fast-paced action, *TA* is without doubt one of the best real-time strategy games ever. The polygon units are smooth, and multiplayer games are awesome. Pisses on *Red Alert*.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive · 0171 258 3791

SIMCITY 2000 **PCZ #13 · 92%**
A classic that deserves its reputation as one of the all-time greats in the strategy world. Build and maintain the city of your dreams and cope with all the problems a real-life Mayor would come up against. It's a lot more fun than it sounds, trust us.
PUBLISHER Maxis · 0171 505 1500

THE SENTINEL RETURNS **PCZ #66 · 90%**
Twelve years on, the sequel to the 'classic' Amstrad and BBC Micro strategy-fest makes a welcome return. Some may find the gameplay a tad too repetitive, but it's compelling and runs happily on a P133.
PUBLISHER Psygnosis · 0151 282 3000

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98 **PCZ #57 · 90%**
The best football management game ever gets its seasonal update and a few added extras – you can now play a number of leagues simultaneously, and edit the existing stats.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive · 0181 636 3000

CIVILIZATION II **PCZ #36 · 90%**
Explore the world, conquer territories and research new technologies in one of the most successful strategy games ever. It's not that different to the first one, but it merits a '90s update and a place here.
PUBLISHER MicroProse · 01454 893893
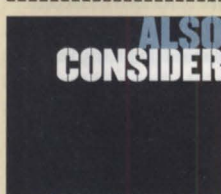
ALSO CONSIDER
WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING Broderbund · PCZ #67 · 90%
OPERATIONAL ART OF WAR VOL 1 Empire · PCZ #68 · 92%
COMMANDOS Eidos Interactive · PCZ #66 · 87%
INCUBATION Blue Byte · PCZ #56 · 94%
MASTER OF ORION 2 MicroProse · PCZ #45 · 92% *BUDGET*
COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT VIE · PCZ #47 · 94%
SETTLERS 2 Blue Byte · PCZ #41 · 92%
M1 TANK PLATOON II MicroProse · PCZ #63 · 90%

FLIGHT SIMULATION GAMES

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR **PCZ #68 · 95%**
This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece is perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this one.
PUBLISHER Ocean/DID · 0161 832 6633

FLIGHT SIM 98 **PCZ #55 · 94%**
Another year, and yet another flight sim to come from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and hugely impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.
PUBLISHER Microsoft · 0345 002000

TEAM APACHE **PCZ #65 · 93%**
A highly accessible and detailed chopper combat sim that lets you get on with the fun stuff rather than struggling with systems and an over-complex flight model. A bit vacuous for die-hard prop-heads, but as flight sims go this is one of the most fun to play.
PUBLISHER Mindscape · 01444 246333

LONGBOW 2 **PCZ #59 · 92%**
"*Longbow 2* is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review. If you don't have any extra graphics hardware, there's only one thing to do – think 'upgrade', 'upgrade' and 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

JANE'S F-15 **PCZ #64 · 92%**
A hard-core propeller-head's sim that can stand alongside the awesome *Longbow 2* as one of the most realistic flight sims available. Newbies to the genre might find it a bit overwhelming, but it's worth persevering with.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

US MARINE FIGHTERS **PCZ #30 · 92%**
Lovely graphics and a realistic enough flight model. This was originally released as a mission disk for *US Navy Fighters*, but it now comes as part of the *US Navy Fighters Gold* pack, so make sure you go get that instead!
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts · 01753 549442

FLYING CORPS GOLD **PCZ #59 · 92%**
Action-packed WWI flight simulation with neato graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WW1 flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WW1 sim currently available.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive · 0181 343 7337

JETFIGHTER III **PCZ #47 · 91%**
The follow-up to one of the most popular sims ever. Fly over three and a half million square miles of accurately-mapped terrain of South America. It really is just like being there. Oh yeah, you get to shoot things too, but sadly there's no duty free option.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive · 0181 636 3000

A-10 CUBA! **PCZ #59 · 90%**
BUDGET
Functional graphics for a game that really does capture the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Although it's slightly limited due to a lack of a fully-fledged campaign it's still great fun, as well as being pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.
PUBLISHER Activision · 01895 456700

FLIGHT UNLIMITED II **PCZ #60 · 84%**
It can't really compete with the behemoth that is *Flight Sim 98*, and as a result is somewhat limited and claustrophobic. However, it does score highly for being more detailed in its smaller area, and much more fun.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive · 0181 636 3000
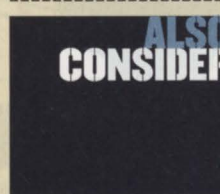
ALSO CONSIDER
If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – hence our recommendation for *US Marine Fighters*. Some of the more recent releases worth considering include...
AIR WARRIOR III Interactive Magic · PCZ #62 · 80%
COMANCHE 3 NovaLogic · PCZ #51 · 92%
COMANCHE GOLD NovaLogic · PCZ #65 · 87%
F/A-18 KOREA Empire Interactive · PCZ #61 · 90%

ONTHECD

Don't sit there gawking at it, chuck the bloody thing in your CD drive and come back here when you get lost

⭐ **WORDS** Richie Shoemaker **DISKMEISTER** Daniel Emery

DEMOS + SHAREWARE
ON THE CD

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

⭐ You'll need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb 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 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb 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 Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.

MONACO GP RACING 2
Ubi Soft

Until *F1 Grand Prix III* arrives you could do a hell of a lot worse than pick up a copy of Ubi Soft's latest racing sim. Its predecessor was the best racing sim of last year and this latest version is likely to pick up the title this time around. Try out the two tracks on offer here and see what you think. Controls are redefinable within the game and you'll need a Direct3D-compatible card to run it.

Controls:	Steering wheel/ joystick/keyboard
</>	Steer left/right
A/Z	Accelerate/brake
SPACE/CONTROL	Gear up/down
F1	Help
F2	Playable view
F3	Realistic view
F4	Different views
F5	Current grading
F6	Differences
F7	Auto/manual gearbox
P/ESC	Pause/quit game
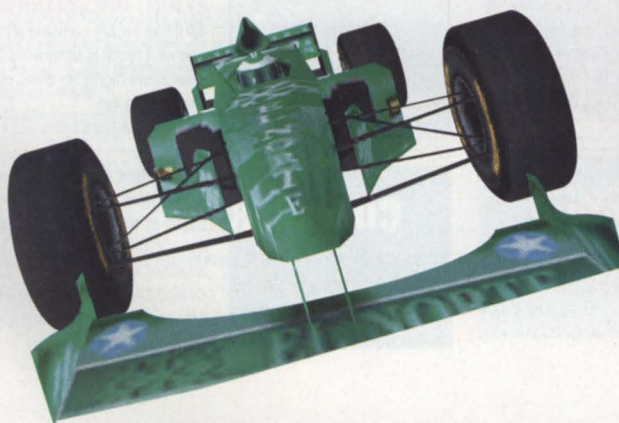
CAESAR III
Impressions/Cendant

Two full training missions from this excellent real-time god sim. The aim is to ascend the ranks from trainee governor of a provincial Roman hamlet, to the all-powerful Caesar of Rome.

Controls: Mouse

RETURN FIRE II
Ripcord

Just as we were going to press we managed to squeeze on this superb 'capture the flag' action game. It's in the /demos directory, where you'll find both 3Dfx and software versions.

Controls:	Gamepad/joystick/keyboard
CURSORS/SPACE	Select vehicle in hangar
F/B	Forward/back
W/S	Look up/down
A/D	Left/right
SPACE	Fire 1
M	Fire 2
V	Change camera view
END	Suicide
N	Drop flag (jeep only)
F1	Display keys
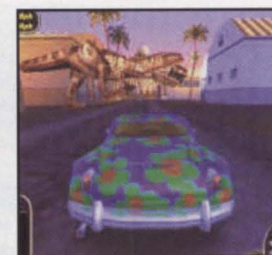
SPEED BUSTERS
Ubi Soft

Fancy a quick spin around Hollywood in a car painted with pink flowers? Well you've found the best place to find out what it's like. Sadly there are no Californians to mow down, but then they all drive anyway. Direct3D cards only.

Controls:	Keyboard/joystick
F2	Change camera views
F3	Replay camera views
F4	To hide the screen display
F5	To activate/deactivate the mirror
ESC	Pause the game and activate the in-game options menu
R	Reverse (to get back to first gear, press 'A' twice)
S	Activate the handbrake
CURSORS	Accelerate/brake/left/right
SPACE	Activate the nitro boost

ROBO RUMBLE
Interactive Magic

Yes, we have run this demo before, but that was before Interactive Magic got their hands on it and decided it was worth investing in. Judge for yourself whether it's money well spent. Direct3D supported.

Controls: Mouse

PLAYER MANAGER – SEASON 98/99
Anco

And so it falls to the latest version of *Player Manager* to try and strip *Championship Manager* of its well deserved title as king of the footie management genre. Try taking Liverpool to the top of the Premiership and you'll soon have a good idea if it'll succeed where others have failed.

Controls: Mouse

HANG SIM
Virtual Pilot

If you played last month's demo of this hang gliding sim then you probably won't care that this is a newer version. If you missed it then now's your chance to catch up on what you didn't miss.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard
F12 Panning toggle
Mouse + LMB Pitch and roll
Mouse + RMB Virtual cockpit control
SPACE Running toggle
A Thermal autopilot
CURSORS Engine controls
PG UP/DOWN Increase/decrease time
F4/F5 Increase/decrease simulation rate
F11 Reset rate
F1 Pilot view
F2 Chase view
F5 Track view
F6 HUD view cycle
HOME/END Increase/decrease visibility
INSERT/DELETE Increase/decrease field of view
F11 Reset view
W Query wind (interesting concept)
F8/F9 Increase/decrease ground resolution
BACKSPACE Store launch site
TAB Recall launch site

RECOIL
Virgin

Latest version of Virgin's futuristic shoot 'em up starring a tank that turns into a submarine. Play the demo, and if you're really good we'll try and get a review next issue.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard/joystick
CURSORS Movement/steer guided missiles

MOUSE Targeting
LMB Fire pulse gun
RMB Fire advanced weapon/ switch missile view
1 Select pulse weapon
2-9 Select advanced weapon
SPACE Detonate remote mines
F1 Track mode
F2 Amphib mode
F3 Hover mode
F4 Sub mode
A/Z Surface/dive (sub mode)
C Centre turret with chassis
BACKSPACE Centre chassis with turret
B Unlock turret movement restrictions
CONTROL+B Toggle on/off cursor steering feature
V Toggle first/third-person views
G Overhead view
M Map

RAGE OF MAGES
Microids/Monolith

Real-time strategy meets fantasy RPG in this top-down demo from Eastern Europe. Control two heroes in this full mission from the retail version.

Controls: Mouse

F-16 MULTIROLE FIGHTER
NovaLogic

Try one of the single-player instant action missions from NovaLogic's latest flight sim, alternatively go online and try out Novaworld – their free online games service. 3Dfx support is included (at last).

Controls: Joystick/keyboard/ mouse
Aircraft Control
CURSORS Pitch and bank
DELETE/PG DN Rudder left/right

RAINBOW SIX
Take 2 Interactive

If you've got a Direct3D-compatible graphics card then you're in for a bit of a treat with this game, which can only be referred to as *Quake* with brains. Take control of an elite anti-terrorist squad in the first stages of the first mission from the full game.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard
CURSORS Forward/back/sidestep
MOUSE Turn left/right, look up/down
END Crouch
RMB Run
LMB Use inventory item/fire
SHIFT Shuffle
Numpad 0 Manipulate environment
DEL Change magazine
Numpad DEL Change rate of fire
1 Select primary weapon
2 Select secondary weapon
3 Select inventory item 1
4 Select inventory item 2
PG UP/PG DN Change to previous/ next team

HOME Toggle team hold in place
INS Change ROE mode
BACKSPACE Change ROE speed
S Status report
Q Give gocode alpha
W Give gocode bravo
E Give gocode charlie
R Give gocode delta
CONTROL Toggle sniper mode
N Toggle night vision
F1 Toggle camera view (1st or 3rd person)
+/- Expand/shrink cinema window
M Toggle map full screen
[/] Map zoom out/in
**** Watch next member in map

A Toggle auto aim
F3 Toggle targeting reticule

Planning Phase Controls
LMB Add a waypoint
RMB Select a waypoint
DEL Delete the selected waypoint, advances to next waypoint
BACKSPACE Delete the current waypoint, go to previous waypoint
CURSORS Move map
HOME/END Zoom map in/out
PG UP/PG DN Rotate map right/left
[/] Change level up/down
S Toggle 3D view

WING COMMANDER: SECRET OPS
Origin

Following on from last month's free first episode of Origin's space combat simulation, we now have episodes two to five. If you missed it, phone 01789 490215 for a copy of our November Issue, or you could just download it from www.secretops.com – but at over 120MB prepare yourself for a hefty phone bill. More episodes next issue, out Tuesday 17 November.
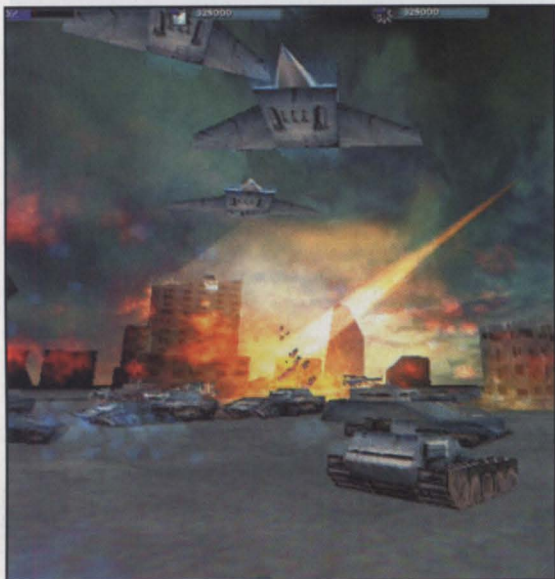
URBAN ASSAULT

Microsoft

Finally, a 3D real-time strategy game with half-decent AI and a huge range vehicles to dive into and control. Try out two full missions and see why we gave Microsoft 85% for their efforts.

Controls:	Keyboard/mouse
F1	Help
P/ESC	Pause/escape
CURSORS	Directional control
Z/A	Acceleration and altitude control
SPACE	Fire
Num 0	Brake/autolevel
TAB	Missile camera
X	Machine gun
L	Become squad leader
H	HUD toggle
B	Beam host station
O	Give orders to units
C	Create unit
S	Squadron manager
1-5	Set aggressiveness level

M	Map toggle
J	Jump into vehicle
F2	Situation analyser
BACKSPACE	Jump into last occupied unit
SPACE	Jump from host Station Bridge to gun turret 1
F4	Jump to host station
F5	Jump to current squad leader
F6	Cycle through units/ jump into gun turrets
F7	Cycle through squad leaders
F8	Jump to last message sender

B	Brakes
F	Flaps up/down
G	Gear up/down

Targeting

ENTER	Create shootlist
TAB	Next target
[/]	Cycle targets up/down
'	Boresight target
F1-F8	Select view

Weapons

Z	Fire cannon
SPACE	Fire selected weapon
`	Select next weapon
1	Deselect weapon
2	Select cannon
3	Select medium range AAM
4	Select short range AAM
CTRL+1	Select medium range AGM
CTRL+2	Select short range AGM
CTRL+3	Select bombs
CTRL+4	Select fuelpod

Avionics

Numpad 6	Attack display
Numpad 4	Defence display
Numpad 9	Artificial horizon display
Numpad 5	Navigation display
Numpad 7	Status display
Numpad 2	Stores display

Engines

5	Engines off
6	Throttle idle
7	Throttle to 25%
8	Throttle to 50%
9	Throttle to 75%
0	Full throttle
BACKSPACE	Full afterburner
-/+	Throttle up/down

Miscellaneous

ESC	Abort mission
L	Auto level
CTRL+J	Eject
END	End mission
</>	HUD brighten/darken
F9	HUD on/off
CTRL+Z	Jettison stores
C	Launch chaff
E	Launch flare
M	Mission goals

N	Next waypoint
Y	Recent messages
F12	Time compression
W	Wingman commands

Multiplayer

T	Chat
CTRL+T	Squadron chat
P	Player list
K	Score

GEX: ENTER THE GECKO
Crystal Dynamics

Gex is the closest you'll get to *Mario 64* on your PC. It's also a good game, scoring 82% back in September. If you like your games sugar sweet then you'll like this. 3Dfx card required.

Controls:	Gamepad/keyboard
CURSORS	Movement
RETURN	Jump
DELETE	Fire
END	Sticky tongue
SPACE	Zoom in/out

ANCIENT CONQUEST
Mega Media

A real-time strategy game with a goal? Surely not. Build up a glorious navy and go in search of the Golden Fleece in this isometric build & bash 'em up

from Australia. Full instructions are included in the associated Help file.

Controls:	Mouse

BRUNSWICK CIRCUIT PRO BOWLING

Play seven frames of an exhibition match in this bowling simulation where handing in your 70-quid Reeboks in exchange for colour-coded plimsoles isn't a necessity. 3D hardware acceleration is supported – check out the readme.txt for more details.

Controls:	Mouse

GET MEDIEVAL
Microids/Monolith

If you remember *Gauntlet* then the chances are those memories are fond ones. It was perhaps the greatest multiplayer game of its day and obviously someone thought it was time for a newer version.

Controls:	Keyboard/gamepad

Player 1

CURSORS	Movement
CONTROL	Attack
SHIFT	Magic
SPACE	Disc

Player 2

F,H,T,G	Movement
Q	Attack
W	Magic
E	Disc

ADDED EXTRAS
ON THE CD

FLOPPY VERSION

Here's a glimpse at some of the other added extras on the *ZONE* CD

ESSENTIALS & ONLINE
Paint Shop Pro v5.01
Latest version of the best shareware paint program.
Quick View Plus 4.5
Instantly view files and their attachments. Pretty handy.
HyperSnap-DX 3.21.00
Take game screenshots with this grabbing utility.
Compuserve 2.6a
Includes one month's free trial.
3dfx Glide Drivers v2.43
DirectX 6.0 for Win 95

MS's system drivers.
DirectX 6.0 for Win 98
And again for Win98 users.
Ezdesk '95 v1.8
Latest version of the superb desktop-saving application.
Winzip v6.3
Essential archiving utility.
Fileview v2.1
Likewise with HEX and ASCII files.
Ameol v2.12
CIX online conferencing.
Kali95
Popular Net gaming software.

Timeonline v1.10E
Keep track of your time online.
Getright v3.1
Cure downloading headaches.
mIRC v5.4
Net Relay Chat software.
ClaraNET
Sign up with ClaraNET.

TIPS AND SOLUTIONS
All the walkthroughs, tips and cheats we've had in these hallowed pages.

HOTSHOTS
Daikatana may have slipped until next year but at least you

can see how the game is shaping up. Also check out the latest *Quake II* mission pack *Ground Zero*.

EXTENDED PLAY
All the latest third-party add-ons we could find for *Interstate '76*, *Total Annihilation* and *Unreal*. Check out page 180 for more details.

WIREPLAY
Latest Wireplay Client software and four of the 'classic' games you can play online; MUD2, Bridge, Chess and Backgammon.

Floppy disks don't hold as much stuff as CDs. If you've got the floppy disk version of *PC ZONE*, here's what's on offer

AIR COMMAND
Shareware
If sitting in a chair, directing blips on a radar screen is your idea of fun, then this air traffic control simulation could well be the game to moisten your gusset. This shareware version limits your career to the Los Angeles area and going on strike is certainly not an option, more's the pity.

Controls:	Mouse
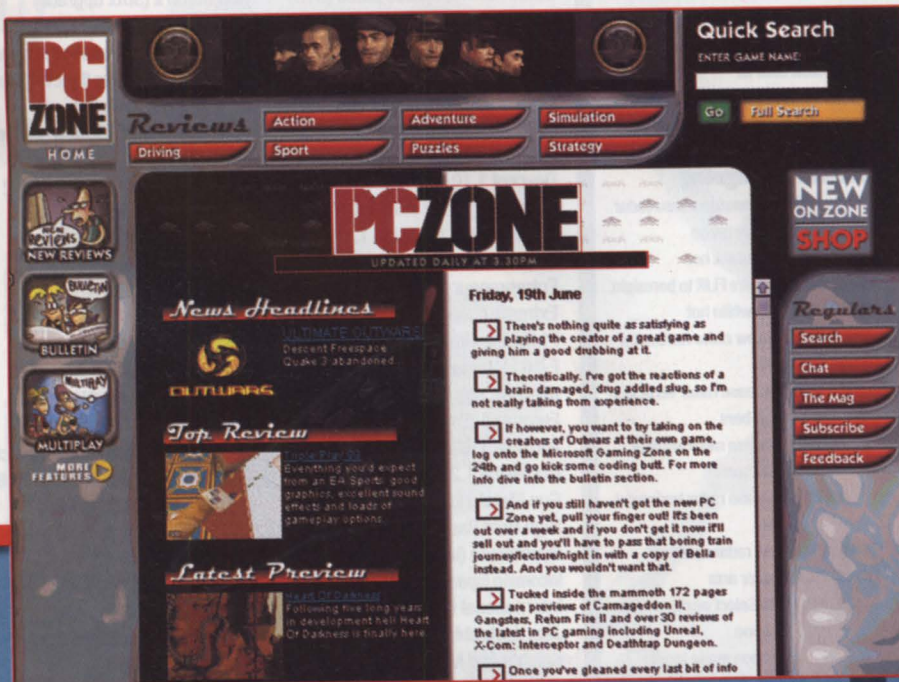
PEOPLE'S GENERAL
Mindscape

Of course, it wouldn't be a proper CD without at least one turn-based strategy game in there somewhere or other. This one from hexmasters SSI centres on a future war in south-east Asia. Check it out.

Controls: Mouse

WARGAMES
Electronic Arts

Not the greatest real-time strategy game ever made, but at least it contains some of the best lines ever spoken by a computer: 'Shall we play a game?' Oh, alright then – just a quickie mind.

Controls: Mouse

ARMY MEN
Ubi Soft

Try the Boot Camp tutorial and two full missions from Ubi Soft's real-time strategy game where you control little plastic soldiers. It's a kind of a poor man's *Commandos*, hence the poor score in Issue 66.

Controls:	Mouse/keyboard
Numpad 8/2	Move forward/back
Numpad 4/6	Turn left/right
SPACE/LMB	Fire
Numpad 5	Go down to kneel and lie prone
Numpad 7/9	Roll left/right
Numpad /	Dive
SHIFT	Walk/half speed (in vehicle only)
F8/D	Drop current weapon
1-3/RMB	Select weapon
F4/E	Enter/exit vehicle
Z/X	Turret left/right
ENTER	Scroll map and bring up free floating cursor
TAB	Toggle through squads
F1	Order squad to follow
F2	Put squad on attack. Scroll map, use SPACE/LMB to place
F3	Put squad on defend. Scroll map, use SPACE/LMB to place
F9	Tell squad to attack at their current location
F10	Tell squad to defend at current location
F5	Scroll map; press SPACE/LMB to place air strike
F6	Scroll map; SPACE/LMB to place paratroop drop
F7	Air reconnaissance
F11	Recall mission & pause
F12	Bring up map
ESC	Options and pause **PCZ**

iF/A-18E CARRIER STRIKE FIGHTER
Interactive Magic

Why do Interactive Magic always put a little 'i' in front of their titles? Perhaps it stands for Interactive. Why then does it not appear in front of their other games? *iKnights & Merchants* anyone?

Controls: Joystick/keyboard/mouse

Flight Controls

CTRL+C	Catapult launch
A	Heading hold
SHIFT+C	Coupled direct steering
ALT+C	Coupled course steering
SHIFT+A	Attitude hold
CTRL+T	Auto-throttle control (cruise)
ALT+T	Auto-throttle control (approach)
CTRL+/	ILS
/	ACLS mode 1 (coupled)
SHIFT+/	ACLS mode 2
ALT+R	Altimeter toggle (barometric/radar)
X/Z	Rudder right/left
W	Wheel brakes
B	Speed brakes out/in
G	Landing gear up/down
H	Flaps down one increment
SHIFT+H	Flaps up one increment
SHIFT+W	Hook up/down
CTRL+J	Jettison external stores
CTRL+D	Fuel dump toggle (on/off)
SHIFT+E	Eject

Throttle Controls

CTRL+L	Left engine (on/off)
CTRL+R	Right engine (on/off)
1-0	Throttle 10-100%
-/+	Decrease/increase throttle by 10%
Numpad *	Afterburner (on/off)

System Commands

P	Pause (on/off)
TAB/SHIFT+TAB	Increase/decrease accelerated time (2x 4x 8x)
CTRL+TAB	Normal time (1x)
ALT+F4	Close and exit game

Comms and Navigation

CTRL+B	Call the ball
Y	Com1 (on/off)
U	Send Com1 message
K	Send Com2 message
SHIFT+G	Send guard message
'	Network chat mode
O/SHIFT+O	Next/previous waypoint
Function keys/Numpad	Various internal/external views

DDI Controls

N/SHIFT+N	Next/previous DDI
M/SHIFT+M	Next/previous mode in current DDI
CURSORS	DDI cursor movement
Numpad /	Full screen DDI view

Countermeasures

E	ECM
V	Auto dispense chaff/flares
C	Chaff
F	Flares

HUD Controls

SHIFT+;	Next/previous HUD mode
CTRL+H	Helmet HUD toggle (on/off)

Detection and ID

R	Active radar toggle (on/off)
I	IFF check on current target

Weapons and Targeting

[/]	Increase/decrease radar display range
SHIFT+DEL	FLIR black hot
SHIFT+HOME	Centre FLIR to boresight
SHIFT+INS	FLIR white hot
DEL	Narrow radar horizontal FOV
END	Decrease radar vertical scan bars
HOME	Increase radar vertical scan bars
INSERT	Increase radar horizontal FOV
PG UP/DWN	Slew radar up/down
BACKSPACE	Master arm
RTN/SHIFT+RTN	Select next/previous weapon
\	Weapon mode toggle
SPACE	Fire weapon
SHIFT+SPACE	Fire gun
S	Auto-designate target
D	Designate target
L	Designate boresight target
T/SHIFT+T	Select next/previous target
SHIFT+D	Remove target from list
ALT+D	Designate CCIP

PATCHES

Get more out of the games you already own. We've raided the Net and harangued the games publishers to bring you all the latest and finest patches

Armor Command 1.03 to 1.06
Banzai Bug 1.01
Battlecruiser 3000 AD 1.01d r7C to 1.07c
Battlecruiser 3000 AD 1.01d r7C to 1.07D (CD version)
Battlecruiser 3000 AD 1.08a to 1.08b (CD release)
Blade Runner update patch (CD)
Blade Runner update patch (DVD)
Carmageddon and Carmageddon Maxpack (Voodoo2 patch, alpha!)
Chessmaster 5500 1.1
Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines 1.1 (European release)
Descent DDR 1.6
Descent 1.10
Descent II 1.2 for Win95 & NT
Entrepreneur 1.1 1.2 to 1.31
Entrepreneur 1.3 (for Win 95 NT)
Entrepreneur 1.31
Extreme Assault 1.21 to 1.22
F1 Racing Sim 1.09 (Direct3D patch)
F-16 Fighting Falcon (Voodoo2 upgrade, requires 3Dfx upgrade)
Formula 1 (Voodoo2 fix, unofficial)
Formula 1 '97 (Voodoo2 patch)
Gun Metal 1.2 to 1.3
Gun Metal v1.3
High Heat Baseball 1999 1.4
Hyperblade (Voodoo2 upgrade)
Incoming (speedfix for Voodoo2 OEM)
International Cricket Captain 1.31
Jazz Jackrabbit II 1.23 (shareware)
Knights And Merchants 1.30
M.A.X. II 1.3 (UK release)
Megatraveller I (version3, patch 0.01)

Mortal Kombat IV patch 1
NFL Gameday 99 1.1
Panthers In the Shadows 1.22 to 1.22a
Quake II (3DNow! drivers for v3.19, unofficial)
Quake II 3.17 (3DNow! drivers)
Quake II 3.17 to 3.19
Rainbow Six 1.02a
Red Baron II (3dfx upgrade)
Resident Evil (Voodoo2 support)
Screamer Rally (Voodoo2 support)
Simon The Sorcerer II (new game driver for Windows 95)
Speedboat Attack (3DNow! drivers)
StarCraft 1.01
Steel Panthers Campaign Disk 2 (El Guettar scenario update)
Sub Culture (3DNow! drivers)
The Creed Mission Importer
The Golf Pro (Setup 3.0)
The Golf Pro 1.01
The Operational Art Of War, Volume I 1.04.07 to 1.04.08
The Operational Art Of War, Volume I 1.04b
The Race To Galamax (Cyrix patch)
Tigers On The Prowl II 2.08 to 2.08a
Tomb Raider (ATI Rage PRO)
Tomb Raider Unfinished Business add-on (PowerVR only)
Total Soccer 1.3
Total Soccer 1.32
Unreal OpenGL updated patch
WarGames Fix No 1
Warhammer: Dark Omen
X-Plane 4.15

OOPS!

Apologies to those who last month couldn't get the *Colin McRae Rally* demo to work on their PC. There were a few incompatibility issues with certain 3D cards that caused the game to crash. Codemasters have since released a new version of the demo that we will endeavor to cram onto next month's CD. Sorry 'bout that.

EXTENDED PLAY

A distinctly laconic introduction this month, as we have a truckload of *Unreal* mods, *Interstate '76* levels and *Total Annihilation* units to get through. So let's crack on

⊗ **WORDS** Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF

ON THE CD

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 174.

❝Hack and patch your way to a more fun-filled existence. Once again we've tracked down all the best bolt-ons and crammed them on to our cover CD❞

Each file on this month's cover-mounted CD has been carefully selected, painstakingly downloaded, lovingly installed and then analysed, appraised and assessed by our panel of experts (ie me). The average were mocked; the mediocre scoffed at; the stinkers thrown straight into the recycle bin. What remains is what you see here – the survivors. The very best. The crème de la crème. The cherry truffles in a world of Curly Wurlys.

Gamers have never had it so good. So sit tight, clench those muscles, and get ready to pig out on well over 100 premium-quality maps, hacks and new troops.

Moo, moomoo, moo, moo, moo… Moo, moo, moooooooo!

Where's the Holy Hand Grenade of Antioch when you need it?

UNREAL

⊗ *Monty Python* mods and nifty new levels

It's quick, it's slick and it's very picturesque, but *Unreal* doesn't quite meet the standards set by iD's infamous benchmark. And if you're one of those peeps who think that Epic's colourful shooter takes itself too damn seriously, try my new autumn range of exploding cows and earthquake bunnies. Guaranteed to amuse, or your money back.

⊗ **BATTLECOWS** (bcows1.zip) are flying moo-moos that vomit rabbits and missiles. Like the standard cows in the game, they ignore you unless you go and aggravate them, but don't be

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

⊗ **Yet more meat for the real-time chartbuster**

Yes, yes, I know we 'did' the Cavedog classic three or four issues ago, but there's just so much new stuff appearing that it'd be daft not to check some of it out, especially as the game is now available on budget. There's no wrestling with configuration files or console commands, just double-click on the file in question, point the installer at your *TA* directory, and everything plugs straight in.

First up for analysis are the new units. TADD's goodie bag (TADDPack1-4.exe) features a total of 21 troops all gift-wrapped in one archive. Pick of the bunch: the ARM M1A4 Campbell tank, so utterly effective that you just have to impose build restrictions.

HYPERION RESURRECTION KBOTS The ARM Wraith and CORE Soul Reaver resurrect dead units, repair damaged units and can reclaim metal. Mighty fun, especially after a big battle.

FAST-ATTACK HOVERCRAFTS The ARM Mosquito and CORE Locust are total girls on their own but are extremely powerful in swarms. Great for fast-attack rushes over both land and sea.

HEAVY LASER RIOT TANK Do some serious damage with the new CORE Hellfire riot tank. It's a bit tasty, is this hefty chunk of metal. Hellfires make great support vehicles for larger, slower units such as The Can and Sumo.

CLOAKING ATOMIC BOMBERS Monster stealth bombers, the Liche and Spirit are packed with atomic bombs for an instant Nagasaki. Every air force now needs a fleet of interceptors to match them.

HEAVY ANTI-AIR-TO-AIR INTERCEPTORS ARM Gryphons and CORE Harpies pack a serious punch with their air-to-air ARAAM missiles and Sidewinders. Perfect for taking out approaching atomic bombers.

EXTREMELY HEAVY SEIGE TANK The ARM M1A4 Campbell is an almighty Krogoth killer that uses a Goliath's siege cannon, fast attack laser and long-range rockets. Make sure you impose unit restrictions on this badass.
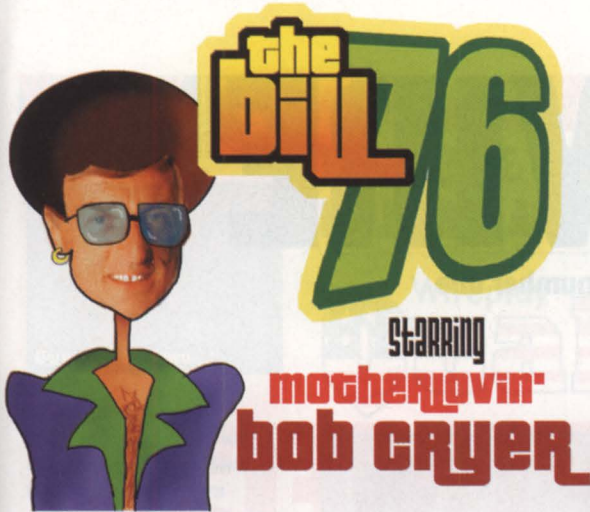
the bill 76

starring
motherlovin' bob cryer

surprised if you round a corner and stumble into a private bovine splatterfest. After installing the files to an *Unreal* sub-directory, you can assemble your own herd by typing 'summon devilcow. devilcow' at the console.

⭐ **QUAKERABBITS** (qrabbit.zip) is a modification of the game's standard Nali rabbits, with a vastly improved hopping distance. Oh, and every hop now triggers an earthquake. ⭐ **DETGUN** (detgun1.zip) is a

modified rifle that fires explosive arrows. When you hit your target, the arrow starts to count down from 15. Once the count reaches zero, the victim ruptures in a fountain of gibbage. You can tool yourself up by typing 'summon detgun.detgun' at the console. ⭐ **SMOKE GRENADE** (smokeg2.zip) emits a dense

smokescreen that can be used to confuse and confound your enemies. A customised Eightball Gun is provided with this mod, along with a map on which to test it.

INTERSTATE '76
⭐ **Funky, groovy maps for the groovy, funky driving game**

YOU LIKE? YOU WANT SEE MORE?
Anyone not visiting these pages will smell of egg sandwiches. With cress
-----
Unreal Mods http://unreal.moonbase.com/downloads.cfm?type=Mods
-----
Unreal Levels
http://unreal.moonbase.com/downloads.cfm?type=levels

Interstate '76 Links Page http://pluto.njcc.com/~arhodes/htf/links.htm
-----
TADD Total Annihilation Centre http://tadd.annihilated.org

TAMMO Total Annihilation Centre www.tammo.com

Cavedog's TA Site http://total.annihilation.com

Whukka chakka chukka! Activision's first *Mad Max* crib was never going to be a classic, but the groovy atmosphere and gonzo soundtrack kind of make up for it. When they released *Interstate '76: Nitro Riders* (PCZ #63, 87%), people took the whole thing more seriously; here at *ZONE* we felt that the second instalment was a gnat's chuff away from becoming a Classic.

But on to the business of the maps – 40 of them in total. Installation is a stroll in the proverbial park: all you have to do is unzip the contents of each archive into your *Interstate* Addon sub-directory and away you go. Pick of the bunch: Voodoo Villa (voodoo.zip) with its cursed course, Pins Of Pain Plains, Rooster Blood Ridge, Toads Teeth and mini-long jump. **PCZ**

FAST-ATTACK ANTI-AIR VEHICLE Invaluable when used in conjunction with other AA measures, the ARM Kaat builds quickly and provides excellent cover against atomic bombers.

CLONED BIO MICRO-FIGHTER A light laser means the ARM microNAUGHT is a bit of a wet blanket, but used in large numbers it offers fine protection for valuable base resources.

HEAVY ARTILLERY HOVERS The ARM Big John and CORE Battle Bee are huge, lumbering hovercraft that have the top speed of a Magimix and the road holding of a Flymo.

FAST-ATTACK MINI-SUBS Fast and cheap, the ARM WaterWing and CORE Frog tend to be built in huge quantities by computer opponents.

ADVANCED RADAR JAMMERS Offering a large area of effect, the bizarrely named ARM Oracular Effect and CORE Shadow Mask are now an essential part of any base.

UNDERWATER MOHOS Stop your metal meter banging on empty with these cool ARM and CORE mohos. Both units take cover under armour coating when attacked, increasing their longevity in battle.

ADVANCED BATTLE MECH KBOT A fat-bastard Kbot on some serious steroids, the ARM Raptor is another Krogoth-killer with two heavy gauss guns, a long-range missile launcher and heavy, long-range laser turret.

MINI-MINE RADAR JAMMERS Dump the ARM and CORE mine jammers in the middle of your mine fields and turn all the mines invisible.

BARRIER WALLS A total of eight units, including N/S Bertha Walls, E/W Bertha Walls, N/S Dragon Fences and E/W Fences. The perfect barricade against some of the game's biggest guns.

AMPHIBIOUS HEAVY SEIGE TANKS Both the ARM Orca and CORE Moray are built to withstand the toughest onslaught. Heavy armour plating, heavy weaponry and guaranteed waterproof.

AMPHIBIOUS LEVEL ONE CONSTRUCTION VEHICLES With an ever-increasing number of water maps and amphibious tanks becoming available, the ARM Beaver and CORE Muskrat construction vehicles are a welcome addition to any army.

FAST-ATTACK STEALTH FLAME TANK The CORE Mirage unleashes a very violent, very crisp death with its onboard flame-thrower. It can also cloak itself, and has a chilled drinks dispenser in the glove compartment.

Another group of unit makers, TAMMO, have recently got back on to the *Total Annihilation* design scene after a brief absence. Pick of the bunch: the ARM ICBM Attack Sub, able to launch devastating attacks on land targets from out at sea.

ARM KINBOAT AND CORE KODIAK The Kinboat (armkinboat.exe) and Kodiak (corkodiak. exe) are sub-hunting escort boats designed for ARM and CORE respectively. They come armed with a new type of missile plus HLT, and feature an onboard repair system and full sonar capabilities.

ARM NAVAL SERIES RADAR AND CORE NAVAL SERIES RADAR Put the tactics back into *TA* with this underwater radar system for both ARM (armnsradar.exe) and CORE (cornsrad.exe).

ARM BEAR TANK (bear.exe) A medium assault tank that carries prototype missiles which can knock a plane out of the sky with ease.

ARM BEHEMOTH (behemoth.exe) A multi-weaponed monster armed with an energy shell, HLT laser and standard AA gun. One mean momma.

CORE ANTARES (dantares.exe) A CORE unit that can be built by the Advanced Vehicle Plant. It's especially useful against enemy Krogoth units.

CORE CIRCULAR SAW (dccirsaw.exe) A CORE unit that can slice and dice an approaching enemy vanguard in two seconds flat.

CORE ERADICATOR (dcorerad.exe) Highly effective in preventing rushed victories. We suggest you limit the number of Eradicators to nine when in battle mode.

ARM KRYPTOR (dkryptor.exe) ARM's response to the almighty Krogoth. The Kryptor requires a whopping 115,512 energy and 31,035 metal.

CORE CORSAIL (dsail.exe) A sailing vessel equipped with a powerful laser. Built by an Advanced Construction Shipyard.

CORE SPY TRUCK Capture and repair any unit on the map with this vehicle. (dtruck.exe). No weapon, but fantastic armour and full cloaking facilities.

ARM ICBM ATTACK SUB (icbm.exe) This shooter can launch missiles from the ocean surface to targets on the shore. What's more, the ICBM missiles it uses are unique to this unit.

CORE RAPIDO Armed with a brand new weapons system, the CORE Rapido (rapido.exe) is a rocket Kbot capable of launching multiple rockets at an advancing enemy.

ARM WASP (wasp.exe) A light air-to-air fighter with stealth capability, designed primarily for a use in defensive role. Works best when deployed in large swarms.

Moving on to a selection of new maps that have become available, we've picked out nine new levels, all of which are excellent fun when played as either multiplayer or skirmish modes.

Pick of the bunch is Military Base, which provides a custom landscape rich in resources and vantage points. Unlike a lot of new maps (including some of the kosher Core Contingency ones), AI players cope well with it.

DEATH VALLEY Easily the best map visually, Death Valley (DeathValley.exe) features stunning customised graphics and textures.

DOGS OF WAR (DogsOfWar.exe) A proving ground for your new amphibious assault vehicles, atomic bombers and submarines.

ALIEN DESERT II (AlienDesert2.zip) A small and relatively simple map with high winds, acid pools and rocky passes.

CAPRICORN ISLES Another cool map with customised textures, Capricorn Isles (CapricornIsles.zip) is set on a waterlogged swamp world.

HARD CORE Rev up your metal mines as you plunge into Hard Core (HardCore.zip), a world made entirely from metal.

MILITARY BASE (MilitaryBase.zip) A fantastic city map with premium-quality graphics and amazing gameplay.

CHAOS IN METROPOLIS A brand new urban sprawl with wide roads, city blocks and alleyways gives Chaos in Metropolis (Chaos.zip) a unique feel.

NEWSWIRE

The month's hottest news on Wireplay, the UK's number one online gaming network

★ **WIRED** Warren Chrismas

Wireplay
The games network from BT

IN THE CLUB: NETMECH

In our irregular looks at the game clubs organised on Wireplay, this month we turn the spotlight on the club for *MechWarrior 2* players

CLUB: NetMech (*MechWarrior 2*)
CLUB CAPTAIN: Stixx (aka Charlie Abbott)
EMAIL ADDRESS: stixx@rebo.demon.co.uk
CLUB WEBSITE: www.rebo.demon.co.uk/
TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE: A league system is used, based on three battles per tournament, each lasting 20 minutes. There's also a knockout prize tournament every two months.
GAME TIMES: Every other Sunday at 7pm.
CLUB RULES: No cheating! Cheating techniques are well known in NetMech, so don't bother. It's possible, for example, to enter with hacked Mechs, set up with, say, unlimited auto cannons. However, tournament referees can detect these with a program called Mekpeep, and Mech configurations are usually checked by opponents after each game anyway. Also, it's sometimes possible to position a Mech against an indestructible object – such as a hill, stone wall or box – and see through it, enabling you to fire freely but not to be hit. Anyone found guilty of using this or any other cheat can expect to be penalised – anything from dropped points to

disqualification. "I very rarely have to settle disputes between players," says Stixx.

Best *MechWarrior* players on WirePlay: Comp1 (a veteran warrior from the west country); Graydeath (an ex-clan leader from a Internet league); Naranek (the last prize tournament winner on Wireplay); Hogmeister ("the UK's biggest battle tech fan"); Nobblet (long-time NetMech player).

TOP 10 TIPS FROM STIXX AND NARANEK

1 When setting up a Mech, don't mount weapons on your arms – they're usually the first things to be blown off; put less essential items such as extra ammo and heat sinks on the arms instead.
2 Always put at least one jump jet on a Mech – they help you to avoid enemy missiles and close in on an opponent quicker. Upgrade your armour to Ferro and Endo, which are lighter but just as strong as standard armour.
3 Try to find a good balance between the number of heat sinks and the number of energy weapons you have. It's no good having six PPCSs if after two group-fire shots your Mech is shutting down – or exploding – because of excessive heat.
4 Never drive your Mech in a predictable path; learn to pilot erratically while still keeping your aim.

5 Use a mouse for aiming – it enables fast turret movement. It takes some getting used to, but by adjusting the speed of your mouse to move slower and with less acceleration, you'll find targeting (lateral and horizontal) moving objects easier.
6 If your Mech is fitted with a gauss cannon, aim for the head.
7 Press 'W' to activate image enhancement or wireframe mode. Use wireframe mode when fighting, as it reduces lag and makes it easy to see when and where you've damaged an enemy Mech.
8 A simple but effective offensive move: advance on a Mech by thrusting upwards to about 50 metres, target and shoot at the enemy, then tap the reverse thrust to push yourself away, making you difficult to hit.
9 Slightly more complicated: again thrust up to about 50 metres, but go over the head of the enemy. Now swing around 180 degrees, target and fire at the rear of the enemy Mech (which has less armour) and tap reverse thrust. Use your radar (or external camera option) to keep track of your position in relation to the target.
10 If a Mech fires locking missiles at you, quickly jump-jet upwards (to about 150m) and tap forward thrust. The locked missiles should run out of fuel before they hit you.

WIREPLAY: TAKE US ON

QUAKE II
GROUND ZERO MISSION PACK

WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER

Take on various members of the *PC ZONE* gun-toting collective at *Quake II: Ground Zero*, still Wireplay's most popular game

- - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - -

INFO: This is a free-for-all event – just log in any time from 6pm to 9pm on the night. At the time of writing, we're not sure which server we'll be playing on, but look around and you'll find us. If you do take us on, please email Ritchie at richie.pcz@dial.pipex. com afterwards with the subject line 'And you play games for a living?' to tell us what you thought of our performances (remember to include your Wireplay handle and your real name).

PRIZES: The best performer on the night will be crowned our Player of the Month and, courtesy of Wireplay, sent £60 worth of HMV vouchers or four copies of the 'great' new album from Steps, the 'band' they're calling the new Abba (yeah, right).

MechWarrior 2: take the tips from Stixx and Naranek, then join NetMech and blast 'em to smithereens. Possibly.

QUAKING ALL OVER
WIN SOME TOP HARDWARE COURTESY OF DIAMOND AND 3COM

Wireplay Quakeadelica

Quakeadelica: they think it's all over. It is now.

Q. How much does an annual subscription to Wireplay cost?

⊕ 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?

Send your entry to: Quakeadelica Competition CPCZ9812B, PC ZONE, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK. The closing date is Tuesday 12 January 1999.

⊕ Terms and conditions: Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply. And all that. Phew!

Does your PC need a kick up the multimedia arse? Well, we could have just the answer thanks to Diamond Multimedia and 3Com, co-sponsors (along with Wireplay, AMD and BT Highway) of Quakeadelica, the massive *Quake II* tournament, the finals of which were held at the Ministry Of Sound nightclub in London on October 15.

Up for grabs for one of you lot is a 12Mb Voodoo2-based Diamond Monster 3D II accelerator card (*PCZ* #64, 80%) *and* a 3Com US Robotics 56K Voice Faxmodem (*PCZ* #68, 90%). To have a chance of winning them, all you have to do is answer the question below and send it on a postcard, along with *all* the information requested, to the address shown. Watch out for an extra-special report from the Quakeadelica finals in next month's *PC ZONE*, on sale Tuesday 17 November, or visit www.quakeadelica.com for the latest details.

⊕ Got a need for speed? Try the Diamond Monster 3D II.

FROM THE WIRES

⊕ Wireplay have plans to offer gamers a full Internet service in conjunction with their sister company BT Internet. There's no news yet on pricing or availability, but the cost of subscribing to Wireplay and BT Internet together will be less than subscribing to the two services separately. No, really. Wireplay are also working on something called Wirenet (working title) which will offer full Internet access on a pay-as-you-go basis with no subscription charges. More news when we get it, as they say.

⊕ Months after gamers started playing it through the back door, so to speak, Wireplay have added *GRAND THEFT AUTO* to the roster of games playable on the service "due to overwhelming customer demand". However, the company is refusing to support it officially due to poor performance. So now you know.

⊕ It's been a relatively quiet summer for Wireplay, with no new games added for… ooooh ages. However, *PC ZONE* has it on good authority (via a bloke down the pub whose sister knows someone who lives next door to someone who used to work at Wireplay) that several new titles – including the likes of *KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD, ACTUA SOCCER 3, TOTAL AIR WAR, APACHE HAVOC* and a special multiplayer version of *WARGASM* from DID – will be added to the service before Christmas.

⊕ Also coming soon to Wireplay are two new – and totally free – multiplayer games from VR-1, the company behind the popular multiplayer flight simulator *Air Attack. RUMBLE IN THE VOID* is a subspace (ie *Asteroids* on steroids)-type of game in which you compete for intergalactic dominance either singularly or in teams against – it says here – "hundreds of online players" (or approximately one opponent if you intend playing at 4am on a Sunday morning). *TOWERS OF FALLOW*, meanwhile, is a real-time action-strategy wargame in which you man and fight from a series of, er, stone and wooden towers. We'll have more news on both games once they go live on Wireplay. In the meantime, you'll find slightly more info at www.vr1.com.

⊕ All Wireplay's *QUAKE II* servers have now been upgraded to use version 3.19 of the game. If you haven't got the 2.4Mb update you'll find it on this month's *PC ZONE* cover disc and in the download section of the Wireplay website (www.wireplay.co.uk). See page 174.

⊕ Peter Molyneux corrupting nation's youth, shocka! Wireplay have begun a series of interviews with the service's club captains on their website (www.wireplay.co.uk), kicking off with a chat with Shov (real name Peter Lovall), who heads up the *Armored Fist 2* and *Gettysburg* clubs (as featured in *PCZ* #68). While this would usually be newsworthy, we at *PC ZONE* were rather intrigued by the advice given to the 15-year-old by Peter Molyneux. Apparently the head honcho at Lionhead advised Shov to go to university because "you can get xxxxxx and xxxx every night!". What *did* he mean?

Wireplay
The games network from BT

THE LIONHEAD DIARIES

Continuing our insider's view of the making of *Black And White*, the first game from new developers Lionhead

● **WORDS** Steve Jackson

Christian Bravery's concept drawing of a lion (left), which has now turned into... a 3D low-polygon model (right).

GENETIC ENGINEERING

The Lionhead artists shoulder a major responsibility for the success or failure of *Black And White*. Though we might pride ourselves on the slogan that 'gameplay is everything', we have to be realistic about what will actually happen when the game hits the streets. Ultimately it's the look of the game which will make the general public stop in front of an in-store *Black And White* demo and say: "Wow! What's this?" or walk past on the way to buy the box of floppies they went in for.

We currently have all five of our artists working on *Black And White*'s graphics. Each person is allocated certain assignments at an early stage, which ensures that they quickly become experts in learning how their art package can be best used for specific tasks.

Our original artist, Mark Healey, has been concentrating on designing wireframes and animations in *3D Studio Max*. He created the game's cursor (a wizard's hand) as well as the early creature and citadel concept work. Jamie Durrant has been focusing on bitmaps for the test bed version of *Black And White* (a working model with primitive graphics which enables us to test the gameplay at an early stage).

Christian Bravery has been designing the creatures. In the game, the player picks an ordinary animal – like a lion, cow or monkey – which gradually transforms into a titanic monster. These creatures must all morph between various shades of good and evil, and it is Christian's job to ensure that the change is seamless and convincing.

Our newest artist, Andy Bass, is designing buildings which will make up the villages of the eight game tribes. And Paul McLaughlin, our head of art, has developed many of the techniques and tools required, as well as some of the landscape textures. He also has the awesome job of co-ordinating the artists' work – there are roughly 10,000 individual pieces of art to be drawn, and the number grows every day.

Paul describes what it's like to work on the project: "It has to be the ideal job for a game artist. We're doing things that not only *we've* never done before, but that nobody else has either. Because this is Lionhead's first title, it's got to be the most beautiful and luscious art imaginable. Creating the game world, the creatures, magic spells, the different tribes and their villages is a serious challenge. The scariest thing is that they all have to change dynamically between good and evil to reflect the way the player chooses to play.

"We've got to have the best-looking landscape ever. Jean-Claude Cottier is doing cool work with the 3D engine, but it's up to us to make it look stunning. We don't just want it to look better than existing landscapes (which I think it does already), we want it to look superior to whatever else is around when the game is released. This means second-guessing the technology to some extent, but more importantly it means capturing the essence of landscape. We don't just want a functional playing area, we want a thing of beauty.

"We've used the Internet a lot for researching landscapes from around the world, and have built up a respectable reference library. Having done that, we had to create the textures, which *Photoshop* is great for.

"The creatures, which you can 'adopt' and nurture, are a mammoth task in themselves. They are largely based on real livestock, but this being a Peter Molyneux game there will also be a couple of surprises. It's vital that the player believes in and cares for the creatures. As Mark Healey once said: 'If the little bugger stubs his toe, the player should genuinely cry.'

"Christian's lion character is slowly taking on a character of its own as it's being used as the guinea pig for our creature tools development. Every day it does something different.

"We're building and animating creatures in *3D Studio Max*. It's great for low-polygon work (3D models are made up of thousands of polygons, each of which must be filled with a texture on the fly), and our 3D programmers are well on the road to integrating the creature editors, so we'll be able to build, texture, animate and simulate the game's effect on the creature, all within *Max*. Eventually we'll be able to create a convincing 'fat but strong good cow walking on two legs with a damaged left arm' animation. We're doing some of the animation movements ourselves, videoing it and using the footage as a background image to rotascope (trace over) the animations in *Max*. Hopefully it will all pay off in the end.

"There's a tremendous amount of graphic work to be done. I haven't even mentioned the magic spells and the weather effects we're planning. Players will expect so much from *Black And White* that the spells alone are scaring the shit out of us. This is the most demanding title I've ever worked on, but it also promises to be the most stimulating and rewarding." **PCZ**

> **"It's vital that the player believes in and cares for the creatures"**
>
> PAUL McLAUGHLIN, LIONHEAD'S HEAD OF ART

Lionhead's art department (left to right): Paul McLaughlin, Andy Bass, Christian Bravery, Mark Healey, Jamie Durrant.

Paul's attempts to walk like an angry giant cow (left) have been captured on video. The 3D cow (right) is modelled to mimic his movements, frame by frame.

How a rock texture is built up, layer by layer, using *Photoshop*.

The same texture, applied to the landscape.

● *As well as being a director for start-up games developer Lionhead, Steve Jackson is co-founder of Games Workshop, author of* Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks, *and columnist for* The Daily Telegraph.

● *The next part follows in next month's issue, out Tuesday 17 November.*

SICK NOTES

Your letters? No fuss! Just send them to us! It's Sick Notes, the single most appalling waste of time and resources since *Pets Win Prizes*. Post us your missives, light fuse, and retire

⭐ POURING SCORN Charlie Brooker

THE PLACE TO WRITE FOR ABUSE

NAME-CALLING

I was just reading your magazine the other day and realised how it was a steaming pile of crap and that I didn't like it at all. Who the hell writes the reviews? At the end of the review I don't know anything about the game. All I know is what the person who wrote it did last night. Why don't you employ some decent writers to write your reviews? Overall, I think you are a boil on the butt of humanity!

Peter George

⭘ Yeah? Well you're a canker on the prick of despair.

> 66 Oh, by the way, I heard you wanted a fight with someone, so I'm offering. This ferret's got teeth, and I'll chew your head off! 99
>
> **JOSEPH WILLIAM COLE**

NOEL COWARD II

Yo, dude! I've been building my own computer and I thought you could help me. I've been trying to get my graphics card to fit inside the case but it was too big, so I got a hacksaw and sawed a few centimetres off one side. I bet you think I'm stupid enough to throw away the sawn off bit. Well you're wrong! I sellotaped it on to another part of the graphics card, so there!

The processor in this computer had too many pins sticking out of it as well, so I snipped a few off with a pair of pliers and it eventually went in. I turned on the computer and it purred like a cat. There is no picture on the screen though, but the case it's in is brill.

Oh, by the way, I heard you wanted a fight with someone, so I'm offering. This ferret's got teeth, and I'll chew your head off!

Joseph William Cole

⭘ This is the kind of material Hale And Pace use. Perhaps you could work it into a three-to-four-minute sketch and see if they're interested. Your best bet is to find out the name of their production company and mail it straight there. If that fails, try contacting their agent. Good luck. Oh, and if you do get through to them, try suggesting they change their names from 'Hale and Pace' to 'Piss and Shit'. You know. While you've got their attention.

THE MUTTERINGS OF A FOOL

Here's a great idea for a game. It will sell by the ton load – literally [goes on at length to detail intensely pedestrian game scenario].

You can reply to this advice in your usual crap manner. Although I may be a stupid, scrounging student, you always be ugly [sic].

Arclight

⭘ Whereas you'd be a fine catch for any girl. Assuming she doesn't mind being violated by an imbecile.

GIVE PEACE A CHANCE

I would like to see someone else that I could kill in games. The main people that we get to kill are Germans, Russians and aliens. If your excuse is that it's because of WWII and the Cold War, then I say IT'S TIME TO FORGET. I think that it is now time we got to kill some Italians, Frogs or Norwegians for a change. Most of all I would like to kill some Yanks, but as they produce most of the games I suppose it is out of the question. I must admit though, I like sneaking up behind a German and slitting his throat in *Commandos*, but why don't programmers make someone else the enemy for a change?

Andrew Jesse

⭘ Bagsy a game where you walk around a small town punching six-year-old girls in the face. That'd rock.

LOSER OF THE MONTH

You can be a loser and also a winner – of £50

STICKS AND STONES

I see that in issue 67 of your 'magazine' you asked us to send in a game idea. How's this then: you start off in a primary school where all goes well and you please the teachers. You then progress to secondary education and achieve above average results and so decide to sit A-levels in your local college and finally, after four years in university, end up with an honours degree in English language and English literature.

AND THEN YOU END UP WRITING YOUR PATHETIC [swearword] PIECE OF [swearword] PAGE-FILLING SO-CALLED COLUMN.

Mark Richardson

⭘ There was a boy called Mark Richardson at my school. Everyone called him 'skids' because once, in the PE changing rooms, somebody noticed he had huge brown skidmarks in his underpants. Not that this inability to tackle basic personal hygiene was restricted just to poor wiping skills. He smelled bad pretty much all the time. He was a mess. His face was permanently coated with a faintly shiny film of sweat and grime, his hair so caked in grease it recalled television footage of unfortunate seabirds in the aftermath of the Exxon Valdez oil slick. His clothing was dirty. To use the *Whizzer And Chips* terminology of the day, it 'ponged'.

But the worst thing about Skids was the way he picked his nose. He was always at it, plugging a finger in as far as he could, corkscrewing it around inside the nasal cavity, unhooking entire strata of half-dried mucus, drawing out measureless strings of oleaginous grey-green slime. Then he'd take them to his mouth, puckering his lips as if sampling some exotic delicacy. Skids devoured snot. He relished it. Guzzled it. Chewed it up and swallowed it whole, then painted his finger clean with his pink, stubby tongue. Made you sick just to watch him do that.

Anyway. Sorry, what were you saying?
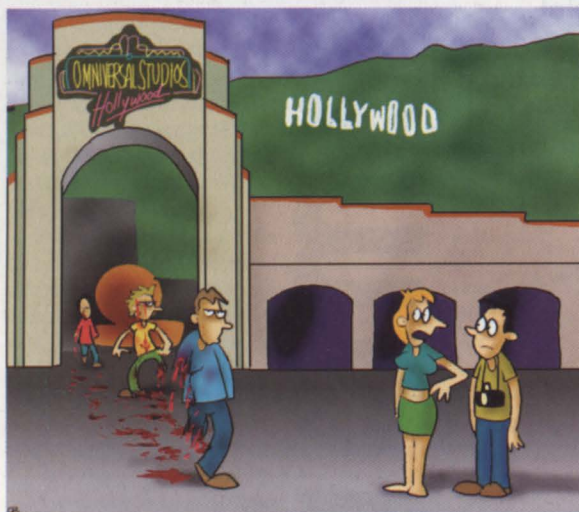
Honey, would you mind if we gave that new 'Saving Private Ryan' theme ride a miss?

CARMAGEDDON II

Carpocalypse Now

NOVEMBER

PC CD ROM

SCi

STAINLESS

©1998 SCi (Sales Curve Interactive) Ltd. Engine © 1997 Stainless Software Ltd. All rights reserved. SCi (Sales Curve Interactive) Ltd is a subsidiary of SCI Entertainment Group PLC. SCi, Carmageddon II, Carpocalypse Now are trademarks of SCi (Sales Curve Interactive) Ltd. E&OE. Head Office: 11, Ivory House, Plantation Wharf, Battersea, London, SW11 3TN, UK. Tel: +44 (0)171 585 3308, Fax: +44(0)171 924 3419.

www.sci.co.uk