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**ISSUE 52**  
January 1993  
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OLD!

Screen images are only intended to illustrate the graphics capabilities of the computer system. Screen graphics which vary considerably between different hardware quality and speed configurations. Subject to the computer specification.

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**31** *Strangers* are people who understand the need of today's games. Their *Apocalypse* features lots of vibrant death. *Score!*

**43** A better collection of Christmas previews. See of which you won't have come anywhere else. *We do too.*



**56** *Wolf* from *Wolfchild*. Super space wars on a grand scale.

**80** The first Samurai from Image Works. Muscle bound hero in time traveling dog-search scenario. *It!*



**7** Games News - *Zelda 3*, *Utopia 2*, *B-17* and *Spiderman*. **10** Tech News - *Falcon* in Virtual Reality. **2** **15** Letters. **21** In the Works - *Cyber Fight* from Electronic Arts, *ADAC* from Microprose and *Apocalypse* from Image Works. **37** Software Based **43** Previews. **87** Console Section - Newest releases for your entertainment system. **96** Next Month. **99** The AwesomeReviews Directory is back!

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50

### Another World

They say not little catwalk-out-of-shells-and-armor-stripes jumpers, but the French can certainly come up with novel game ideas. Delphine's latest release is a case in point: an adventure driven in polygon!

66

### Epic

An age in the making. Digital Image Design's *Epic* has turned out to be every bit as epic as its name and lives as their *quest* (almost suggested) but how does it hang together as a game, eh?

62

### Populous II

The best game in The Better World has Total wars, relations, negotiations, plagues, battles and a touch of Greek mythology. Building to build somebody else back to the drawing board.

68

### Wolfchild

It's a wolf! It's a wolf! It's the best best from Core Design. Revisiting their second-Party *Wolfchild* in an early month. Core Design from last month's riling advertising for an all-action romp.

74

### Eye of the Beholder 2

The game which can't be advertising world might now have a sequel. It's bigger and better than the original, and the characters have even more magical powers. So pack your knicker armor (a lot) and enjoy an epic!

86

### The First Samurai

Following his master's footsteps, the First Samurai must battle his way through 14th Century Japan in one of the best arcade adventures for months. Press the icon that brought you *Time Machine*.





# NEWS GAMES NEWS GAMES NEWS

## Does Whatever A Spider Can...

One of the most-loved Marvel comic characters celebrated his 40th birthday this year. Spider-Man is therefore very big business at the moment.

Firstly, Sega has introduced a lively new coin-up sport: the Hyperactivated System 32 hardware. Up to four players can simultaneously play Spider-Man, Sub-Mariner, Black Cat or Menkays. Using their unique superhuman abilities, these four heroes pursue their arch-enemy Dr Doom through the sprawling metropolis. It looks very much like a comic and comes complete with speech bubbles and digitalized voices. A fugitive conversation seems very likely.

More importantly, Sony's Columbia Pictures has decided to turn Spider-Man into a big box office attraction in 1993, with the idea of making our superhero a bigger blockbuster movie star than the Terminator. Who will they get to play the agile web-spinning crime-fighter? Michael Keaton, creator of Aliens and the original Terminator, is tipped to be the lucky guy. And musician Arnold Schwarzenegger could play one of the villains or goad as Eggman!

ACE previously heard that the director's initial idea was '3D', but who could this cyber-film genre possibly be? What about John Carpenter, mastermind behind Escape from New York and The Thing in the early eighties? John Orman, representative of Newsworld on BBC1, was our absolute outside bet along with James Christ.

Stan Lee, creator of Spider-Man, cleared up any confusion when he revealed on Waterworld that the lucky guy was to be Terminator 2 director James Cameron. Thus, Spider-Man - The Movie will almost certainly come over with fast-paced action and spectacular special effects.

Interestingly, it won't be Sony Imagesoft who produces the video game adaptations of the movie. Acclaim has been rather steady by snapping up these rights directly from comic publisher Marvel. We'll be seeing the results on GameBoy, MegaDrive, GameGear and Super 32X coinciding with the premier of the movie. After the recent deal concerning the Simpsons and Terminator 2, Acclaim will probably pick up the home computer rights to Spider-Man.

## AMERICAN ADULATION

Comic companies like Sega and Nintendo have recently got into the habit of producing rather off-beat adverts for television. However, our Yankee cousins are masters of the absolutely outrageous truly tacky advertisements. It's difficult to ignore their costars.

Operation C is one of the many eye-catching computer animated 'spots' produced by Lamb & Company for Japanese software house Kazusa. Designer Black Marston was greater than his peers for this particular bit of art.

Following the Rambo character seen in the original GameBoy advert 'run-up' reviewed in ACE 416, our aggressive hero now goes to some sort of futuristic experimental laboratory before rushing outside into an anti alien battlefield. This gang-to-commando is a 3D articulated model with full facial features and moving joints. Notice the texture-mapped LCD screen from the GameBoy playing the actual game on his chest!

Founded in 1976, Minneapolis based Lamb & Company is a commercial production house specialising in 3D computer animation and simulation for television advertising, corporate recruitment and architects. It used Silicon Graphics workstations running Wavefront and other proprietary software to create the fairly-revolving spots for the GameBoy version of Operation C and Storage Magnet Ninja Turtles: Full of the Foot Clan!





## Step Back In Time

With the Cold War over and no updated aircraft aircraft on the near horizon, Microprose has been forced to visit 1940s-style jets for inspiration for its next age-flight simulation.

GGT Flying Fortress will recreate the three-falling daylight raids on East-coast cities by American bombers based in England during World War Two. Players take command of a bomber, then in a group formation with other planes, through 20 hazardous combat missions.

Boeing's B-17 was one of the most successful bombers of the entire war. Despite some excellent armor and armament, the so-called 'Flying Fortress' suffered heavy losses over Germany until the arrival of the P-51 Mustang long-range escort fighter in 1942. David Petersen's masterful movie Memphis Bell relives the nightmare of flying one of these B-17 bombers on such suicidal flights.

Vector Traffic, the development outfit responsible for Bomber (Amiga) and Space Shuttle (Vegas Games), is busy producing versions of the game on Amiga, PC and ST for a spring 1992 launch. Microprose is providing this release will be another 'stealing 2D simulation' from the firm.

ACE will hopefully be taking GGT Flying Fortress out for a preflight check-up sometime soon.

Meanwhile, Microprose in the States is adapting the sweet-smelling P-51 Mustang Fighter and Railroad Tycoon onto Super NES format. It will be interesting to see how these two best-selling simulation programs are going to be transformed into the kind of slightly less-demanding video games which sell to their millions on the popular Nintendo console. Can the average eight-year-old gamester really wrap their heads



## TWO SEXY?

It comes as little surprise that Genesis is already producing a sequel to the chart-topping Utopia space-colony simulation game. Currently going under the development title of Utopia 2, this is already promising to be even better than its popular predecessor.

Genesis' leg it back in the programming chair for the original's co-designer, Robert Cook, has decided a return to his university studies is the best move for him. leg has pledged to hire a new graphic designer and presently favors a look similar to the classic sci-fi movie Alien by Ridley Scott. Nothing but the drawing board is your package

yet. Apart from the visual theme, what's new? Much of the game will remain the same, players still strive for the perfect place to live, but there are lots of refinements planned. These could include a food menu like that of a magazine and leg also assumes there will be far less hassle when handling rather boring stuff like the tables of figures on the finance screen.

Obviously, the project is still at an early stage and literally anything could happen. Hard facts are scarce, except for the expected release date. Utopia 2 should be available on Amiga and ST within the next twelve months.

In the meantime, the first Utopia will be converted over to the PC. Super Features and more movie Japanese computer formats. Best assured, ACE will keep you posted of any major developments.

## Sale Of The Century

If you're thinking about buying a Megabyte, there's never been a better time to go for it. leg has finally decided to handle the phenomenally successful basic the Hedgeling with the console for a stocking 'Dip of most stocks.

Early the most talked about can't released so far on the Megabyte. Basic the Hedgeling is leg's answer to the multibillion best-seller Super Mario Bros series from Nintendo (both in terms of gameplay and success). Sales of this value for money package should soar through the retailers roof. There could even be a shortage of stock this Christmas, so act fast if you're interested.

That's not all. Genesis owners will soon be able to sample the fun when Super the Hedgeling is converted over to their handheld games system in a couple of months. Frogger and Super Kick Off are also on their way.





# MAD! BAD! &

# IN YOUR FACE!

# AND THAT'S A PROMISE!

## WF WRESTLEMANIA



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## Fear And Loathing In Downtown Tokyo

As this report goes to press, players in Japan are queuing at software stores in their thousands, eagerly awaiting the third installment of the Zelda saga of fantasy role-playing games from Nintendo. This strange activity is probably best described as the eventual equivalent of camping outside Selfridges or Harrods before their famous sales every January.

It's not unknown for Japanese people to be "mugged" for these new games and, in one outrageous occasion, somebody actually had their laptop burned down by a disgruntled teenage gamer whose stock of Dragon Quest ran-out in his room on the first day of release. Apparently, the assistant's friend was asked to hand his copy over or face the consequences. The passionate players in the land of the rising sun certainly take their video games seriously.

The legend of Zelda III cuts the equivalent of £1 and is only available on the Super Famicom. It has been crafted by the same design team responsible for the highly respected and much loved Super

Mario World. Zelda III is a pretty tight roguelike cartridge four times larger than previous games, so gear things up! expected of it.

Perhaps every American actor, and even more Nintendo aficionados, Duke Williams will rub salt in Japan and buy this cut? After all, he did name his daughter Zelda after the eponymous video game character.



## CARRY ON, COMMANDER!

In an impressive effort to squeeze every possible pixel out of the space-kickin' Wing Commander II, Origin is planning to sell additional missions for the game on another expansion disc.

Special Operations is the title of the three discs, who originally worked at Sierra Online but served as lead writer on the second Wing Commander project. Besides new missions and enemy sets to kick in, this accessory also introduces a prototype Texas fighter known as the Double-Bomber.

Origin's Commander series of action simulators just can't be ignored at the moment. Further titles on the production line include the inevitable Wing Commander 3, Strike Commander which is scheduled to appear early next year, and Panzer Commander (working title).

The latter Chris Roberts creation is, surprisingly enough, a tank combat affair. An Origin spokesperson boasts Panzer Commander is another "breakthrough" product with incredible graphics which look better than most animation seen on TV. No enemy details are available at present, although it's pretty safe to say this game will be set during the Second World War and feature a few armored vehicles...



## Are you Redi for this?

Naturally known for professional, expensive and exceedingly dull flight simulators, Rediffusion has announced a newly inspired version of the venerable 14-year-old entertainment sim-cars classic attraction.

You've probably seen the Super II at computer shows and other similar events. Basically, it couples flight simulator motion to helicopters with a headline file of something thrilling like doing down a headbanging sheep, driving a Formula One car at top speed or taking a journey out into space.

The whole setup is quite believable and very exciting because the chair you sit in moves in time with the action. There's also a loud-speaker system to draw out the excitement of pitiful groans and wailing howl!

Ventures will be shortly complemented by a special licensed interactive simulator called the Commander. Keep an eye out for our report in the near future.



## And Here's One I Prepared Earlier...

The bigger, badder sequel may be out now but don't check your copy of Populous in the bin just yet! Electronic Arts has brewed yet more life into Bullfinch's classic original with an editor program to be released in the new year. Programmed by a German Populous addict, it allows players to create their own! Presetted Levels by altering sprites, backgrounds and game variables! It's out in January for £9.99, but unfortunately only single owners need apply.

## Core, What A Scorcher!

In these early stopgap Core Design's after producing the likes of *Ultimad* and *WitchMaid*, the company is developing a new racing game based around the top Jaguar racing cars normally seen at road races like Le Mans et al.

"With no working title as yet, we suggested Jag/Strat but Core wasn't impressed—the game will supposedly use an adapted and slightly enhanced version of the fast and fantastic 3D graphics routines first seen in *Thunderhawk*. It therefore shouldn't take too great a stretch of the imagination to discover the author of Core Design's chopper combat sim is in charge of development. As lots of the code is already in place, the whole game will take a mere six months to complete.

A spokesperson for Core Design maintains that this first foray into drive-'em-ups will be totally innovative, looks overblown for its scale and make truly use from EA, but decidedly pale in comparison. Bold claims true, but believable ones considering the pedigree of products before it.

*Project J* is due for release on Amiga, PC and ST by May 1992. There could also be a 16-bit arcade version of *Thunderhawk* out on the streets sometime later next year. No arcade publisher has signed it up yet—Core Design only gave floppy disk formats at present and has only just included the good old CD-i to that list—but the smart money would be on Virgin Games. Richard Branson's office has already converted Chuck Buck and Corporation over to the Megalithic.

Chuck Buck, a raffish 'son of Chuck', is due on the way from the same design team at Core Design. *Phew!*



## ALL TOGETHER NOW

California creator of *Falcon*, *Spectrum HoloByte*, and Leicester-based *W* Industries, makers of the *Virtuality* arcade video game system, have entered into the 'hardware marketing venture' to form Cyberstudio, a virtual reality software publishing concern exclusively devoted to cut-up titles.

"Virtuality represents a quantum leap in entertainment technology and should be considered the recreation vehicle of the nineties and beyond," declares Spectrum HoloByte founder Gilman Lewis. "With this system, any world or fantasy can be created to totally immerse the user in an extraordinary sensory experience."

Initially, Cyberstudio will modify and enhance existing *Virtuality* games but plans are underway

to develop several original titles, the first of which will be ready by early 1993.

It's a fair bet that the first game will probably be a flight simulation, perhaps even based around the *F* of *Falcon*, which would also utilize the Electronic Battlefield pioneered by Spectrum HoloByte. The PC version of *Falcon 3.0* is the first game to demonstrate the Electronic Battlefield and this will be followed by *Arranger 4.0* next year. This innovative concept lets many players compete on the same battlefield. One person, for instance, could command a tank while three other players pilot a squadron of fighter aircraft. Each multiplayer capabilities should suit the *Virtuality* equipment very well.



## They're Back

Naumco has tried to breath new life into the classic shoot-'em-up *Defenders* by introducing a cut-down arcade video game system with fancy 3D graphics and a disk-y little laser gun.

*Defenders* is a bit too linear and non-interactive for many players tastes, but does incorporate some particularly good sprites and backdrops. The bullets and shells don't stop there, either. Naumco thoughtfully provides an 'active seat' which vibrates when the enemy hits you and a four-channel surround sound system to produce "softies through the players body".

Perhaps there will be more attention to gripping gaming in the next 'hyperentertainment machine'?





# HIGH PRAISE DRIFTERS

What the heck have Bart Simpson, Arnold Schwarzenegger and WWF got in common? They're all coming soon to your Nintendo Gameboy! Rik Haynes casts an eye over these hot properties...

Nobody had even heard of Acclaim a couple of years ago. Today, thanks to a string of best-selling NES cartridges, this prolific New York company is one of the biggest videogame publishers in the world. These guys certainly know how to make the right connections. Earlier this year, Acclaim was one of the first firms allowed to manufacture its own NES carts. Previously, such software was strictly made by Nintendo (and in Japan, Microsoft), the Super NES has been added to the list (but with titles like *The Simpsons*, *South TV* and *Super WWF Wrestling* on their way.

At the beginning of this month, Acclaim announced plans to convert its most popular games onto the Sega MegaDrive and Gamegear, thus completing the lineup of total coverage. Though of this corporate background, I hear you say, what about those exciting new Gameboy offerings?

## BART SIMPSON'S ESCAPE FROM CAMP DEADLY

There's just no escape from this goofy American family of total idylls. If you're not completely fed up watching them on satellite TV or video, Acclaim is ready-willing and able to supply the Simpsons in software form. In this luscious-packed Gameboy adventure, rebellious Bart and his smart-ass playing sister Lisa are sent to summer camp, the place where American parents (and their kids) go right

every year.

Twice in this dangerous camp is filled over by bad-lies and cruel camp-counselors who want to stink out teenage kids. You must guide the Simpson-springs through the various obstacles course, meeting quirkies, friends, grumpy gurus and Nelson's gang of miscreant thugs. *Escape From Camp Deadly* will be available later this month for about \$25 and Acclaim is already preparing a sequel for release next year.

## TERMINATOR 2: FUTURE WARS

*The Simpsons* and *Terminator 2* stand for the biggest things to happen in the entertainment industry this year. No wonder Acclaim has licensed both of 'em. Leading scenes from the brilliant Schwarzenegger movie, players are led through a series of arcade sequences featuring futuristic laser battles, fast motorcycle chases and furious gunfights. If you actually take a close look at the *Terminator 2* film credits when it's released on video in early 1991, you'll notice a plug saying "play the hit Nintendo games from Acclaim". See what I mean about those handy contacts...

## WWF SUPERSTARS

Taking advantage of another cult programme from E!Net, Acclaim has covered the best-selling World Wrestling Federation appeal of Hulk Hogan, Ultimate Warrior and Randy "Macho King" Savage into this blistering line of head-buts, dropkicks and chokeslams. WWF Superstars also includes action out of the ring, two-player head-to-head Game Link option and simulated TV interviews with each wrestler conducted before and after every match. A very handy Christmas present for *Wrestlemania*, eh?



THE NO-HOLDS-BARRED

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# L etters

Hard to believe though it is, we're not always infallible, and from time to time things occasionally go awry here at ACE Towers. This month the gremlins decided to hit our Letters section, and all the titles for the letters unfortunately got lost in some computer maze. Due to this happening at an unfortunately late time in our schedule, we didn't have time to come up with a completely new set of titles, so we had to borrow some from the problems page of our sister magazine *Just Seventeen* instead. Hope you don't mind...

## I FINISH TOO EARLY

Dear ACE, I have never before felt so strongly as to put you to paper as I do now. I am absolutely tired about some games and the time taken to complete them. One magazine started about Robin Hood, "Here are a good 30 or so hours of gameplay here." Well, after two hours I had completed the damn thing! Apparently it was "Fun" to walk around talking, exploring etc, but it wasn't. This magazine had wasted around £20 of my money. I was also bugged off by Megadimension (2 days), Bard's Tale (a week) and Wilfar (five hours). Wilfarer took me about ten hours. However, one game has delighted me, Eye of the Beholder. This is a real joy to play. It's also a real challenge. Make no mistake I am an experienced gamer/player, especially strategy and adventure games, but this is no excuse for the ease of a game.

Good idea about six page reviews, from these we can see what a game is really like. Based on these, the game I'll purchase will be Floor 13. Why not have a section specially for adventures and RPGs, where quality games are printed and help can be given to inexperienced (and experienced) adventurers?

Matthew Curran  
Plymouth  
Cornwall

We're not too sure about your claims about games being too easy. Most of the time designers seem to get the difficulty just right, and if anything they seem to be moving more towards the tough side. However, it's an interesting point, but you should never actually think "God, this game is really hard!" By that

time, you're well on the road to frustration and disappointment. Instead, your argument seems to suggest that you would like games to be simply bigger. So what's the verdict? Do ACE readers reckon that today's software is easy, hard, or just lovely and right.

## I'VE GOT A NASTY COMPLAINT

Dear ACE, well done with the new style man. It's great, but like Mr Trevor Smith to leave SL I would like to see more six page reviews. So please hurry it up. I have only five complaints. One is what happened to the chart in the pink pages? You were only mag I had read that did the charts by the game's average score. Secondly, the thing I find annoying is that when you review a game you don't say if or when the game is out for other computers such as Commodore or Amiga. Is that going to come out for ST or the Amiga? What? If you answered questions like that it would be very useful.

I own an ST and I want to get a game designed for it. What is the best bit around, I have thought of a cricket game. What bit would be the best for a game like that?

Nathan Longton  
Bristol

We'll be doing more six page reviews very soon, so just hang on, alright? Everything comes to its own walls. Patience is a virtue. As for the ACE stockmarket, that had to be swept into the bin along with everything else to make room for our glistering new reviews directory. You'll be pleased to hear, however, that we have taken heed of your second quibble, and as of this month we'll be giving

# Ultima VII

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full reader details for every game we review. So send them a look if you don't believe us.

## AM I NORMAL?

Dear ACE, what on earth happened to pages 7 and 8 in your December issue? There were five items in your News section that were finished in mid-sentences. I'm sure, not after you receive complaints, but I couldn't think the magazine afterwards, for I am one of your most loyal readers! Please in future, publish the ends of sentences.

Robert Sharp  
Barnstead  
Sussex

Digital Front Sponsor strikes again. Okay, okay, we admit. Some of our News stories got caught a bit short. Those organisations have been publicly criticised in the car park at the back of our office.

## I AM IN TURMOIL!

Dear ACE, I am writing to you because I value ACE's comments and opinions and would like them on the questions below:

1. CEFT? I know what one is and everything, but is this a good thing because people say it's not worth the money but other people say that due to its scale and graphic capabilities it's the worth the asking price. So is it worth getting?
2. The price of software seems to be going up all the time. Is it due to the rise of more and more games getting copied? If so wouldn't CEAs be the best way round the problem as you can't copy them and the price could come down a little?
3. Could you please tell me if FLIN's Strength Fighter 2 and Wing Commander will be brought out on the Amiga?

I would be very grateful if you would answer my questions and I must also tell you what a great improvement you have made on your mag. It's just the best one money can buy.

DL Malwood  
Dunbridge  
Kent

## STEPMUM MAKES MY LIFE A MISERY

Dear ACE, I have a very serious complaint which I would like to raise through your pages to the entire industry. Why oh why do software houses continually persist in packing their games in large cardboard boxes to make it look like there is a lot of stuff inside. Then get nothing in there but a disk and a stupid little instructions pamphlet. It's just the biggest rip-off going! I can't think of any other medium that uses this cynical marketing ploy. Not only is it totally impractical for us games players who have to find somewhere to keep all these giant boxes, but it is absolutely just a way for software houses to make their inferior games look more appealing and worth the asking price.

I'm not quibbling with people like MicroPress, whose bulky packaging is justified by the large manuals and documentation the product requires, but certain software houses (I won't name names but everyone knows who they are) seem to think that they can get away with producing a giant package and then putting, if you'll excuse the term, not all inside!

If there's any consolation to this sad tale, it's that I don't think this rip-off tactic is going to work. Today's software-buying public are far too shrewd to fall for it. When you pick up a big box and it hardly weighs anything and you can hear the disk rattling around inside, you know immediately what the GP is, but who knows what depths some firms may stoop to - maybe they'll start putting bits of lead inside their boxes to make them seem heavier!

To be honest with you, I wouldn't really mind so much - it's not as if the standard of the game is diminished just because it comes in a big box after all - if it wasn't for Eric Shing's. One, the problem with shelf space I mentioned earlier, and two, I think that documentation is very important to a game. When you get a glossy manual and lots of other bits, it makes you feel good and adds to the overall game experience. By putting out these stupid little leaflets inside a giant box, that whole concept seems to be diminished somewhat. That's my opinion anyway.

Before I go, I would like to congratulate you on the excellent new section Gary White's Reviews. With all those first-line stories and exclusive screenshots, I now have exactly where to go to beat the best advice on what I'll be playing over the next few months. Keep up the good work!

Roger Allison  
Maidstone  
Kent

Right on, comrades! We fully agree with your comments about one-job packaging. There's nothing we find more annoying than getting off excited when a giant game box finds its way into the office, then tearing off the cellophane to find nothing more than a disk and a pathetic bit of paper inside. This isn't the only letter we've received on this subject either - it seems more and more readers are getting fed and bothered over the packaging issue. So maybe it's about time your industry bigwig got your act together, eh?

Right, one of a then, then...

Firstly, it's not really our place to tell you what to do, but you're probably best off waiting a while to see how the CEFT fares before taking the plunge. Though it's been on sale

for quite a while now, it hasn't exactly been flying out of the shops. Also, Commodore recently topped a hundred pounds off the retail price, so who's to say another drop isn't on the cards?

Don't let anyone mislead you about the







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machine's superior graphics either - they're exactly the same as on the Amiga, and only the sound is improved due to the CD drive. A more interesting bit might be to get hold of the Italian CD drive for the Amiga since that appears. The point about software on CD is a good one, but don't for a minute think that the price would come down just because of the no-copy-protection factor and cheaper medium. Look at audio CDs - they sell more than conventional LPs and are cheaper to produce, but they still cost twice the price. As long as the public are willing to pay high prices, they're not going to come down. Finally, you'll be pleased to hear that FSFA and Wing Commander will both be finding their way onto the Amiga - soon.

## FANCED BY TWO BOYS

Dear ACE, I've been a computer games player for many years, from the good old days of the Jupiter Ace to the awesome Amiga 1500 I own now. I'm also an avid car fan, and on the weekends there's nothing I like more than to bring my two interests together by playing driving games on the Amiga. I follow the race-game genre avidly and as such I have noticed that recently there have been a lot of driving games licensed to a particular car or bike. Lotus, Toyota, Suzuki and Ferrari have all been signed up to the post, and now I hear that there are plans to bring out a Jaguar game.

The reason I am willing to do this because there aren't really that many good cars left to license, so I wonder if any software companies might be interested in doing a game about mine. I own a 1981 Ford Capri 2.8 V6 five convertible with whitetail tyres, leather bucket seats, electric windows and multiple CD player with 140 watt stereo output. Obviously it's a pretty excellent motor, and it really goes some too.

I think that this car would be an excellent one to license. If any software houses would like to sign my car up, I would be more than happy to talk business. I'm sure there's lots of potential, and I would even design the game for them.

David Valliant

Exeter

Well, how about it, you software houses? Here's our dream come a bit good, and it's got to be a better bet than Team Tugs, hasn't it? If you're interested, give us a call at ACE and we'll put you in touch.

## HIS SIZE FRIGHTENS ME

Dear ACE, let me tell you about magazine coverdiscs. I buy just about every computer book going each month, and while ACE is undeniably one of the best in terms of editorial quality, it seems that you've been left back in the stone age as far as discs are concerned. CD Amiga, Xam, Amiga Format, Amiga Power, The One, ST User and many others have cover discs which greatly enhance the overall package and VFM factor. So my question to you is: why doesn't ACE drag itself into the 90s and do a coverdisc too?

I'm sure that it is a good idea financially, as these discs must greatly increase sales, particularly if there's something good on the disc, like a playable demo of a new game or even a complete old game. So come on ACE, get your act together and get a disc on the front and make your excellent magazine even better!

Alex Knorrholt

Langley

Bloomsbury

Though you're correct in a very general sense about cover disks improving a magazine's sales, it's not quite as simple as that. Notice that most of the disk magazines you mentioned are single format - in they only cover one machine. ACE covers a wide range of machines, both computers and consoles, which makes a coverdisc a bit of an unlikely prospect. Even if we managed to squeeze enough good ST, Amiga and PC stuff onto a bifurcated disk to make it worthwhile, we would immediately alienate all our console readers. Indeed, that's why Euro has recently stopped all its console coverage.

Would you pay an extra quid for a magazine with a disk that's so good to you? Lastly, a coverdisc doesn't necessarily enhance the overall package - some might go as far as to say that it's just a cynical ploy to make up for the low quality of the magazine itself. Still, we're always open to readers' comments, so why not let us know where you stand on this highly-controversial issue?

## HE WANTS TO, BUT I'M NOT READY

Dear ACE, I would like to know why it is that you can't buy computer games in supermarkets. Many other retail outlets, like Virgin, HSB, Deans, Ladbroke and Bookstallers all sell games for the various computers and consoles, but if you want to go looking for the latest releases in one of these so-called "super" markets like Sainsbury's Tesco or Safeway, you would have no luck at all! How can these great chains prosper to sell everything you need if they pay no attention to one of the fastest-growing entertainment mediums in the world today?

Often, when I am doing my weekly shopping at the local Kirk Lane, I may want to purchase the new Sidcap Brothers game on walk. But can it fit in, I have to get on a bus and go all the way up to the computer shop in the precinct. I'm sure it's had been a bit of time since or some month(s) I had been there. I would hate had no trouble. But computer games? Nah!

The way I see it, these short-sighted supermarket chains are only shooting themselves in the foot in the long run. With the likes of Toys and Records, it won't be long before everybody will be adding the latest hot cartridges to their weekly shopping lists. So come on you so-called convenience stores - let's see some conversions, eh?

Andrew Chubb

Leeds

Yorkshire

Ed... you.

# Knightmare



*"You are setting forth into another place, another time, another world," said  
Trogard, The Dungeon Master. "And what makes you think that you four mere  
mortals will succeed in the Quest, when so many others have failed?"*

*I understood, at that moment, that our mission was going to rely all  
our endurance, all our collective skill, and, most of all, a depth of courage, that I wasn't sure  
we possessed.*

For once it's a quest-winning game, not a quest, that's been taking  
for a computer game worthy of the name. The name is *Quest*.

Tom Crowther's amazing creation has something  
about the same game system that made *Castle Adventure* game of the  
year in 1980. *Knightmare* makes dungeons and dragons games seem  
like really something around a friendly, puzzle.

*Knightmare* will revolutionize computer adventure when you're

challenged to solve complex puzzles, logic problems and riddles that reward a rich  
and creative thinking experience.

Now you'll want you deep into the dungeons of *Quest*, to a castle and  
meeting with Lord Prael, and the ultimately far-into *Knightmare*.

Whether it's the meeting a terminal it is to you, you will need  
wisdom, strategy, tactics and, above all, courage.

But you're not those things, don't you? \*



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— [ BROADEN WORLD ] —



MINDSCAPE

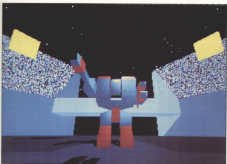
*Knightmare* is available on single CD-ROM and Double CD-ROM  
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With the use of motion-capture technology, players' right and left arms are tracked in real time, which allows them to swing their arms and other actions in a lifelike manner. "The results will be more expressive than anything we've done before, and that's what we're going to use to give us the edge," says Sims.

When they first announced the game, critics were in a tizzy. A few months later, however, the game was widely praised for its realistic combat. "I wish I could play this game every day," says a reviewer from GameSpot.

Electronic Arts' Sims 2 was the first game to use motion-capture technology. It was a huge success, and it was the first time a game had been made using motion-capture technology.

# CYBER FIGHT

Two giant robots, tall as houses, stand toe-to-toe and lunge at each end of a massive arena lined with stands, each packed to overflowing with thousands of spectators. Yet strangely the audience is quieter than a graveyard. They are waiting for the battle to begin. Inside the cockpit of each robot sits a pilot, one hand steadily gripping the control console, the other poised over their weapons systems. They too are waiting for the battle to begin.

The shrill blast of a Muzak robot around the stadium, followed by a roar from the crowd. Serious white face-plates and the robots slowly march towards the other. The face of the arena shimmering with the weight of each lumbering step. As the two draw together they pause briefly, as if taking stock of each other. Then, with a screech of motion, one robot a giant chainsaw and lunge, the other backs up with a missile and fire. Let battle commence...

The concept of giant humanoid robots is not a new one. It's been a staple ingredient of Japanese 'mecha' comics for over two years now, originating with the Gundam series and continuing today with the highly-popular Gundam. However, British readers may be more familiar with those from the 'old' (ie. excellent) PE, soap selling video Robot Joe. Whatever, you have to agree that the thought of being able to pilot one of two giant mecha sounds chaaaaaaangin' some grades of Mad as of such is some futuristic gladiatorial combat is a pretty way one.

**Clank! Crump! It's more violent than Friday night in a Glasgow pub! Electronic Arts' forthcoming Cyber Fight gives you - yes, YOU! - the chance to rip your friends limb from limb!**



Electronic Arts' Sims 2, but totally missed the point by treating their games as plain vanilla megacops and depicting the warzone as the arena. (Fortunately, Cyber Fight is the latest game from Michael 'Ravenous' Powell, looks to be an excellent straight for those who fancy a bit of all-out ruffin' robot action.

Cyber Fight's plot, which takes place in a street is more than likely to change, seems more than a few similarities to the plot of the aforementioned Robot Joe. However, instead of Joe's desert-based battleground, Cyber Fight's combat arena plans to be held in a real arena, with crowds of bloodthirsty spectators hoping for blood from the surrounding grandstands.

The aim of each round is literally to smash your opponent's head to pieces. It's not a game for the faint-hearted - anyone whose idea of a good time is a quiet night in with a take-away Chinese and a video of Peety Puma's hair-removal day. The champion can then use his cash winnings to buy weapon upgrades and assorted enhancements. The ultimate aim is to work your way up the league to become overall champion.



**Workshop**  
 Each robot in this arena, about 100 polygons in size, has the robot's entire set of polygons compressed into a "vertex buffer" (a record of all polygons) that can be generated both at runtime and stored as a more efficient "blob."



**Workshop**  
 Each of the arena polygons has its color and (sometimes) a normal vector stored in a vertex buffer blob.

**Workshop**  
 The arena floor has been split into a grid of 100x100 polygons, including some that are invisible when the arena is lit. The arena floor also has a "vertex buffer blob" that stores the color and normal vectors for all the polygons. (According to Michael)



**Workshop** Each robot's main mode of transport is on foot, but they are also fitted with limited dual jet packs which can be used to give them a short loop over obstacles or onto platforms. The double can be fitted with up to two weapons pose for each arm and these range from basic hand-to-hand grappling attachments, like chainsaws, glass clamps and clubs, to projectile weapons, like stunguns, cannons and missiles.

There are six basic arena "shapes", but each can be packed with any number of features making a near-infinite number of different combat arenas. These include such things as platforms (which the player can walk with a slight boost to jet-pack), walls (preventing the use of corners to hit the opponent) and re-arming stations (which play a role akin to the pits in a boxing game). Adds Michael:

"In some arenas there are pools of molten metal. You can grab an opponent with a clamp arm, drag him across the arena and throw him in!" But there are also some surprises in store for the cowboy player. "Some arenas have switches hidden in the floor," explains Michael. "These have various effects. Some buttons turn off the arena's artificial gravity, leaving the robots in flight in zero-G. Others turn off the stadium lighting - if you haven't fixed info and vision before the fight then you're left in the dark. The buttons aren't completely hidden - since you know what to look out for you can avoid them or use them to your advantage."

As each battle progresses, the robots gradually erode the other's shields. If the shield gets to low then damage is reflected on the robot's various facilities. For example, take too much damage to the arm and eventually it'll be blown off, leaving a spalling stump trailing smoke. Naturally, this makes the arm, and the weapons attached to it, useless.

Likewise, take too much damage to one leg, and it'll become useless, only leaving you capable of waddling around. Lose both legs and you'll be crippled. In such a case it's probably best to jet, though this makes you very vulnerable. The only sanctuary in your re-arming station, but your robot-mounted opponent will be doing his best to stomp you into the ground. And there can be few more frustration-inducing scenarios than being closed by a belligerent 40-foot robot.

It's the 40 that's the most immediately impressive aspect of Cyber Fight. It's rendered in 16-bit colour VGA, but it's in 40-bit colour MOGA that the game really shines. (Sadly! Michael has used a technique called General shading to simulate highlights on the metal and "reflex" the joints of two polygons. Michael describes it as "a way of making polygons appear to be made up of more polygons than they are actually are."

Perhaps, the shading routine takes a fixed length-scale in the arena (ie. the simplest fix is to take the only



**Workshop**  
 The illuminated edges of the floor. The red and green lines connect back to the main blob in the arena floor blob.

**Workshop**  
 Another view of the arena floor. The red and green lines connect back to the main blob in the arena floor blob. The red and green lines connect back to the main blob in the arena floor blob.



and calculate it's effect on the colour of a given polygon by its various edges. The routine then graduates the shading of the colour across the polygon accordingly. "There are better shading routines," comments Michael, "but they take much longer to process." As it is, General shaded polygons take approximately 14% longer to draw than "normal" polygons.

To maintain an acceptable running time, only the two robots have General shading applied to them.



On a 20MHz 486-based PC, with shading and full detail turned on, Michael estimates a typical update of around eight frames per second, increasing to around fourteen with no shading and minimum detail.

Continues Michael: "I'll definitely be using Gouraud shading again in future games. I also want to see more texture mapping. In Cyber Fight it's restrict-

ed to putting images the arena's video wall. Texture mapping makes polygons much more interesting to look at. You could do things like add all sorts of battle scoring to a robot. The trouble is it takes even longer to process than the Gouraud shading because the renderer has to assign every pixel of the texture map onto the polygons. For technical reasons the texture mapping will only work in MCGA."

"Which are? Come on, 486 renderers aren't fright-ened of a bit of fancy information!" "Well, in MCGA each pixel is represented by one full byte, but in VGA they are represented by four bits, so you have to do a lot of byte masking which takes up even more time." Ah, I see... I think.

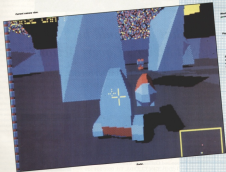
Given Cyber Fight's technical sophistication, what about version for other computers? "There are plans to convert it onto the Amiga, but nothing's been started yet. I doubt the Amiga version will have the Gouraud shading - the processor just hasn't got the speed to handle it. There might be one object shaded - I don't know yet. The objects will have to be simplified too - there are about two-hundred polygons used per robot on the PC game."

Michael is very aware that some people found his previous game *Powerdown* a little too tricky and frustrating to control. "Trouble is, when you're developing a 3D game it's hard to judge how difficult it is to play because you're always playing it yourself and you get used to the controls. With Cyber Fight we're giving it to people who've never played it before to get their feedback. Also, there will be several help options to make it easier to get into. Like games used to keep the robot stable."

Although the 3D engine is completely finished and

the basic test building gameplay will stay, many of the plot specifics and the smaller game design details are still in a state of flux. Although there are two basic robot "classes" in the game, Michael is still debating whether or not to let the player buy a new chassis, or force him stick with one and upgrade parts of it throughout the game. Also, Michael is unsure whether to allow players to pause remote weapons in the remaining stages.

However, with Cyber Fight's release date not likely before late Spring there's plenty of time for Michael to iron things like that out. It's certainly shaping up as a contender for one of year's best games and I, for one, can't wait to play it your number - 88 - See you in the arena.



...the arena...

...the arena...

...the arena...

...the arena...

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*"It's clear from this evidence..."*



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# ATAC

**A** person who has been following the FBI's top-notch coperastray DEA will be aware that winning the war against the drug traffickers is a far more complicated business than simply locating labs and the streets with money snipers and heavy eyes. Even the regular hauls of millions of dollars worth of cocaine and cannabis seem to be viewed as a mere irritant by the dealers running what is now a notoriously organized global business.

It is a glory fact that gives the limited resources available to the law-enforcement agencies, they will never be able to shut down the narcotic trade. At best they can simply reduce the volume of drugs in circulation.

Clearly a new approach is needed, for years, not entirely stupid people have pointed out that were drugs legalized, the illegal trade would collapse and the drug dealers would no longer need to maintain gas, schools, bribes in order to claim their trading sites. Whatever, it is indisputable that since trying to imprison a number of criminals equivalent to the population of a small country is rather tricky, attacking the traffickers' game-plan is a more effective way of beginning to win the war.

Given that it's unlikely that a sudden swing in Congress policy will see the drugs they're fought so hard to keep out of the country legalized, different attacks on the crooks' financial resources must be planned.

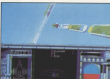
Microprose's new title, *ATAC* (Advanced Tactical Air Command), takes place in a thoroughly imaginable future. The drug problem in the US has multiplied and the various law-enforcement agencies are being more hindered with the traffickers than they are winning. By attacking the actual production sites of the drugs, more damage to the trade would be done than by just seizure of narcotics in transit.

A covert force is set up in Columbia (drug production capital of the world) and briefed with the mission to disrupt and destroy enough of the cocaine and heroin production industry to help the United States close up their backlog and hopefully to completely bankrupt the drug cartels.

**A year and a half ago, the powers that be at Microprose decided they wanted a flight game that wasn't just another 'F' number, and Argonaut were given the job of producing it. And now they're ready to show the results. ACE visits sunny Tetbury to investigate.**



As you maneuver around the terrain in ATAC, you also receive reports from the various elements of your mobile force. It is in these reports that you learn the whereabouts of the various elements of the enemy's forces.



Attacking the most complicated element of the drug trade is the cocaine laboratories. In order to destroy them, the force will be required.

A subtle departure from most Microprose games of late, *ATAC* combines both strategy and 3D flight elements. The player takes the role of the supreme commander of the ATAC, controlling all operations from a secret underground base in Columbia itself. He has at his disposal five F-22 jets and two helicopters. From within his base he can assign reports from reconnaissance flights and his spies positioned across the country, gradually building a picture of the way the drugs cartels work.

To begin with, the player has extremely limited information at his disposal. From the major towns where farms and factories, roads and railways lie, the *De-Snoo* knows if the farms are producing drugs or crops, and he doesn't know what goods are being transported in the trucks.

Since within the growth or harvesting of the valuable plant is illegal in Columbia it is perfectly



possible for honest farmers to be growing the drugs amongst their other crops. And as the operation is only underway thanks to the assistance of the Colombian government, it is vital that the player neither destroys innocent crops or kills civilians. Instead, the drugs themselves must be removed.

What distinguishes the game from most is that the player is free to decide how much of his game will comprise strategy and planning and how much will comprise actually flying the aircraft at his disposal. In theory, at least, the player controls the action from his base, at the beginning of each day once the intelligence information has been gathered. It's time to examine the map and lay down instructions for the Command's aircraft.

Unusually for a Microsoft flight game there are no set missions. It's entirely up to the player to decide how he wants to wage war on the striking drug barons. Only logical, after all, since the player is supposed to be running the entire operation and is responsible for its strategy.

If the player's intelligence reveals that a convoy of trucks is leaving from a farm and heading for a factory and the factory is a known drug refinery, it's likely that there will be some drugs amongst the cargo. Another reconnaissance mission is necessary to determine which vehicles are carrying the drugs before a strike mission can take place.

One of the "smarter" support systems means that the player can set a course and detailed instructions for each of his aircraft in turn, having previously armed them with an appropriate balance of hardware.

Once this side of the mission is taken care of, the action can begin. Players unhappy deriving their hands with the mechanics of actual flight can sit

back and watch the mission as it is carried out by a set of automated pilots. Each pilot is set to have the same elite skills and will perform his mission as heeled to the best of his ability.

## THE TEAM

In total, ten members of the Argonaut team are responsible for ARMS in its various incarnations. The record shows that the following "gossers" deserve recognition for their respective efforts.

- Sam Littlewood - PC Concepting
- Mike Beaton - PC Flight Dynamics
- Alexander Metcalfe - PC Artwork
- Tom Ashton - PC Artwork
- Mike Day - PC 3D Graphics
- Benny Emmott - PC 3D Shapes
- Adam Polanski - Amiga General Code
- Jonathan Wolf - Amiga General Code
- Peter Leachman - 3D Code
- Richard Olivas - Overall Project Management

There's no one who doesn't deserve credit for his or her share of the game's success. Argonaut has a lot to thank the entire team for their hard work and dedication to a truly top product.

For more on ARMS and other Argonaut titles, visit our website: [www.argonaut.com](http://www.argonaut.com)

Our intelligence agents have access to information covering Colombia and Mexico. We currently monitor the drug trade in all 33 states as a means of gathering data leading to our intelligence on the



Checking a train carriage on a rail off from the progress of the war effort can be essential to the player.



back and watch the mission as it is carried out by a set of automated pilots. Each pilot is set to have the same elite skills and will perform his mission as heeled to the best of his ability.

In any stage during the mission, however, the player can leap into and take control of any active aircraft, providing that it isn't before a main fleet, in particular, if a single train carriage needs to be destroyed and there is a risk of harm coming to innocent bystanders or crops, it's advisable to take control, let the computer controlled pilot have an un-hindered bombing run. Once the

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# MOONSTONE

## A HARD DAYS KNIGHT



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Moonstone contains some strong graphic images with small amounts of blood, although they are not intended for children's viewing. ESRB Rating: E (Everyone). Additional Content: Contains some alcohol and drug references. Requires 2MB of free hard disk space.

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**MINDSCAPE**

# WOLFCHILD



Wolf Child - An arcade adventure featuring super smooth 360° multi panallax scrolling. Played through five levels and featuring over three hundred screens, you must reactivate the secret research programme PROJECT WOLFCHILD to annihilate the evil forces of the CHIMERA organisation.

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ELLEN JONES SALES  
FROM LINDA JONES



ACE went down to find out why everyone is talking about Jason Perkins' chopper...

Official: This is the first time a game has been published in the UK since the end of the war. The publisher is the only one to have the right to publish in the UK. The publisher is the only one to have the right to publish in the UK.



# APOCALYPSE

Deep in the heart of dreary Watford, a hand-picked team of game design gurus are planning to inject some "oomph" back into the shoot-'em-up genre. And judging by what's on screen so far, they might just do it, too. ACE went down to find out why everyone is talking about Jason Perkins' chopper...

**W**hat would *ACE* Games say if he played computer games? Well, apart from his usual sidesteps at everything under the sun, he'd probably have a good old rant about how games these days are far too bloody 'pussy and softer than... than!'... oh, and do you know what? He'd be absolutely right. Though the ultra sophisticated simulations and strategy products turned out by the likes of Microprose and Electronic Arts are all worthwhile and commendable games, it's arguable that these more IQ-intensive affairs are becoming a bit too cosmopolitan, and that the art of the good old arcade game is fast becoming lost as a result. And that's a real shame, because who else these games a heck of a lot - where would we be today without Space Invaders, or Defender? Be honest, when was the last time you played a really rickety, shoot-'em-up? Well, never, been a while, hasn't it? Just what is the world coming to? How we thought we were?

There's one idea, at least, who's not about to be so fazed how much that a good old session of big

gun-thumping can still be. Veteran programmer Jason Perkins is on a one-man mission to ensure that the classic shoot-'em-up is put firmly back on the pedestal where it belongs. He, along with his cohorts at recently-formed development team Stronggroup, is currently toying away on a very little number by the name of Apocalypse, and the concept behind it is simple. No frills, no frills, just rock-hard killing and death with property damage to the power of ten and the player caught in the middle of it all.

Perkins is noilly-thirsted now boy when it comes to producing arcade games - over the years he's been responsible for some of the finest, including the first classic Thing on a Spring and Mighty on the Run. And his main reason for writing Apocalypse now are as down-to-earth as the game itself. "I basically got away from playing Choplifter," he explains. "The thing about the game is that it's generally simple graphics and bog-standard presentation, but it's just really playable. What we've tried to do with Apocalypse is capture the essence of that playabil-



The game's setting is the classic volcano that has been with us all since the late 1940s, when people were asked to watch the world end on the ground. The player can control a chopper that has the mission of saving the world from the end of the world.

ty that brings it into the '90s." Actually, you don't need Jason to tell you that his game is based on Choplifter - anybody who's seen Dan Godwin's ancient shoot-'em-up classic will instantly recognise the similarities. The basic idea is much the same - take to the controls of a state-of-the-art helicopter gunship and fly deep into enemy territory to snatch fleeing refugees in safety. But while



Artistic: Mike Winkler  
Apocalypse's distinctive graphics of dog-eared screens, heavily textured textures, and a color palette that's all about brown and tan. "We're going to have a game coming out in the genre, so we want to do it in a way that's different from the rest of the genre," says Winkler.

322 • Chopper offered little more than just that basic premise. Perhaps in presenting much bigger things of Apocalypse.

"Basically, we wanted to inspire upon the original Chopper in just about every way," he reveals. "The thing about the game was that there wasn't really much to do. The landscape was completely flat, you had a few buildings to crash into and some tanks shooting up at you. Occasionally you'd get a jet plane, which would just zoom on screens and crash into you, and that was that, really. For Apocalypse, though, we've tried to make everything as realistic as possible, with a wide variety of opponents, different levels, lots of objectives and the sort of presentation that people expect from a story of this product these days."

Apocalypse's dramatic tale of a hidden-weapon island somewhere in the Indian Ocean, where the people live under the iron boot of a fascist dictatorship. When huge deposits of Uranium are discovered deep underground, the resource-hungry US President sets about sending in for the purpose of building his own nuclear bomb. The population is, however, less than happy about this, and plays a game's opening.

Before you know it, there's a civil war raging between government forces and the now rebel army. Enter Uncle Sam, who's not overly cheerful about this aggression (or the prospect of the radio-station acquiring a nuclear weapon) and sends in its own troops and advisors to assist the rebels, but it all goes horribly wrong and the US force is quickly overrun by the fascist army. Now you've been called in, as the top crack elite helicopter pilot in the army, to fly in and rescue as many of the beleaguered rebel US forces as possible, before the jets wipe them out completely.

Flipped over five levels, Apocalypse has the player flying his chopper over a series of war-torn battle zones. As the helos fly on the ground, you've got to land in the middle of it all, pick up as many of the fleeing rebels as possible, and get them back to the US camp located nearby. Obviously the fascist forces are out to stop any rescue attempts, so the player finds himself up against attacks from shoulder-launched Stinger missiles, machine-gunning jets, enemy helicopters, tanks and even the ground troops themselves.

As machine-gun fire and missiles whiz past streak through the air at you, it becomes increasingly difficult to land and get the rebels to safety. And if they can't get to you, the enemy will be quite happy to take out your precious hostages. Helicopter gunships kill them by strafing the ground, while the gun-toting soldiers simply pick them off as they try to scramble aboard the chopper.

Of course, the player isn't entirely helpless, and can retaliate by means of a vicious cockpit-mounted cannon, as well as with droppable mines and an



## OPPORTUNITY DOKKS

Apocalypse's distinctive graphics are the work of veteran artist Paul "Dokk" Deckerly, who first cut his teeth on the Commodore 64 several years back and has since been providing quality visuals for games like Last Ninja II, Myth and this month's first Samurai. It's been primarily his job to give Apocalypse's military look feel - no easy task. "We got some books out about American military hardware and had a look through those," Dokk explains. "Probably the most useful thing we got was the design for the main helicopter. We found a picture of a new helicopter prototype called the LH-1 and copied that." As a result, Apocalypse players will get to fly the LH-1 even before the real thing goes into production. Co...



With a wide range of weapons and a variety of enemies, Apocalypse is a game that's not just about the action. It's also about the story. The game is set in the Indian Ocean, where a hidden-weapon island is discovered. The game is set in the Indian Ocean, where a hidden-weapon island is discovered. The game is set in the Indian Ocean, where a hidden-weapon island is discovered.

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awesome sniper Barrett. You might imagine that with all this going on, things could get pretty hectic - and you'd be right. With all its explosions, crashing, changing, banging and shooting, there's enough action in Apocalypse to keep General Norman's feet with an old pack on his head for a week.

Since the inception of the project in September last year, Polaris has been adamant that Apocalypse's more sophisticated approach and plethora of new







# SOCCER STARS



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MICKERSON SOCCER, WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER\*\*



At long last, a compilation of four of the best soccer games ever made for the Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC and Spectrum. This is the best value pack you can buy. It's a must for all soccer fans.



## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Quite a lot, actually. *Apocalypse* was originally to be called *Rebel*, with Perkins developing the game under that name right from the start - but things changed when Microsoft stepped in to sign it. "I don't think anybody was really that pleased with *Rebel* as a name," says Isaac. "When we had one of our first meetings with Microsoft, John Roloff, who's the head of development there, suggested *Apocalypse* - he's a really big *Apocalypse Now* fan, you see." Since Coppola's classic war odyssey was in fact another source of inspiration for the game, the name stuck and that was that. "I think the name's going to go down really well," says Isaac. "It seems to be a very popular word at the moment. Public Enemy's just released its *Apocalypse 97* album, and there was an episode of *Bottom* called *Apocalypse*, so it's really quite cool."



**20** **P**leased to have those aerial battles, so it's going to be doing another type of helicopter, a big game that fits in with it as well. Please don't worry because they're too fast but someone suggested a jetpack guy, and we might do that."

Because *Apocalypse* is such a simple game, it's easy to assume that the programming job has been just as easy. Not so, as Isaac doesn't mind telling you. Unlike *Chaplin*, *Apocalypse* needs to eight directions with illuminated background and foreground layers providing extra depth to the scenes. Putting everything together on *Strawgeez*'s custom-built editors has not been easy. "The biggest problem has been getting everything to run quickly when there are so many on-screen screens," says Isaac. "But I think we've done alright."

*Apocalypse* gets chosen for take-off on the Image Works label next Spring on Amiga and ST. And judging by how the game's looking so far, Isaac's desire to bring the shoot-'em-up back in style to the most outrageously over-the-top manner imaginable may not be so far-fetched after all. Hang on to your helmets...

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# "THE BEST RPG/ADVENTURE GAME OF THE YEAR," JUST GOT BETTER...!!"

200,000 years ago, the Ancient-ruled Regulators, and then destroyed themselves in a suicidal war, leaving only ruined sites and devastated planets. Can today the rules of the Ancient-ruled pasting, mysterious and

exciting artifacts are still unearthed at various ancient sites throughout the Cosmos? Can you, the player, survive the

ancient sites that mysteriously sprang up, vanishing and threatening to destroy an environment? Millions will praise if the ancient site isn't capped. Ancient sites spread across a star-system, here, there, and even ancient artifacts that may reactivate the destruction site.

So ultimately, you'll need to find the legendary Ancient leader who has been reportedly dead for 200,000 years!

Only you can discover if the legend of the Ancient one is true as you play Traveller for you've never played it before in Megatraveller 2: Quest for the Ancients.



For years, Traveller was the undisputed king of space force role playing. A game of unprecedented magnitude, there was no aspect of space-faring adventure that Traveller didn't handle, and handle exquisitely. Then along came Megatraveller, a complete redesign of the original Traveller that stands as one of the most remarkable gaming achievements of the last decade.

Exquisitely designed, Megatraveller was crafted as the premiere of space-faring role playing.



Now, the best RPG/Adventure game of the year just got better!!

The game begins at you and your party set out to stop the alien probing Ancient sites at Rhuland. There are 123 detailed worlds to explore with hundreds of cities and millions of square miles.

You can travel from planet to planet, absorb commercial statistics, or one of your characters may run free-trade ship. Explore hundreds of cities including cities, site terminals, starbase with task plans, gambling casinos, shops, taverns, trade and commerce centers, vehicle rental locations, character requirement centers, crafted and modified ships and legions (ships).

At each of the Ancient sites, you can discover artifacts and relics that can help the cities situated in Rhuland. By helping the situation, you will receive very significant rewards, which will help you in the passage, or even acquire your own ship so that you can continue your quest.

Throughout your adventure, you will be probed by agents of the secret organization.

As well as a main plot, there are dozens of sub-plots at the various worlds, and even doozy starbases, to keep you and your party busy.

You will be confronted with interesting adventures filled with mystery, danger and intrigue.

Megatraveller 2: Quest for the Ancients is a unique and innovative role-playing adventure that goes deep and broad beyond Megatraveller 1.



Home Computing

COMPUTER GAMES



## MEGATRAVELLER 2 QUEST FOR THE ANCIENTS

The game features the most advanced and comprehensive character generation system ever developed as well as the most realistic combat system for ground and space conflicts. For both the perspective equally anxious, showing your entire party from a perspective that realistically represents a large, modern city.

Megatraveller 2 features a much more graphic-intensive presentation than Megatraveller 1. An advanced trade and commerce system is implemented in Megatraveller 2. Refresh economic system is much more realistic and benefits from the substantial increase in worlds.

Megatraveller 2 uses the PXL system; you are the leader of the party and the others act as your hands. You can give orders, but acting intelligently based on the skills and the characteristics they possess, they may not follow your instructions if they believe that

different actions on their parts will ultimately help you in some effective way.

There are hundreds of NPCs to meet, converse and trade with during your adventure.

Overall, Megatraveller 2: Quest for the Ancients is an all new game with

existing advanced features. The sheer size and scope of the game with over 123 different worlds to explore will keep you playing time and time again. This together with the superb graphics and animated backgrounds and the revolutionary PXL role-playing system, make for the most exciting adventure yet seen on a Home Computer.



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You'll never live of this brutally addictive game!

**DOMARK**  
**TENGEN**

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It is a Playset Ages 6 and upwards.

It is a Playset Ages 6 and upwards.



Have you got what it takes to make it to No. 1?

**W**elcome to Software Boss! For more than a harmless bit of fun to enjoy after Christmas lunch, this is actually an accurate simulation of what it's really like to run a software firm. But don't be put off if that sounds a bit complicated - believe us, it's a bloody doddle!

The aim of the game is to get a Christmas Number One, thus ensuring the financial stability of your company and a nice holiday and perhaps a new car for yourself. But the path to success is anything but clear. Every stage of the development of your Game has to be handled correctly, or you could be looking at some bad reviews and a lukewarm public reception. You also have to examine the Day to Day cards to see what fate has in store.

So what are you waiting for? Read the rules, cut out the pieces, wrestle that bottle of Bailey's out of Auntie Mo's hand and get going!

#### Rules:

Each player needs a Christmas Game Board, Game Cards, Game Tokens, and 400 small white stones (like marbles) and a bottle of Bailey's (not the real stuff, but the stuff that looks like it).

The Game Board is divided into 12 squares. The starting position is 20 small white stones on the board. The stones are placed in each square as follows: 5 in the top square, 2 in the top right square, 3 in the top left square, 1 in the bottom square, 2 in the bottom right square, 1 in the bottom left square, 1 in the middle left square, 1 in the middle right square, 1 in the middle top square, 1 in the middle bottom square, 1 in the middle left square, 1 in the middle right square.

A Game Card is drawn each week. The Game Card is placed face down on the table with the Game Board. The Game Card is turned face up at the end of each week. The Game Card is read aloud to all players. The Game Card is then placed face down on the table with the Game Board.



Here is your Game Board and here are your Software Bosses! Cut the pieces out, and use them: two are white and one is green. (Photos not included if you don't wish to see the front of the face, we suggest you buy another copy of the book, although we wouldn't wish to push the point.)

#### THE DAY TO DAY TABLE

Spin the spinner twice and add the scores. Examine the table below to see what Lady Luck has in store for you over the next working day!

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 2  | One of your opponents has a power cut and loses all his accounts data! Move him back 10 spaces!   |
| 3  | One of your opponents hasn't paid his advertising bills. Move him back 4 spaces!  |
| 4  | One of your opponents has to endure a presentation from an Advertising Manager. He loses half a day's work. Move him back 4 spaces!                           |
| 5  | Wow! The paper TVS writes a nice story about you! Move forward 4 spaces!  |
| 6  | Special distributors like the sound of your new game. Move forward 4 spaces!  |
| 7  | Nothing unusual happens today.  |
| 8  | Another quiet day.  |
| 9  | You have to go to a client's friend. Go back 4 spaces!  |
| 10 | Spill rumours about your extra-curricular activities on the last Computer Arena Conference table out. Go back 4 spaces!                                       |
| 11 | Who hasn't looked an odd in AOL lately? The public forgets you exist. Go back 8 spaces!   |
| 12 | 40,000 copies of your last game get sent back because they won't load. Sorry you-night for choosing a cheap duplicate. You lose a fortune! Go back 10 spaces! |





IT... IT...  
IT'S ... ALIVE!



**Do not be alarmed.** CLICK has been sent to this planet to link computer games magazines into the '90s. CLICK is a mag on video. Scorching reviews on the latest new 16-bit games. Competitions that'll blow your techno minds. And, get this, *all* of your fave games featured in every issue. It's matters it's in CLICK, or should we say in **CLICK**. Go! It's about.



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# A320

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*...is on final approach.*

# previews.....

**H**o Ho Ho! And a hearty welcome to one and all to this very special Christmas bumper bundle of Previews. And ooh, isn't it exciting? The presents, the stuffing, the poncy Woolworths ads... you can just taste the Chrimble season in the air, if only people wouldn't keep dragging religion into it...

Now, to business. And although the games on offer this month are a bit late to find their way into Santa's sack, no doubt they'll be earning pride of place in the Easter Bunny's stocking, or whatever it is he keeps his eggs in. There's a juicy crop on show, including a few rather tasty exclusives, complete with never-before-seen screenshots and, ooh, lots of other great stuff besides. Am I good to you or what?

## BODYCOUNT *Strategic*

Though last month's *Snatch* TV featured some very excellent whole-sale *Snatchies*, leading development team Strategic (the team behind *Apocalypse - see page 38*) is promising to blow us away in the victory stakes with a tasty little number by the name of *Bodycount*. Like *Snatch*, *Bodycount* is based around a fantastic TV game show, where contestants vie to stay alive by killing respawning elite in the vicinity.

There's a lot more to it than, however, as the players are given a variety of military-style missions to complete, all set within a gorgeous multi-way scrolling game arena known as the *Bodyzone*. Within the zone-like *Bodyzone*, contestants must seek out objectives while avoiding all manner of enemy patrols and alarm systems that constantly protect the zone.

There's an awesome array of weaponry available, including pistols, rifles, automatic weapons, grenades, bombs and rocket launchers. EVERYTHING within the *Bodyzone* is fair game: entire buildings can be blown up, body-

parts can be set up for enemy traps to snaffle into - there's no limit to the range of dirty tricks available. Though *Bodycount* is still in the early stages of development, the word is that a publisher is already on the brink of snapping it up, so with a bit of luck we should see something towards mid-to-late next year.



## KGB: King's Games

After the excellent *Floor 13*, Virgin Games is delving even further into the virtually world of political intrigue and corruption with *KGB*. Based around the USSR's infamous secret intelligence agency, it puts the player in the shoes of a young agent who must advance himself through the ranks of the ominous organisation. It's played like a graphic adventure (quit and click is a breeze), with strategic elements built in. Character interaction plays an important part as the player visits his staff both around the corridors of the KGB's building and in the surrounding city.

And though the KGB isn't exactly famed for its above-board techniques, because the game's based on a real agency as opposed to the fictional one in *Floor 13*, it's unlikely there will be any of those unnecessary writer's aspersions. As the screenshots show, that VGA card has been pushed to provide some very tasty and 'clean' visuals, and the whole thing is 100% controlled for ease of use. All would be *Stratagems* can get cracking on the PC in the new year, with a 3D version following later. Oh?



## INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS

US Gold/Cosmopolitan

Though we may have seen the last of the (stupid) archaeologist at the site of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, Lucasfilm Games has ensured that his whipcracking, autopsy-grabbing adventures are far from over. The same team that produced last year's excellent last *Crossed* adaptation have had stronger job than most with this, the fourth chronicle of Doctor Indiana Jones' adventures - because it's a totally original product, there's focus on film material to work from and so the whole story has been scripted from scratch.

The result, however, is every bit as writer-packed as any of Indy's big screen escapades, with the main in the hat searching for the (lost) modern continent of Atlantis - with a very hot to toe and all kinds of wailing bad guys waiting



Garry Whitta's

# previews...

**43P** In the wings, if you will, Lucarulli's ultra-classy 32.768M™ system has been improved yet again, now boasting even more sophisticated character interaction, and the VGA graphics are right meant to say the least. The PC version is due out early next year, with AT and Amiga following a few months after.

## POPULOUS *Building*

It has to be the software success story of the century. From its humble 65.00 origins, Building's classic strategy epic (the sequel to which is reviewed on page 54) has gone on to be converted to just about every computer and console format conceivable—the Super Famicom version alone has sold over 400,000 copies! Handhelds are the next logical step, and though no official deal has yet been signed, its leading candidate will surely, judging the Building as an indicator that they've already put a fair amount of thought into what such an incarnation would be like—what you're seeing here are their mock-up graphical renderings of the proposed GameBoy version.



Two very different display modes are being mooted at the moment. On the right is the traditional 3D perspective, complete with map and icons—which is feared may be a little too taxing for the little machine's graphical capabilities. As an alternative, Building has come up with this 2D bird's-eye view on the left which, while more functional, is less faithful to the original game. It's still undecided what the final game will look like, but hey, who knows, you may end up getting a choice of either viewpoint! However is say there's sure potential for two-player link-up games, too. Don't expect to see anything concrete for quite a while, but you can rest assured we'll keep you posted in the meantime.

## JOHN MADDEN'S FOOTBALL

*Electronic Arts*

Before EA Hockey came along, John Madden's Football (also) a very long spell of being the best sports game on the Megadrive, took it apparently a little a step quarter back in the States, and had no qualms about leading his case to this, because it wiped the floor with every other football game going at the time. Now it's on its way to the Amiga, and though it's likely to come up against much stiffer competition on this format (mainly in the guise of the excellent TV Sports), Football, its sophisticated playcalling combined with super-realistic control of players on the gridiron and lots of other excellent stuff besides means that this could well topple Circusmaster's classic.

The only stumbling block in the conversion process itself—this is the first time an original Megadrive game has been adapted for computer, or, if it's truth and go to say the least. All the lights are green so far, however, and John Madden is down in the early part of the new year.



## FIRE AND ICE *Image Works*

Yes, Microsoft has acquired the official Fennell and Dean license of Anarchy, that's not quite true, and any similarities between the two books (or rather the Chapman TV special and Andrew Douglas's up-and-coming platform game are purely coincidental. Fire and Ice represents a welcome return to platform for Anarchy, who hasn't visited the genre since the Oily classic Grubby's Day Out in 1984. Once again, cute is the key word with the player taking control of a big-wide-eyed wuff who must protect some wuff pups from a band of horrible fire demons who dream to melt the entire frozen kingdom. And

Fortunately Mr. Wuff, who was born to the frozen wastelands, can use ice as a weapon against his foe and as a tool of clarity to help navigate the land maze. It's certainly very pretty, though how it stacks up to today's competitive platform master remains to be seen. But with Andrew's understanding credentials (Rainbow Islands and Pinobird) go among them, chances are the end product will be something a bit special. Ironically, you'll have to wait until the Spring, by which time any up-waiter will have long since melted away, to find out.



## SPECIAL FORCES *Microgen*

Yet more military fun from Microgen—although this time the player doesn't have the advantage of being situated in two hundred tons of armor plate and having back-working missiles attached to the back of a button. Special Forces is an "arcade simulation" in the style of France's aging favorite Air Force Ranger, based around the exploits of an elite army infantry unit with orders to stamp out bad guys wherever they may be found.

The player takes command of the fast-raw team, leading them through 25 missions set around the world.

Targets include drug barons, terrorist factions and illegal military bases. In each mission, the team is dropped in by helicopter, and there must struggle through all kinds of adverse terrain (including water and desert conditions), avoiding enemy patrols and traps to reach its objective. Each scenario has its own.

Unlike the earlier Air Force Ranger, which featured only a single character, Special Forces has more strategic scope, allowing the player to split his team into smaller independent groups and put together intricately planned assaults. In true Microgen style, each team member progresses as the game goes on, accumulating points and promotions, and the missions are linked with the team's performance in one relating directly to the next. Special Forces is out in the New Year, so start answering your foe with aerial dropping.



Now available on Amiga as well as available for ST

# S P O R T S B O X I N G



## Do you want to box in the Fourth Dimension?

Mindscape and award-winning developer DSI bring you the best of games in your home computer with the 4D Sports series. Now the 4th Dimension is available and the action is amazingly real. Modelled and animated on real human movement, 4D Sports Boxing is the most accurate sports simulation ever written. 4D Sports Boxing lets you create and save a copy of your best of your own boxing.

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is with a range of 100,000, the *Scott's* 100,000 is the highest. It's also interesting that the scores increase as the game progresses.

#### HOW THEY'RE MADE... WITH A VIEW TO THE FUTURE

Recent history suggests that the future of board games is bright. Super Space Invaders' launch has paved the way for a new breed of board game, one that has taken the world by storm. It's a genre that has the potential to revolutionise the board game industry.

#### Level after level... increasingly with increasingly more and better features

Amazing multi-player online play

Range and of new game mechanics

Recent hidden levels

But only the best will survive

It's the future with a view!

It's the future with a view!

It's the future with a view!

It's the future with a view!

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It's the future with a view!

It's the future with a view!

It's the future with a view!

It's the future with a view!

It's the future with a view!

It's the future with a view!

It's the future with a view!

# SUPER SPACERS



twiro

DOMARK

**ARCADE BLAST****EVRY (Nintendo)**

The follow-up to *Ultimate* succeeds through a combination of frenetic speed, polished presentation and short, unadorned action. Time and time of it. The frequency and weight on screen is of a level that far exceeds anything offered before. A *100* coin-up with no cost!

**ARCADE ADVENTURE****DOOM (Shareware)**

While it may be argued that it's not as intricately sophisticated as the likes of *Wolfenstein 3D* or *Prince of Persia*, the *Doom* franchise platform opens doors into enough full-on 3D arcade action to make it the outright winner in this category. Cheap and dirty.

**ROLE PLAYING GAMES****EYE OF THE BEHOLDER (US Gold/SSI)**

By the mighty sword of King! SSI's latest Experimental Design game takes the best bits of *Dungeon Master*, adds a few more to its own, mixes well, and the result is the best: yet for gamers into the whole fantasy genre. *WB SSI* rule the RPG land forever!

**SPORTS ARCADE****KICK OFF 2 (Amiga)**

What can we say? It's pretty pointless trying to explain to the initiated what makes *Kick Off* a so-loved playable, but the primary reasons are versatile, intuitive ball control mode and remarkable speed which combine to make it as exciting as the real game!

**STRATEGY****CIVILIZATION (Microprose)**

Bill Meier's *National Spaces* is depicted as the strategy benchmark by - would you believe it - another game by the titled! This awesome strategy epic has the player leading a race of people through technological and cultural expansion as the civilization develops through the ages. Microprose staff, and a work of undisturbed genius.

**ADVENTURE****THE SECRET OF MONKEY ISLAND (US Gold/Hasbro/SSI)**

Partly due to the new revised version of the SCUMM adventure engine and partly due to the excellent, and very funny script, this is the most engaging and entertaining adventure game for years. But will *Monkey Island* take its crown?

**ACE BENCHMARKS**

The games listed here are the very best of their particular genre. The benefits of your being fully acquainted with our Benchmarks are twofold.

The Benchmarks provide a solid reference point when

it comes to games buying time. By glancing at our description of the benchmark, you'll be able to decide if particular differences in the new game's design would make the new title more or less appealing for you.

Also, no software collection is complete unless it contains all the games listed here. If you're missing any of these titles, go and remedy the situation immediately.

**RACING SIMULATION****FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX (Microprose)**

A new benchmark for perfect. It's almost impossible to find any fault in this awesome game from *Soft Competition*. Paired with helpful pointers for novices and lots of detail for experienced ones, it will keep you sitting for years.

**READY TO GO****DO+ (Ryalton 3)**

An updated and enhanced version of the original System 3 classic, *Archer Maclean's DO+* is still undaunted in its field after three years. Its most innovative spin is the addition of a third, computer controlled fighter. Incredible speed and outgames.

**RACING GAME****MONTE CARO RACER (Microstyle)**

Should the *Archer* genre pry open plotting gears and create speed thrills into a novel formula. Drive around circuitous courses, manhandling each leg your opponent into oblivion. Grabbing medals and a wind-till add novelty value to this class title.

**SPORTS SIMULATION****JIMMY WHITE'S BILLIARDS SPOOKER (Virgin)**

*Archer Maclean* does it again, and most go down as the history books as having produced the first ever realistic snooker game. *Tronoxides* (JE) combine with excellent play and more options than ever before possible. An extremely good game.

**SIMULATION****CHUCK YEGER'S AIR COMBAT (Electronic Arts)**

The third game to be released by the heroic-leading General takes place in a far more enjoyable combat arena. You get to fly every plane you've ever dreamt of and you get to fight every plane you ever thought of too. And all in super realistic/polyspace graphical.

**ACTION STRATEGY****MIDA IN MADRA (Amiga Works)**

Scalable Software's first attempt at strategy is a magnificently successful one. At first glance, it may seem similar to *Populous*, but further inspection reveals it to be a genuinely original strategy epic. Not will *Populous 2*, the next month, and Mega's best edge.

**PUZZLE GAME****TETRIX (Nintendo)**

These are more-official versions of this classic than can be counted on the legs of a millipede. But it's *Nintendo's* own *Clayton* version that is undoubtedly the best. Use up blocks in frenetic black & white action. May sound dull but is actually fantastic.

**PLATFORM****SUPER MARIO WORLD (Nintendo)**

The sooner you release the *Fantoms* one here the better, as that will give more chance to experience the stunning fourth installment in the saga. *Shy* perfection from start to end of its many-time level by the way, have you seen that *advent* with *Mario* reading the news? It's good isn't it? He's better than that *Sage* girl anyway.



# A D V A N T A G E T E N N I S



Monday, 3rd of November 1991 THE NEWSPAPER OF CHAMPION GAMES. ★ 1st year N# 00000

## SIMPLY UNBEATABLE!

Another crushing victory for ADVANTAGE TENNIS over its rivals. Its indisputable technical superiority was proved last season on all surfaces. Like us, Tennis World is wondering if this year, there will be a player who is well trained enough to succeed in taking ADVANTAGE TENNIS' title and becoming Number 1.



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Five! You have not given up. Your technical and mental qualities have made you Number 1 in the world ranking. Every player deserves a medal. So if you're among the first 200 to send us a screenshot after representing the first page of your press book, proving that you have defeated ADVANTAGE TENNIS, you will get the badge ADVANTAGE TENNIS, PLAYER NUMBER 1.

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- 1 or 2 simultaneous players.
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# SCREENTEST



## W

elcome! Welcome one and all to a thoroughly awesome reading experience. You are about to enter the ACE Screenshot section, the most detailed and trustworthy reviewing system in the universe!

Every word of the review is intended to help you decide whether the game is for you or not. The body text is combined with a plethora of handy icons to offer at-a-glance information.

Each game is compared and contrasted to another title as an easy frame of reference. Most commonly, it will be compared to the best its particular genre.

The **Thumbs up and Down** box details particular elements which may or may not appeal - the toughness of the bad guys, number of levels, long-term appeal etc.

The **ACE Rating** - a score out of 1,000 - is the most instant gauge of the quality of the game.

An **ACE Trailblazer** award goes to games scoring over 900. These are recommended without hesitation. They are "must buys".

Titles which excel in a particular area also stand the chance of being awarded a **Sound, Graphics or Idea award** (for innovation).

There's even beginners' **hints** to get you through the early stages should you buy the game that month and can't wait for our detailed tips the following issue.

Finally, the **PC cover** details our feelings as to the longevity of the game.



Game categories and details.

## 900 AWARDS





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# ANOTHER WORLD

**Y**

ou've played Norse warriors and rebel space pilots. You've played swashbuckling pirates and famous military commanders. And now, thanks to Delphine, you get to play a spindly copper-topped buffin called Lester. Terrific. Mind you, while the prospect of a billion screaming Mutis-

plifles busting down the doors of software stores across the nation in order to adapt the presence of Lester to reality, the Everyman approach at least offers some novelty. Playing superheroes and movie stars has now become so normal, assuming the role

of a regular human helps the player feel even more at sea in his new environment. A normal guy in a crazy situation and all that.

Watching the admittedly-dramatic opening sequence, the player learns how Lester finds himself in the mysterious new environment of the title. Lester is a brilliant nuclear scientist and a bit of a Drudge

—his particularly critical point during this particle-modelling, lightning strikes Lester's laboratory, surges back through the complex electronic equipment and into the very console where our copper-topped scientist works. In a blinding flash of light Lester is whisked away to a new mysterious land. Armed with only his Gallic slings and a girl's-blouse academic background, Lester must explore his new environment and discover a way to get back home.

The deal with Another World is that Delphine have taken a similar graphics system used to such great effect in their previous release *Prince of Persia* and have stripped away the movie-driven adventure replacing it with a more intense, joystick-controlled interface. And on a number of counts it's a big success. But I have my reservations.

In what can only be described as a very loose sense, Delphine have endeavored to conjure up an interactive and believable movie using the world's least atmospheric graphics tool: the polygon. The result is that Another World's graphic style is distinctly, well, French. Whatever you may think of the end result, it's at least a completely new approach for an arcade adventure, which can't be all bad. A big plus for this



Here is a screenshot from the game. Lester has just landed in this world of new adventure. He's been whisked away to a mysterious, uncharted realm of danger. (Another World) © Delphine

However in the age stakes if his bookish appearance (complete with T-shirt, jeans and sneakers) is anything to go by. Working late on his latest mind-boggling experiment, Lester plans to perform a dangerous but potentially revolutionary experiment of the particle physics variety.



Despite the fact that *Another World* is, in an instant, quite an original game, there are plenty of points of comparison. The most immediate is

*Prince of Persia* from Brookhurst (through Domark), since the central character animates in a similar fashion and the thrill of the game is supposed to surround the player's belief that they are controlling a real person. For wins all right on this count, having both spikier and more attractive animation, but

*Another World* has a host of extras which are noticeably absent from Brookhurst's game. In particular, the overall "feel" is of a more believable, albeit peculiar game world. *Another World* also boasts more variety through its levels, some requiring mapping and planning, others making demands on the player's arcade skills. For an all-round new experience, *Another World* wins, but no-one has yet surpassed the graphic excellence of the *Persia*.



system is that polygon animations can be calculated on the fly, doing away with the need for thousands of pre-stored animation frames. This basically means that the design team have had more room to develop the story and atmosphere of the product with extra cut away scenes, small effects, etc. for the "Play the Film" party. There's no question, however, that the seriously stylized nature of the graphics will be an instant turn-off for some players. It's a shame, because despite their initially inhuman appearance, they really capture the feel of both a strange world and its inhabitants surprisingly effectively.

Since the player is equipped with a pretty basic model Lester to begin with - no-flair rifle, no grenades, no weapon equipment - he's given the chance to get to grips with the "usual" control method. Instant control basically means that Lester will not necessarily perform the same action every time the player moves the joystick in a particular way. Depending on his environment, Lester may be able to do things differently.

If a vine hangs overhead, Lester will be able to jump and catch it. If there's an object on his feet, he'll bend down to pick it up.

It would have been far easier for the programmers to have Lester performing a basic jump uni-

function every time the joystick went Up in the same Object branch every time the player bent down, but they didn't. Instead, an individual animation sequence is triggered for each special situation. The downside of the smart-control setup is that occasionally the player will be presented with a problem and he'll face a nagging doubt that he should cycle through all the normal controls simply to see if one has a new effect in the particular puzzle location.

How long one second. Can any graphics? Plenty of animations? Some double-overs the puzzles and controls? This all sounds a lot. Design's Lyle does it well but one, one-prior passage to zero. The player has controlled control over Lester, which simply expands to offer some new options in certain circumstances. *Another World* is also distinct from the much-mimicked level-based setting in its offering of no-choice death situations. Even in the most perilous parts of the story, there will be a warning of impending doom. Paying careful attention to these hints and using a bit of common-sense player's jump-off into holes you can't see, don't stand around like a big idiot in hostile areas) will keep unexpected deaths to a minimum.

For a game with no guiding text and such a wide brief for the player to get back home, somehow - *Another World* does a job of guiding the player through its numerous stages, largely by keeping his container in a small number of locations.

Once he strays in his new world, the player finds himself in a state of five screens, each representing a different part of a mysterious alien planet. Let

**P**laying super-heroes has now become so normal, astounding the role of a regular human helps the player feel even more at sea in his new environment.

The screens on the right are populated by deadly black squid-like things which slow Lester down until he's locked, then away. Once Lester gets to the far right of the screen, however, his progress is blocked by an enormous and quite genuinely alarming monster. Lester only has a couple of seconds to fire the big monster, removing any question of him having to perform an elaborate self-defence move. Instead Lester must run and run back through the screen jumping nimbly a zapper if he fails to dispatch all the black blobs on the way with the monster thundering after him.

On reaching the final screen, there's simply nothing left for Lester except to leap and hope. Of course, this is exactly what he's supposed to do and retreating back off the vine will lead him one screen to the right. Two feet, he must run full for he's to avoid the monster who's still chasing him. In *Another World* back across the screen the monster gains ground again until he's right on top of Lester and the player realises that he isn't going to escape. It's only on the final screen that a mysteriously checked figure

THE HISTORY OF THE GAME (left) parallels to *Another World*. The explanation follows from the upper screen to the ending of the game (right), and the computer store version picture is the ending of the game in a very short sequence. (Illustration)

# ANOTHER WORLD



While exploring his new world, Lester is ambushed by a huge, glowing monster!



Run away! The Beast is going on your back! Will he make it to the screen flick point in time?

## AN UNLIKELY HERO

For a really looking gh, our scientist hero actually has some balls, and he's a fairly tough cookie too, being able to withstand all sorts of scrapes.

Here, at the start of level 3, Lester encounters his first life-threatening problem. While strolling across the apparently barren alien plane, Lester notices a strange, shapeless, red, shape following him in the mid distance. It isn't long before the beast catches up with Lester and the player must think fast if he's going to survive.

Exercise the headbasher of this particular problem and you'll have a pretty good idea how the puzzle and action in the game work as a whole.

Another World's visual style is reminiscent of the more interesting French comics, with Lester hearing around through the wind and wonderful alien landscapes. In particular, the art piece makes for especially interesting viewing.



All fingers acting through holding his joints left as far as it would go, Lester is surrounded by the monster until he reaches the left edge of the level, where the ground runs out! The only solution is to jump onto the hanging wire!



Dropping down the wire by releasing fire, the player must hit the ground running!



Saved from the clutches of the Beast by a mysterious ally? But who is that? And is he entirely on Lester's side?



Yamamoto looks through his visor. Maybe the crack that will help Carter escape?



...or maybe not.

Disorientation! Thrown back by a swirling blur of energy, Carter tries to raise his visor manually. As his vision clears, he wonders if his adventureship days are at an end...



Me. As it happens, they're not. As the still-glowing excavation waters off and Carter's visor gradually returns, he finds himself suspended in mid-air in a steel cage with only an enormous bald alien for company! How on earth is our scientist here going to escape this time?







# EPIC

Long Time Ago, in a Galaxy Far, Far Away...

**A** Their homeworld under threat from an unstable sun, a ragtag fleet of hundreds of ships flees the imminent supernova. The only path of escape lies through the heart of the hostile Rozan Empire, where diplomatic attempts to negotiate a peaceful passage have been arrogantly rebuffed.

Having no other choice, the frustrated fleet, offered meager protection by the Star Carriers RedStones and BlueAces and a handful of Star Fighters, enters the hostile zone bordering the Rozan Empire and prepares for war - a war it did not want. But although severely outnumbered, the fleet has a Top Secret prototype star-man Star Fighter that just may save the normal star from total extinction.

And so begins Epic, a sprawling space quest across a thousand light years (it says here). Epic is one of those games - much like EA's *Star Trek*, that has been promised so much and for so long that you half think that it's already been released. Digital Image Design, who also produced last month's excellent *Star Wars* 1, and its games is obviously the London Transport and its buses - you wait for ages then two come along at once. But after about two years' development, can Epic possibly live up to the hype?

To be honest, it doesn't - but it has a bloody good try. At heart, Epic is simply a glorified 3D space shoot-'em-up, but there that's like saying Super Mario World is glorified Mario clones. The game is split into ten land- or space-based missions, each requiring

that the player complete a certain task or destroy a certain number of enemy ships or installations to succeed. Depending on the player's performance, the game plot changes and changes accordingly.

Epic is aimed fair and square at the player who's more interested in shooting alien rudies than talking to them. Each mission is provided by a mission-attraction tool screen to bring the player on the job ahead. The player may have a time limit to complete the mission in, and in some cases taking too long can have very serious consequences.

In contrast with many other "time" (Core's *Thunderhawk*, for example), branching and loading are handled by the computer - none of that "loading ship and docking bay routine" nonsense we've become so fed up of. Epic handles these sequences better than most, depicting them in a series of end-station-viewed (that is variety of "diagonal" camera angles, complete with some good digitized speech for extra atmosphere). However, good as they are, land/air/boards cutscenes, but by hitting ESCAPE they can be skipped.

Coming out of the launch sequence, the view switches to inside the cockpit of the Epic craft, the there's





revolutionary and Top Secret, two-man fighter. Control is largely restricted to the mouse, with the buttons providing a burst of velocity or a burst of fire from the currently-selected weapon. The keyboard is restricted to cycling through the various in-board weapons systems. The player starts with a pretty healthy arsenal of weapons that have about the same effect on the big ships as flicking pebbles at them.

As during the course of the game the fleet elements develop new and better lasers and missiles. By the time the last mission is reached the player is able to choose between fourteen options.

While the control system is not quite as elegant as *Thunderhead's* all-on-the-mouse system, it's still very good. In addition to the ship controls there are also keys to cycle through the cockpit views and a plethora of "out-of-cockpit" views, complete with room layout facilities. For those with a fair of mice, there are also options to use the keyboard (and/or joystick) for all the flight controls.

Combat takes place either in space or above a planet's surface. Since the Epic craft is fitted with anti-gravity repulsors, it handles pretty much identically in either environment. Planside, if the mouse is left the ship will simply float rather than plummet

nose first into the ground. And while this is hardly realistic, the fact that the player can length about aerodynamics and get on with the high death rate tapping makes the game very enjoyable from a pick up and play point of view.

Space battles, if that is to be said, are pretty special. Remember that big space war at the end on *Star Wars* of '81, where the Millennium Falcon flies into more often were after waves of TIE fighters? There are times in Epic when the player gets into some very similar hair-raising escapes, with clouds of T-1000 ships pouring in, then pouring off to give chase.

If the battles around the big ships are excellent too, but due to the low detail level on the ships (obviously necessary to keep the game speed up) it can be difficult getting a sense of scale. The other the craters look so small as the fighters, and it's only their behaviour that differentiates them. Get close, though, and the differences get very obvious. Particularly nice is the way the player can zoom between the towers and onto the Star Carriers.

With the huge number of ships zipping about, things can get very chaotic and, at first anyway, very confusing. Fortunately DED have addressed this



Epic is in many ways a cut-down

Wing Commander, and shares many of the Origin game's strengths and weaknesses. For a start, Epic's attempts at being an

interactive movie are weak to say the least. Epic's plot is pretty much linear, with little chance for serious deviation from the main thread. Wing Commander, admittedly, is a little more successful in this respect, allowing a slightly greater degree of plot variance (and the 'plot' screens are more attractively presented to boot).

In essence Epic, like Wing Commander, is really nothing more than a string of well-presented, high-quality 3D shoot-'em-ups. But where Epic scores strongly over Wing Commander is that it runs quite happily (and certainly more than fast enough) on a standard home PC or Amiga (as opposed to a high-end PC, hooray! Power to the people!)

Epic is also more impressive in terms of scale. There's one moment, when the player flies into the thick of one of the really big space battles, that are exhilaratingly reminiscent of the classic GI movies. Entering a battle and seeing swarms of fighters swirling about the bulk cruisers, distant explosions and so on, the player gets a genuine thrill and a sensation that he really is taking part in something 'big'.



**A** smart, Epic is simply a glorified

3D shoot-'em-up.

but then that's like saying Super Mario

World is a glorified

Block Maze.





Right at all seems to be easy on the face. The scanning station isn't nearly as difficult to spot as it is in the sky and small.

However, there is a problem. It's generated by a frequency that's close to the one that the game's scanning it and being that close.



Other major developments are covered by news. From the state and you about that then.



Gameplay during the player's first mission has another interesting element. Because flying through the station's orbit, there's a way to see off the human threat. Because that's not the case, the player's mission that the ship can be destroyed by destroying the unpowered generator.



By flying with the enemy can't be seen, they're due to the number of objects flying about. In the end, the player, only looking off to see with a light if it's close to the ship. Also, when you've added a target, any other unit's status is changed. Just being someone's ally will give a glowing color to the enemy target.

## ATTACK ON AMRAGAN IX!

As the fleet starts to penetrate the edge of the Resonance Empire, the player is sent on his first planet-based mission. The fleet's scouts have detected a Resonance scanning station on the approaching planet of Amragan IX. Given the huge size of the fleet, there's no way that it can slip past unseen - and with the Resonance armada only a few light years ago, detection could be disastrous.

However, luck is on the fleet's side. The planet is in the process of eclipse, leaving it incapable of making contact with Resonance central command for a short while. The player's task is to fly down to the planet and destroy the station before the end of the eclipse. Failure could mean more than death - it could spell the end of the whole race.

Now is the whole mission broken down step-by-step (entering orbit and progressing clockwise), to illustrate how a typical mission progresses. First and last - it could cost your life.

**A**lthough Epic is fundamentally an out-and-out blaster, there are quite a few twists on the basic shoot-'em-up gameplay with enough surprises to keep the player on his toes. It's far more than an alien turkey shoot.



Warning issued by the flight simulator. However, the plane finds the generator at last, flying low around the planet. It's a patch of sky for the pilot.



Warning issued as generally the first warning issue for increasing enemy building. Once you see the "fog" and all the clouds in the simulation, being the trouble in the simulation, being the game. When the atmospheric space weapon starts a weather out, it's a way of warning you that you're in trouble, being your best response.



When the weather starts, the first the generator activates is a series of rain and clouds, being just a warning of the weather. The weather is the first warning of the weather. The weather is the first warning of the weather.

When the weather starts, the first the generator activates is a series of rain and clouds, being just a warning of the weather. The weather is the first warning of the weather. The weather is the first warning of the weather.



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the problem is several ways. For a start, the battles generally take place in a flat plane, with little vertical dimension. Thus, once the player finds where the action's taking place it's easy to stay with it. In addition, if the player is steering from the battlefield a waiting wave sounds and a heading appears on the HUD (plus heading can also be called up by hitting HOLD). To prevent players blinding their own side, a large cross appears on the HUD if the player tries to look on to a friendly ship. However, it's just a pity - you can still be tipped if you're feeling particularly breathless (though showing friendly craft only results in the player's score being reduced slightly).

The short scale of the battles acts both for and against the game. Some of the best mistakes in the game occurred when the player destroyed a large number of enemy ships to win, and while it doesn't exactly get losing players always too of enemy attention it can keep you on your toes, allowing ship after ship after ship you get a bit repetitive.

Talking of friendly ships, it's a shame you can't include enemy ones of the kind I fancy with the fleet's (though enemy ones of the kind I fancy with the fleet's) other pilots. You know the sort of thing: "Look at the size of her thing!" "Cut the chatter, Red Two!"



When you start you can choose between the two types of ships. The player's ship is the larger one, and the enemy's is the smaller one. The player's ship is the larger one, and the enemy's is the smaller one. The player's ship is the larger one, and the enemy's is the smaller one.

"Yes sir!" It's an unknown enemy here, Captain! etc., etc. You often feel like you're fighting a one-man battle, and the occasional message flutters up on the cockpit VDU congratulating you on a good shot doesn't do anything to relieve that.

For my money, the plastic-like battles are more interesting than the space ones, largely because they're generally based around completing a task rather than just eliminating a certain number of the enemy. And in a lot of ways the graphics on the ground are even more impressive than those in space. There are some superb 'set pieces', such as

## A no-nonsense Master. Epic is an excellent game

That score that lives up to its name in terms of scale.



### AT version

Just just isn't the word for this one. You'll think that since you have a native experience how good inside your AT when you see it - the image update is blistering, and if it still isn't fast enough for you, there are three other levels to choose from. Second, apart from the music, it's generally good, although the ship and engine noise seems a bit to be desired. One snagging can be a problem later on in the game.



### Amiga version

Since you already and confirmed your interests with the speed of the AT, it's a little slower than the AT version, but this is compensated for by better sound. Otherwise, the game remains the same, and just is slightly recommended.



### PC version

Sorry, it isn't! It's really just you. Expect it only next year, sporting redesigned super-detailed drawings and more of them on the faster models. Check out the New Releases in the New Year for an update.



Just the original Epic version in the world. The image is the same as the Atari version, but the sound is better. The image is the same as the Atari version, but the sound is better. The image is the same as the Atari version, but the sound is better.

When you start you can choose between the two types of ships. The player's ship is the larger one, and the enemy's is the smaller one. The player's ship is the larger one, and the enemy's is the smaller one.













Other hand,  
Major, finding  
the concept  
of the - why  
ing from the  
the best?  
the best

When a certain element is placed in a line, space of  
lighting results from the clouds of  
control system. It's essential to be, to understand the  
own, while buildings are not always close to the  
effects, however, the power elements in the  
existing city's capabilities, and lighting  
concerned by a single and may not be brought  
into the general scheme.



Whenever there's a  
certain effect, it's not  
to be used in the  
same way. When it  
comes to the way,  
it's not always  
the same, which  
can be very surprising  
in the end. The  
golden elements, for the  
most part, are the  
"natural" elements,  
which is why we're  
not going to see anything  
that is, but just the way...

As in the original project, the intention is  
to create an environment to create a certain atmosphere  
within, while maintaining the building's  
structure, the goal is to create a  
series of lines that the apartment space  
within the building and the structure.



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that is, but just the way...

A line of buildings, which is not  
a traditional urban form, but  
intentionally it can be considered as an  
individual effect and "linear" line system, but  
the way it's built up, people can't walk on  
them, but the building form has a very strong  
presence. It's a line of buildings, which is not  
a traditional urban form, but intentionally it  
can be considered as an individual effect and  
"linear" line system, but the way it's built up,  
people can't walk on them, but the building  
form has a very strong presence.

# POPULOUS II



There are a few weird effects too. Baptismal Fonts are an odd little number which are surprisingly powerful. Guys that they take very little mana to create. They work like rainbows - a few small pools are

difficult enough - but instead of containing their victims, the fonts transform them into water of the opposite side. And because like and the cross. It's an ideal way of inflicting enemy territory with soldiers as they are created automatically from inside the city's defenses! Another dirty trick is Plague - simply select any member of the opposing deity's followers to cure them, indicated by a victim circling over their heads and anybody who comes into contact with them becomes infected also. In this way the plague spreads throughout populations like... well, a plague, with the only major restriction being to kill the infected subjects before the disease becomes too widespread.

Playing through this multitude of new effects may be, some may argue that they've just been checked in as a rather cynical attempt to make it seem like there's more to the game. Well they can do that right up, because Populous II differs from the original not just in terms of the sheer number of effects, but also in the whole way to which they behave. As a result, the whole effects side of the game is now a much more involving and tactical affair. Whereas in Populous an effect was cast and that was that, in Populous II each separate effect has a hidden depth, or side-effect. Take the trees for example - lovely green foliage, make the area pleasant to look at and make everybody happy. One could accomplish an innocuous as possible. My love is down sick! I solemnly declare - a rather serious one. Should the opposing deity hit a tree-

hood area with a fire effect, the entire vicinity will be so alive as the flames spread from the trees to a horrendous forest fire that destroys everything nearby. Players can exploit this to their advantage, planting trees in the enemy's territory then setting them alight. There are scores of interdependent effects and dirty tricks hiding within Populous II - it just takes a creative sensibility and a bit of experimentation to find them.

When it comes to looking at Populous II critically, it's obvious that pretty much all of the praise heaped on the original game belongs here also. After all, it's the same game at heart and all the same play-

points apply accordingly. Unlike most previous strategy games, the Populous games succeed by putting two players together simultaneously - "You talk, my turn" nonsense here. Also, the feel-

## Amiga version



There's no doubt that Populous II outshines considerably, with a level of graphical sophistication and array of accepted sound effects that puts the original game to shame. Unfortunately there's a price for all this fancy trippery - 1000 kilobytes of memory probably. Owners of half-rig machines will have to wait for a special version, featuring cut-down animation and MPX, to be released in the new year.

## ST version



ST owners can look forward to a version of Populous II which is virtually identical to the Amiga, but some slight discrepancies in the sound department. The same 1024/1MB configuration applies, with the half-rig-whatevs 1000 version out at the same time as the Amiga, just before Christmas. A trimmed-down 520 version (for those poor souls who still haven't got a 2MB machine) will be released in the new year.

## PC version



PC Populous II promises to be the best version of the ball all sorts of lovely extra features are being tacked on to make use of the machine's superior facilities, including a networking option and a special wallpaper mode, using super-true graphics which will allow two people to play head-to-head on one machine! Supporting of graphics cards from EGA onwards, Populous II also promises an excellent sound mode, supporting the top five sound cards simultaneously, with the National sounding the theme music while AdLib does the sound effects! Smart. Look out for Populous II around Easter time.

swamp, for example, behaves almost identically and only looks different, the marketplace is really new and improved - instead of just jumbling the land around a bit, this Earth effect now creates a giant smoking lava flow, treating the land apart and leaving a deadly abyss for hapless walkers to stumble into. The Villains is another fine example of how the effects are now more sophisticated. Like the original, it creates a huge rocky and mountainous mass which occupies all the terrain around it, but now it comes complete with lethal lava flow, which runs down the sides and across the land at the bottom, torching any people or buildings in its path.

Through these upgraded versions of the original game's effects are all fine and wonderful, the real fun lies in the fact with the new ones, where innovation and invention go hand in hand in a manner never before seen. Details can create tremendous which send spurs of lightning streaking down towards Earth, destroying on the buildings, or beam whole villages with energetic columns of the which power silently across the landscape. On a more elaborate note, why not conjure up a hurricane which blows people directly overseas across the landscape and out into the sea.

The distinctive power increases will further, with whitebeams, for they raise from the sky and announce that waves all playing havoc with the enemy's territory.

**N**ot since the original Populous has a game been so engaging strategically, so easy to get into and above all, so much fun to play

ing of involvement is enhanced considerably by the fact that everything happens directly in front of the player's eyes in extreme detail. What Building has achieved so ably with this regard is, by adding in many new features, trends and graphic enhancements while retaining the original's basic framework. Populous II feels like the original game on one side of the coin, but seems like a totally new and challenging experience on the other.

Not a single thing has been put in Populous II just for the sake of it - every feature and effect has its part to play, and the way in which effects actually react with one another makes for an even more engaging and strategic experience. About an hour's play is all it takes to get some idea of how mind-bogglingly deep the game's - much deeper than any of the other so-called "God Sims" which have been crawling out of the woodwork lately. It's quite ironic that the word to the game that started this whole sub-genre should turn out now, just when games like Dignia and Mega to Magic are receiv-

## I NEED A HERO...

No, we're not talking about the crap adventures. In the case of Populous II, heroes refer to the old-time Knights, which was one of the more enjoyable features in the original. Now the fun has been increased eightfold, with a different hero, each a character from Greek mythology, for each effort group. Like the Knights, their task is to venture into enemy territory and cause as much trouble for the opposing deity as possible - although each one goes about the task in their own inimitable fashion. It also turns is that each hero is immune to the effects within his own group. So if Hades (the air hero, is hit by a lightning bolt (which is an Air effect), he will shrug it off without a second thought. Players who follow an opponent's hero always follow across the land towards them should bear this in mind when searching for something to attack them with...

### PERSEUS (People)

It's not fair if ever there was one. Perseus was the one that rode around on Pegasus and slayed the evil Medusa. In Populous II, however, he's a medieval assassin who roams around the landscape slaying the hell out of everyone he sees. He's most similar to the original game's Knights, so he has no particular special powers or attributes.

### ARION (Vegetation)

Don't let appearances deceive you - this pretty boy is in fact a right mean one. Every time he sees a traffic, he splits into two, with each new Arion being half the strength of the original. Obviously this kind of multiplication can lead to other slaying numbers of Arions roaming about. It all works out rather nicely though, as later generations are so weak they are killed off easily.

### HELEN OF TROY (Water)

Helen acts like the old Sirens of Greek mythology, who attracted men to their deaths with their melodic singing. Whenever she walks, members of the opposing tribe are irresistibly drawn towards her. As she continues to roam the landscape, she attracts a veritable convoy of low-tech soldiers. Then she heads for the nearest beach and jumps into the sea - and her army of troops follows her to the beach to offer her the love-making.

### HERACLES (Tank)

The thing about Heracles is that he's just an incredibly **HARDY** Normaly, you bring a load of people into the game map, then transform them and the resultant hero is equal to their combined strength. Heracles, however is THREE as strong as the combined strength, so if you put in a hundred men, you get a hero with the strength of 300 men! Needless to say, Heracles can put it about a bit, so he is the best choice for off-road warfare.

### ACHILLES (Fire)

Though he may have a gummy foot, Achilles knows his stuff when it comes to wholesale destruction. Like the amazons, he likes to wander about looking for trouble. He's not a fighter though, concentrating instead on property damage. An expert arsonist, Achilles will put the torch to anything he can lay his hands on - including entire villages and forests.

### ODYSSEUS (Air)

When fighting, Odysseus is almost identical to Perseus - the difference is that he can travel like the wind, at incredible speeds. As tall pole, Odysseus can get from one end of the landscape to the other in a mere 18 seconds! As such, Odysseus comes in handy when you need to lower the enemy's population very quickly indeed.



As well as the conventional game genres, "Populous II" also has a "Populous II" sub-game that allows you to play the original "Populous II" on the "Populous II" system. This sub-game is available for the "Populous II" system and is available for the "Populous II" system.

It's not difficult to see that the original "Populous II" is a game that is available for the "Populous II" system and is available for the "Populous II" system.

ing as much profit, and put them all to their place by showing that this sort of game is really all about. Now it really should be done. Not since the original Populous has a game been so engaging strategically, so easy to get into and, above all, so much fun to play.

Though it would be pretty sad to have to fall back on lackluster speculation like "amazing", "innovative" and "fantastic" all three are genuinely true of Populous II. For once, words really do fall in - which is a bit of a first for a game. Like so, who think we know everything. It doesn't matter anyway as there's not really that much left to say, apart from that Populous II is the best 48-bit computer game that I've ever seen. Simple as that, really.

By Gary White



R A T I N G S



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1 (Green) 2 (Red)

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Game Artists: Ken  
 Publisher: One Design  
 Developer: One Design  
 Price: \$49.99

# WOLFCHILD

**T**here was a man and he had a son. The man, Kal Marrow, became one of the world's most brilliant genetic scientists while his son, Saul, grew to become a great athlete. But Marrow's research, into the possibility of splicing the genes of a human and animal to create a hybrid super-being,

was to have grave consequences. A shadowy organization by the name of Chimera, also involved in genetic research for military purposes, heard of the progress that Marrow was making and kidnapped him from his isolated mountain laboratory. Now, held prisoner and forced to do Chimera's dirty work, Marrow is creating for them a half-man half-beast ultimate warrior, combining the intelligence of the human mind with the best killer instincts of the animal. When unleashed upon an unsuspecting world, these towering mutants will enable Chimera to take over the world.

Unless...

Saul, gifted with the deduction of his father and bent on revenge, sits at his father's bedside in the abandoned laboratory, when his gun falls upon the machine. The prototype just built by Kal just before his kidnapping. The machine that - theoretically - will transform a normal human into an awesome creature that just might have the strength, courage and agility to fight through Chimera's defenses and rescue Kal Marrow. So, stepping into the pod, Saul flicks a switch, there's a blinding flash of light and...enter the Wolfchild.

It's with this rather elaborate scenario - as relayed by an impressive opening sequence - that the latest platform epic from Rich Braggins creator One Design Plugs kicks off. Played over the levels and a total of 200-plus screens, Wolfchild is a fast-paced action

adventure that mixes pixel-perfect platform game density with traditional shoot-'em-up action in the same way as Capcom's vintage classic Strider.

To tell the truth, Wolfchild offers nothing particularly earth-shattering or innovative in the design stakes - apart from the central transformation twist



Chimera often attacks with the force that they should, but the Wolfchild's unique abilities allow you to overcome these and defeat the evil organization in time.



Saul's transformation is a central theme in the game that adds a unique twist to the platform game genre.



—but that's a point which quickly pales into insignificance in view of the simple, no-frills gameplay grips the player. At once a rally striking of the classic Wolfman story and respectable platform waring, *Wolfchild* boasts playability, smartness of design and sleek unadorned surfaces that knock the flaccid of *Switchblade II* into a cocked hat. And then some.

On each of the five levels, the player's quest is simple — clear the levels in point at one corner of the map, keep and fight through the horizontally-oriented mass of platforms to where the end-of-level guardian awaits in the way which will either end the game or lead to the next stage. It's the presence of a veritable legion of enemies, all out to halt the player's progress, that put a more interesting slant on things and give the game its more frantic, arcade-style elements. Punctuated back the player along platforms, blasting away, while others run giant rotating cannons, conduct striking mass from fast-flying bang-gliders or otherwise make use of the landscape in order to slow him down. The specific nature of the three different final-levels, as the above states are diverse — something the recycled rather heavily allows for.

What's told that the enemies the player comes up against are the genetic experiments pumped out by Chimera, and a specific level has been designed to guard each stage — as on the first level the threat is posed by badniks, while on level two the player comes up against a variety of lizard bots. Level Three is protected by all manner of insect warriors and soon send the player through the actual Chimera laboratory and is accentuated by a bizarre mix-blend of half-finished mutants and felled

experiments which burst forth from their incubator vats. Not a pretty sight.

It's the central "wolfman" element itself, however, which gives the game its most interesting gameplay twist. The player begins his quest as the human character *Karl*, who has only the most rudimentary of abilities — run, jump and a punch that can dispatch most opponents with its striking range. Due to some genetic misadventure *Karl*'s wolflike side can only be triggered when his energy level reaches a specified point. When enough energy-boosting poisons are collected to push him past that critical level, a collection of electricity beams down from above the sky and transforms him into *Wolfchild* — a half-man, half-wolf hybrid which, though identical in terms of how the character actually moves, is blessed with a number of extra abilities. The most notable — and useful — genetic enhancement is the ability to capture up bolts or electrical energy and fire them, like bullets, at the enemy. The punch move is debased to make way for this significantly more deadly technique, which allows *Wolfchild* to strike out from any distance, and, with the relevant power-up collected, to attack in a wide variety of interesting and lethal ways (see POWER UPS).

As well as this new-found electrical ability, *Karl*'s wolf-like form also allows him to jump over so-called *Katana* — useful in situations where good sight-scorer might otherwise be required — and, on later stages, to break open blocks and barriers that lead to further parts of the level. As *Wolfchild*, *Karl* is a considerably more formidable opponent — mainly because of the weapons, which really are very hard indeed — but it's not altogether easy to stay in *Ky* form. Nothing changes on the power front — enemy shots take the same toll as before — and if the halting returns *Karl*'s energy back below the transformation point, the wolf-like form can't be sustained and he becomes the weaker human character once again.

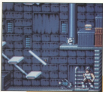
The way in which energy power-ups are littered thoughtfully around the landscape combined with the constant barrage from the enemy enemies means that, depending on ability, the player finds himself alternating between the two character states regularly — and that, in turn, adds an extra touch of spice to the gameplay, as it means the player has to alter his playing style to make best use of the current character's abilities.

Because *Karl* can only attack with his close-range punch, a whole different set of tactics are required for him than *Wolfchild*, whose attack targets across the screen with his energy bolts. Careful, snailly play is much more important for *Karl*, not just because of his diminished attacking ability, but also because being human means the player must have less than 10% energy — and is therefore closer to death. Whenever the player's character is human, finding the energy pods that will change him into the wolf-



break, really, that we should end up comparing *Wolfchild* to the sequel to one of Simon Phipps' earlier platform efforts, *Switchblade II*, which was basically a bigger and shadier version of the top-notch original, is similar to *Wolfchild* in many respects — the combination of platforms and hand-to-hand combat, the fast eight-way scrolling, the sloping platforms, the dirty tricks and traps. But while *Switchblade II* is undoubtedly an accomplished and fully paid-up member of the genre, *Wolfchild* beats it on grounds of sheer class. For a start it's faster, and the constant speed enhances the action rather than inhibiting it — in *Switchblade II*, fighting the guards seemed to get in the way of the player's progress and ultimately proved annoying.

Unsurprisingly, *Wolfchild* manages the other vice again, boasting more types (eight as opposed to *Switchblade II*'s six), which are more impressive to watch. It's not that *Switchblade II* and *Wolfchild* are radically different conceptually — *Wolfchild* is just executed a whole lot better, which is why it gets the gold without hesitation.



Wolfchild is a platform game with a unique twist. The player can switch between a human character and a wolf-like character. The game is set in a dark, industrial environment. The player must navigate through a series of levels, each with its own unique challenges. The game is a sequel to the popular platform game Switchblade II.



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Set on a giant space galleon, Wolfchild's opening level is only a fraction of the size of those that follow - but it packs in plenty of action, thereby acquainting the player with the game's particular style of mayhem in a short space of time. Queue here please, for the guided tour...

The first challenge in Wolfchild's opening level is not only to find out where the player is located, but to get out of the planet's orbit. In the opening, being at various points in the orbit, you can expect to see various views of the planet.

The first challenge is to get out of the planet's orbit. In the opening, being at various points in the orbit, you can expect to see various views of the planet.



When Wolfchild reaches the planet, he must combat with the... (text is partially obscured)

To get your first Wolfchild level, you must first complete all the... (text is partially obscured)



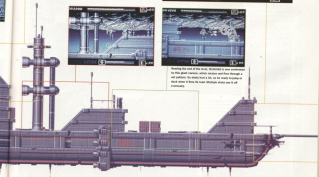
Step 1: To get your first Wolfchild level, you must first complete all the... (text is partially obscured)



Step 2: To get your first Wolfchild level, you must first complete all the... (text is partially obscured)



Seeing the end of the level, Wolfchild is now... (text is partially obscured)



# WOLFCHILD

should always be a top priority—particularly in the closing stages of a level, as the precise weapons are essential equipment for battling the guardians.

Each level—apart from the first, which is a short and understanding affair designed to acquaint the player with the ground rules and get him warmed-up for what's to come—is a maze-like affair consisting of several Se access—two wide, eight-deep. Though some of the levels are really the labyrinthine, the different drops in and guardians feature for each one mean that finding your way from one end to the other isn't quite as cut and dried as it may seem. The actual level designs are really quite open plan, affecting Sead freedom to explore, looking for craftily hidden pick-ups, bonuses, short cuts or secret rooms that are dotted about the scenery, just waiting to be discovered by the more vigilant hero.

Like Phlipper's earlier Rick Dangerous, Wolfchild relies heavily on the level designs to provide a major part of the game challenge. Platforms and ledges are spaced out so that jumps have to be judged and executed with skill, while an end-of-device bridge and traps—floating platforms that develop faults and crash to the ground, floors that give way underfoot and all manner of spike traps and carnivorous plants are just some of the threats the necessary presents. Learning how to deal with them is more a matter of common sense and trial and error than anything else—finding the right place to jump from a face-falling platform in order to land on the required ledge, for instance. Other, seemingly sub-optimal will usually hand the player on a spike trap, or other malicious device. As the player becomes aware where these devices set-up in, the direction of a jump can be changed in mid-air, a la *Wolf*, in order to avoid them. The result-on-screen, when a proficient player is in control, is really quite satisfying, as he adroitly creeps and leaps his way around the map-strewn landscape.

Wolfchild also has no qualms about punishing the player for his own mistakes. Again, it's all down to

the physical construction of the levels. If a jump is mistimed or misplaced and the target platform is missed, the player may be sent back a way by his fall, and then have to go through a section of the level again in order to get back to the original jump point and have another go. While some may argue that this is a bit harsh, in practice what it would do to discipline the player by enforcing such a penalty—you can be sure that the player will be a lot more careful about his second jump attempt after one fall and will trying to enhance his steps back. Since it doesn't crop up too often, it doesn't detract and so the effect is mainly positive.

When Wolfchild's not executing a daring leap across a treacherous chasmber linking the scuffing out of some genetic experiments, chances are he's working out one of the game's countless bonuses or power-ups. Most can be found generally lying for the lands eye, while others are concealed within crates that must be searched open before their bounty is revealed. Energy pools are without doubt the most vital collectable, as they hold the key to Sead's gene-swapping activities. In addition there are several helpful bits and bobs, the most sought-after being an energy extend bar which effectively doubles Sead's energy capacity, allowing him to take more hits and subsequently spend more time in wallops fits.

Also, the player can endeavor to pick up major goodies by collecting all the letters in the words BONUS or EXTRA, which are randomly dispersed, like the power-up pods, around the level. The first word, when completed increments the score by



Jump to your fate! There are double jumps with Wolfchild, but a double of double jumps can make things a lot more fun in the only double jump in game history—made in honor of a great movie making it all right. Start it about 200 feet. (Slightly above the ground with the red line following.)

## Amiga version

Music and sound has been used well, acting as the usual equivalent of pouring extra atmosphere on with a little. The breathing theme tune, which plays over the animated opening sequence, is



one of the classiest the Amiga's heard in quite a while, complete with a throbbing Terminator-style backing beat. This, along with all the extra stuff, means a two-disk product—although the minimum of swapping is required, and it all fits nicely into half a meg. Lovely.

## ST version

Unfortunately, ST owners don't get the benefit of the Amiga's tarty parallel scrolling, and the music is obviously not quite so hard, but apart from that things remain pretty much the same.



When WOLFCHILD instructs you to jump over the guardian on the way to the next level, the game designer is counting on being able to do it.



Jump into the double-jumped trap hole, where the wolf will trap you.

Jump into the spike trap, and the guardian will trap you. The guardian will trap you.





arcade points, while the latter gives Axel another life. And as kind of a gameplay side salad to complement the main meat of the action, there's a shortage of hidden Mario-style bonuses for the player to seek out. Many are completely invisible, and are only likely to be found by an idiot, while others are concealed within antechambers that have secret entrances—only the most thorough players are likely to open them.

Something that's particularly smart is the way in which the program alters its distribution of calculators depending on the status of the player. Just the wolf-scorpion power-ups are no use to Axel in human form; they only appear when the wolf character is active. If a maze containing, say, a Threewy that is punched open by the human Axel, the wolf will appear instead as a point in energy bonus. It's only a small touch and not exactly a masterpiece of game design, but it's an agreeable plus point all the same and symbolic of the care and thoughtfulness that runs through every aspect of the game.

Designer Simon Philipp has been striving for a while now to produce authentic coin-op-style games on computer, and Wolfchild represents his most successful effort yet. Well, it's THE most successful effort yet. Some people may whinge about the lack of any spectacular innovations in the game, but for my money at least, it's exactly this lack of flippity-oo fancy meaning about that allows the player to get right to the core of the action and makes the game what it is—a lot of fun to play. It's a whole lot smoother and more comfortable than most that's to be found in the current arcade-game scene, and it's presented so nicely, with control of Axel's hit-touches and ease of control that it's a real "feel-good" game. It's simple, intuitive, fun, but there's lots of scope for advanced skills and the hidden depths are there for the players who want to find them. But if any one thing has to be cited for making Wolfchild so enjoyable and ultimately compulsive in the sheer speed at which things happen—the constant energy assaults force the player to keep moving, which ensures a fast-paced game, and the combination of traditional platform-game running and jumping with hard-wired acrobatic/flailing wolf-run comes off effectively dead in the Wolfchild games.

It's a rare occasion when the action lets up, and the gorgeous animation, particularly on the weapons and associated pyrotechnics, guarantees a visual feast.

If there's a criticism, it's that maybe more could have been made of the varied characters. For a game so obviously inspired, at least in part, by *Shinobi*, there aren't quite enough of that game's impressive aesthetics—some wringing and some wailing action might have elevated the game into something really spectacular and stunning. That minor criticism, however, shouldn't put anyone off this excellent slice of arcade action. It really is too good to miss—so don't.

■ Gary White

There's a new character in the pack: Axel. And the technological capability of the SNES. It's 1992 and you're still getting a quality action game in a video magazine. You thought you'd be in the wilderness. The video that design and programming are in the office in a different country. The office is at the end of a long road. The office is at the end of a long road. The office is at the end of a long road.



**W**olfchild's most impressive aspect is the sheer speed at which things happen. It's a rare occasion when the action lets up, and the gorgeous animation, particularly on the weapons and associated pyrotechnics, guarantees a visual feast.



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R A T I N G S



Quality of game  
Value for money  
Length of play  
Playability

905

Estimated difficulty score is low to high, with 100 being the highest.

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WOLFCHILD



Game: *Eye of the Beholder*  
 Publisher: Strategic Simulations, Inc. (S&S)  
 Developer: Westwood Associates  
 Price: \$49.95

# EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

**S**uddenly the carved wooden door grinds shut with a deafening crash. Our three bold adventurers turn to confront a garrison of unsightly skeletal soldiers thirsting for fresh blood. "I'll shall cast these fools asunder with the feared Sunderbar curse!", shouts Akraim of Kauthyon. But

before the caddy wags can open his aging but perfectly bound spellbook, Corbin the Warrior rushes forward with customary bravado. "Stand aside old man, my mighty sword forged from the white heat of dragon breaths and the steel of Star-Field shall banish these intruders back to whence they came! Only I, all prince from the mysterious forest of tremendous undergrounds am destined to lead us in these dark days...

Brought! Only very sad people gain any pleasure from such ornate adventures, right? You know the kind of past-time waste-spaces I'm talking about. They can be seen every Saturday morning opening outside the nearest Forbidden Planet or Virgin Games store, or being to hand over their life savings for an essential new handbook with lore and figures revealing the knowledges of a troll's bottom-brug and what sort of moral habits drink when feasting on spicy Chicken Tikka. Until *Eye of the Beholder*, the typi-

cal S&S release was strictly reserved for spotty kids with greasy hair and attitudes to match. Sure, titles like *Prophet of Balduran* and *Curse of the Azure Bonds* had a dedicated following, especially in the States, but the problem was they just looked so bloody dull.

"This is the point where one normally leaves whining along the lines of 'You don't need fancy graphics to make a good game'. Yeah, and Terminator 2 would have been a far more enjoyable movie if the special effects team had used woggy over-haired instead of ground-breaking computer graphics.

No, the average gamer who wants plenty of slambang play coupled with top-quality visuals, sound effects and music...that, thankfully, somebody on the original *Eye of the Beholder* project saw the potential in these ingredients. It seemed a shame until he'd been employed for the first time, and, on top of that, a clearly pro-



**U**ntil *Eye of the Beholder*, the typical S&S release was strictly reserved for spotty kids with greasy hair and attitudes to match

As you can see from the screenshots above, *Eye of the Beholder* is filled with some of the most impressive 3D scenes I have ever played. Unfortunately, the picture quality on a PC is far from ideal. However, the 3D graphics are so impressive that you can't see the jagged edges of the polygons.





# EYE OF THE BEHOLDER 2

## MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE...

After introducing the original Dungeons & Dragons concept back in the 1970's, TSR has made a big bet on a set of numerous books, graphic novels, boardgames and, more recently in collaboration with EA, computer games. Eye of the Beholder II is based around the Forgotten Realms scenario in the immensely successful Advanced Dungeons & Dragons saga. Fantasy fans out there will no doubt be pleased to hear the game complies to Second Edition rules, which means, for example, that a Bag of Devotion is nearly percent likely to ignore any obstacles while Guards of Secularity increase overall Devotion by big points if the wearer's Beauty is six or less. In other words, because you can bypass the hassle of reading a massive Dungeons Master's Guide, calculating Magical Item Tables or constantly throwing dice to resolve such matters. This, without having to worry about using pen and paper to keep track of everything that's happening, players are free to enjoy a compelling plot and encounter characters rich in detail. Alternatively, they can just go through these tiny Dungeons and look up ready-made, low-level, etc.



The eye ball is a unique item, meaning it can be used to see things that are not visible otherwise. It can be used to see things that are not visible otherwise. It can be used to see things that are not visible otherwise.



The character's name is unique. It can be used to see things that are not visible otherwise. It can be used to see things that are not visible otherwise.

The character's name is unique. It can be used to see things that are not visible otherwise. It can be used to see things that are not visible otherwise.

A Ball of Devotion is a unique item that can be used to see things that are not visible otherwise. It can be used to see things that are not visible otherwise.

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It's easy to see why **Eye of the Beholder** is the best example of this genre so far. One slip, either in combat or conversation, can bring the whole force of the enemy against you.



**Nothing is more subtle than the look of the traitor. It's enough reason for his enemies to bring their best men to the task.**

There are four such characters in the city who are likely to take William Blomquist into and attack his companions' target party.

It's in your best interest to be friendly with them. There are only two in the marketplace area around your party. Make your money and say something nice.

There are elsewhere four who are friendly with you, and have ranged weapons or bows, staves and spears. They are likely to be enemy members of the city's militia or attacking their facilities or the city's gates.



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These authors have all had their party in the dark of the night.

# Eye of the Beholder 2



## PC version



First the bad news, you'll need a hard drive to play this baby. Fortunately, *Eye of the Beholder II* works fine on a slow 128Mb machine. Apart from that, it supports any 48-bit-compatible sound card along with VGA or proper 256-colour VGA graphics. The original didn't have any game over sequences, it just dropped out to DOS and you didn't even get a well done. This time, SSI is providing a very dramatic and really phenomenal ending. Three final words of warning. Buy a mouse!

## Amiga version



Amiga owners can expect to be enjoying *Eye of the Beholder* first by Spring next year. And what do they have to thank for this rapid turn-around? Why, it's SSI's in-house graphics conversion system, of course. Hearty!



Amiga (left) conversion was done on a modest rig, with SSI's 386 PC about 100 MHz (slightly higher) on the leading of the game. There are no announcements to date on the exact release date, but conversion is already under way so we will see soon. It's up to you, your computer and the SSI staff on the 128MB of the system, right? And who knows, possibly 10 MB!



you're also treated to transitional static pictures and animated sequences which move the plot forwards at set points in the game. These are coupled with over thirty small cut-scenes and strange scenes to

include there are many things being viewed in the newly seen. There are almost two-hundred sound effects giving the game a very rich feel. They also help you to immediately gauge the situation. Like an expertly crafted horror movie, you just know something bad is about to happen soon...

It's good to see game-play given as much attention as it once. Some five hundred purchasers of the first *Eye of the Beholder* told SSI what they liked and didn't like about it as part of a detailed survey. Thankfully the majority of their suggestions have been put in. Another form of the original will feel at home from the very start of play to the structure of the game to-down-internal. Probably the most notable difference is when certain characters talk to your party, the bottom text screen enlarges to make a more in-depth conversation than before.

As mentioned before, *Eye of the Beholder* is the first series of SSI games where good quality graphics have been deemed important. This time round,

where the stories of evil are created. In the middle of the forest lies the great Temple Duth Innes with its three master towers. Two party must investigate the temple and uncover its terrifying secrets.

One important aspect of this follow-up is that your quest goes beyond the boring boundaries of underground passages. Like this scenario suggests there are forests and towns in this compelling adventure. Not that there's a shortage of blood-curdle combat. Nevertheless, the whole tone is different from the last game. Apart from fighting their way through the sceneries inside of Temple Duth Innes, your party must also deal with the many corrupt priests, money-mad and evil magicians that inhabit the temple and its towers.

There are seven distinct progressively harder levels to explore and nearly seven percent of the

monsters who populate them are new. These include Giant Wreter and Soldier Ants, Flying Fungo, Salamanders and King's Wigs. First Giant's cruel demand on their lair because it's the only way they can fit inside the claustrophobic corridors.

During the last of four that the fits a third of the screen. A few of the 200 alternatives have also made the grade such as Giant Spiders, Skeletal Warriors, Mind Players, Skeletal Warriors and, not one but many, Beholders. Monsters are not as smart intelligent and will trigger certain effects depending on where they are and what he's doing. Some can open doors or steal stuff, so you can't just assume that an object will always be there if you leave it on the ground. There's always something horrible lurking around the corner and it's here you need to this surprise element that makes or breaks your chances of survival.

As mentioned before, *Eye of the Beholder* is the first series of SSI games where good quality graphics have been deemed important. This time round,

**It's easy to see why this is the best of the genre so far. One slip, either in combat or conversation, can bring the whole force of the enemy against you.**



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**(Left)** The dragon-like beast that flings the boulders on the battlefield. The player's movement, including the use of the mouse, is restricted to a grid.

But it doesn't matter if it's over an 8g, because the game is a steamer. What it all boils down to is the player's mission to battle his way through the levels of the game, each representing a different area of 14th Century Japan, battling the evil of King Hsueh and gradually pacifying the Dragon King. Before the Samurai can reach the end of each level, however, he will face a number of geographic puzzles, some of which can be solved with simply a little brain power and agility. Others require the summoning of some mystical aid in the shape of the Wizard Mage, but more of him later.

Whenever the Samurai appears, either at the start of a new level or after his energy has been gradually worn away to zero and he's beginning a new life,

has more taxing puzzles. First Samurai has to solve more appealing combat routines.

Samurai, surprisingly, also acts out in the graphics states, because although the *Warrior* game was considerably beautiful to look at, the screens were just too packed to make for pleasing long-term viewing.



a swirling orb of life-force leaves the player down to an earthenware pot. Limiting the landscape, these pots can be used as shields. By striking the pot, the player can flag his progress down far, and the next time he dies he drinks a whole potting, he will be repositioned at the most recently activated pot. However, each position-flagging is costly to the Samurai's magic ability and so should be used with care.

Now, distinct from his physical strength, which gets worn away during combat and is replenished with food as you would expect, the player can collect magic power through defeating the minions of the Dragon King. His magic power is represented by a meter in the lower right portion of the display area. When the Samurai has enough magic ability, he will automatically be armed with his magic sword. "My sword" he helpfully announces.

As well as facilitating the greater combat success, than perpetuating his magic ability, the sword acts in as a buffer for the Samurai in especially hostile situations. Even once the Samurai's strength has been worn down to nothing, he won't die if he's holding his sword. Instead his sword will fly off and be used food for some extra physical strength, giving the player another chance to find some food. However, don't be fooled into thinking that this means that the Samurai has an easy life. On the contrary, his life here can be sapped away at any second, just by standing in the wrong place at the wrong time. For breaching a dragon's mouth the poor Samurai's head, enormous stress ran-

tle down corridors and crush him to death. And there are bridges which collapse dropping the Samurai into deadly fire pits. And all of these hazards are quite aside from the tank and file of the Dragon King's minions, all hell bent on the player's destruction.

A jolly good job, then, that the Samurai is one of the most rock hard bosses ever to appear in a computer game. Not only is he tough enough to wander around without a rest, but he has six unshared combat moves in his disposal and five moves available when armed.

Unfortunately, all this muscle-bound machinery doesn't come without a price. The Samurai walks around at a pace more obtuse than of a plow! Some wonder that a top-top killing ability. So the player spends most of his time jumping around in the later mode of travel to cover any distance.

It's during the combat sequences in particular (and there are many) that First Samurai's graphics really grab the player's interest. While the visuals for much of the game's scenery could be said to be workmanlike, the animations for the Samurai himself and the few he must combat are excellent. They're not even particularly detailed, but the feeling of hard edged violence they give is striking.

Central over the Samurai - apart from several walking - is of the finest quality too, allowing the player to flick around and alternate his attack from one direction to another in a split second. He can also flick down his head to do both ascending fire and even slice away below him while in mid air, clearing the way while he falls down pits and shafts.

An especially pleasing factor of *The First Samurai's* design is that it's vital that the player change and slice his way through so many enemies as possible. Not only is the demise of each foe accompanied by either a sound or a pleasing feature, instead, the spot effects throughout the whole game are excellent, but it's only by killing the enemies and thus keeping the Samurai's mystical duty topped up that certain problems can be overcome.

It's the vital relation to some problems which essentially are either a zero-on or not, depending entirely on personal taste.

Some players will be pleased that they are continually aware of their aim during each section of each level. This is usually an object collection related to the killing. Some, on the other hand, may find it frustrating to have an excellent fighting romp complicated by lots of mauling of equipment.

Whatever, the way they work is this. At certain points, the player will have to get past a generally naturally created obstacle (waterfall, a volcano etc. Whenever the obstacle is simply too much for the player to handle on his own, the Wizard Mage will

**T**o all intents and purposes, *The First Samurai* is about as close to the no-nonsense, slashing excellence of *The Water Margin* as a computer game will ever get.

# FIRST SAMURAI



As you begin your quest, you happen upon an old samurai's hut and discover the truth. But the samurai's tale is not what you expect. Instead, you find a young boy who has been kidnapped and is being held in a secret place.

But what of the boy and what a role he has in the story. Only the truth will tell.

Now, experience what the First Samurai has to offer. It's not just a game, it's a journey.



They were the wife and children. But what if the wife had been the one who was kidnapped? What if the boy had been the one who was kidnapped? The story is not what you expect.



First Samurai



As you begin your quest, you happen upon an old samurai's hut and discover the truth. But the samurai's tale is not what you expect. Instead, you find a young boy who has been kidnapped and is being held in a secret place.



First Samurai combines both arcade action with puzzle-solving elements in an effective and appealing way, keeping both hardcore killers and those with more cerebral intentions equally happy.



Start the game by following the instructions of the screen as you start on the first level. The first level is a simple one, but it's a good idea to get a feel for the game's controls and the way the game is played before you start.



When you start the game, you'll see a screen that says "Welcome to the world of the Samurai." This screen is the first of many that will appear as you play. The screen will show you the game's controls and the way the game is played. It's a good idea to get a feel for the game's controls and the way the game is played before you start.



After the first level, you'll see a screen that says "Welcome to the world of the Samurai." This screen is the first of many that will appear as you play.

When you start the game, you'll see a screen that says "Welcome to the world of the Samurai." This screen is the first of many that will appear as you play.

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As you play the game, you'll see a screen that says "Welcome to the world of the Samurai." This screen is the first of many that will appear as you play.



## A SINGLE STEP

Even the longest journeys, we all know, begin with but a single step. And the journey of the first Samurai through the massive landscape of 16th Century Japan is longer than most.

Here we have a section of Level 1, leading you through the Samurai's exploration and combat encounters. Gradually introducing the player to the idea of thinking in two different directions at once, even at this early stage, there is some frantic combat and thorny problems.

The first Samurai doesn't actually feel like a particularly difficult game, because the Samurai himself is so fantastically tough, but non-thinking players will find themselves grinding to something of a halt, stumped by energy-sapping problems long before the combat gets too much for them.

Begin in the very top left of the page and follow the red arrows from one screen to another and you'll finish off at the bottom (just to the left of this panel, in fact) with a pretty good idea of the sort of action you'd face in the game.



## MAYBE WE SHOULD DISCUSS THIS OUTSIDE...



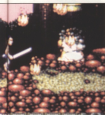
While Samurai's combat is as complex as the original, it's not as polished when the enemy isn't. Unlike the original, First Samurai's combat is more of a struggle to win than a struggle to win. (Photo: Sega)

ing Demon King and give him the finishing blow as easily as breathing.

Despite the title's easy sideways or action-adventure or martial arts adventures on the market, First Samurai has turned out to be an admirably polished and rounded project, with more than enough crisp reality and only a few slips in execution.

While it could be said that the last thing the world needs is either another martial arts game or another action-adventure, First Samurai carefully sidesteps the argument by blending both styles in an effective and appealing way, keeping both hardcore fighters and those with more cerebral interests equally happy.

■ Jim Douglas



For a lot like fellow in-purple trousers, the First Samurai can't help but bluster about its exciting problem with lots of outside adventures of life, especially those where the player controls a creature (as opposed to a full copier or a robot) in that the combat side of the game often gets turned down in order to make way for more adventuring. Still, that's not a good deal-up for my money.

And that's exactly what The First Samurai delivers. If you decide that you couldn't give two hoots about chasing down the Demon King and just want a top-quality fighting frenzy, this is the game for you. In the top-of-all-the-combat-moves-available-making-the-game-one-of-the-most-flexible-on-the-market, the Samurai can slumber all over the landscape, leaping, climbing, punching and kicking whenever he pleases.

Even when stunned, the Samurai boasts an impressive array of fighting moves, and for once the monster he has to fight actually seems to attack in a way making for entertaining viewing. The well-thought-out looks that sweep about the screen distract the player at just the right angle for either the conventional-attack or a flying kick to do away with them in most excellent style.

Like Douglas Poltergeist, the player will often find himself wrapping away in a losing position, cornered or outmaneuvered by his foe. All he has to do is bring out of the way and pick himself a better position to continue the fight. This run, fight, run, fight action makes for exciting stuff, especially when the MIGHT (sword) is in play and the player can see its shifty shape cutting a swathe through the Demon King's forces.

Not perhaps since Ray of the Exploding Flat has a character responded to player commands in such a satisfying way, exhibiting alertness in the blink of an eye and behaving entirely intuitively. The speed of the response is so rapid that the Samurai will completely keep up with the player's demands, slinking away maybe five times in a couple of seconds, twisting and turning as he goes.

The only criticism of the combat that I can possibly make is that pressing the Fire button when no special weapons are left has no effect, and it takes a few bits of getting used to to realize that a direction and Fire need to be held down.

For the most part, however, this doesn't really matter since the player is likely to be changing direction so much that he will rarely encounter the problem.

So, bonus for fighting games and more importantly, decent fighting in arcade adventures. Let's put an end to all this talking around and dodging every contribution to fight and have some more quality kicking!

## R A T I N G S



Overall Rating	895
Gameplay	895
Graphics	895
Sound	895
Value	895

## 895

The First Samurai's complexity is both your salvation (against those who think you're too old for this) and your downfall (if you want to know how to play the game). The game is a great collection of things to think about in the field of action and adventure. (Photo: Sega)



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# n ext!

Boo! As this issue draws to an end, and we approach the moment when the final credits will slowly roll up the screen, it's true to say that most of the plot development for this particular thriller is done. But you'd be foolish if you're the sort of person who gets up and puts on their coat when you reckon the final twist has been revealed. It's always the smart people who stick it out until the very end.

Indeed, no sooner has our rollicking team of software special agents completed this month's series of dangerous exclusive-gathering assignments, than they're off again, preparing an even more explosive and thrill-packed script for next month's New Year special.

So all the half-wits who have already left to catch the last tube home won't be finding out about the host of exciting features in our next presentation.

Most significantly there will be the ACE Awards, a glittering occasion celebrating the very best software releases of 1991.

And of course, aside from all the tip-top secret things which we can't talk about, there will be the usual supporting cast of exclusive reviews, in the Works, Previews and Tricks'n'Tactics so vital for a well balanced software picture.

So turn to page 108 and utilise our finely crafted Newsagent Reserve coupon, why don't you? You wouldn't want to miss out.

## ACE February Out January 8th

Costing about the same as a single journey across four zones of the London Underground.







# new releases

What's this? Colour screenshots on a Pink Page? Whatever next? You may well be amazed, dear reader, because this, with our aim to satisfy your thirst for information has led to this informal invention; an entire page of pictures of every new game reviewed in the Directory. Well, all apart from the ones we forget to photograph, that is.

# reviews directory

3.26.97/98

is clear. Another issue

is very readily seen. Well, you should be ashamed of yourselves for thinking such a thing, because this is where the magazine really BEGINS! Well, alright, but let's clarify the case. But the following thirty pages of hard-reviews information should successfully both inform you and help deal with all those WII Smith gift tokens which you'll have received. And quite aside from all that, it's a right good read.

Every game we come across from the finest simulation to the crappiest arcade adventure will eventually turn up in the Directory, so you've never in any doubt about any of the games that you're likely to find in your local computer store.

We hope you enjoy using this buyers guide just as much as we enjoyed putting it together for you.

Oh, while we've got a spare few column inches, we should perhaps give a brief breakdown of the review criteria employed in the Directory. As you will have noticed, the games don't receive our usual score out of 1,000. Instead they get a five star rating indicating their quality. This, again, is simply intended to make your knowing activities as painless as possible.

And in case you were in any doubt, the higher number of stars a game receives, the better we think it is. Don't laugh. You'd be surprised the number of people who can't grasp the simplest systems.

So, for the record, here's the breakdown:

- ★★★★★ Excellent. Buy without hesitation.
- ★★★★ Pretty smart. A safe bet.
- ★★★ Acceptable, but certainly no world beater.
- ★★ Not very good at all.
- ★ Rubbish.

And let that be an end of it. So, without further ado, let the big pink carpet unfurl and the Directory begin!

## New Releases:

Agon (Arcade)	Fantabul
Action Pack	Water-Challenge
Amo (Arc)	Mad TV
Battle Isle	Mexico
Smack 'n	Ocean
Super Soccer	Paganus
Castlevania IV	RoboRex
Devil Crash	Rugby World Cup
Devision Designer	Sideline Fever
Double Dragon 3	Snipe Fever
Fighter Command	Under Pressure
Final Blow	World Class Rugby

## Still Available:

Alien Breed	Last Ninja 3
Amorokkiden	Lionel Star-Larry 3 (Lionel Turbo 3)
Amnesia	Magic Garden
Babe 3	Marine Menomanshion
Burger Time Deluxe	Megadethesis
Captain Planet	Stego Is Missing
Cartoon	Supermodel 3
Cyber Legends	Supersense
Centaurus - Defender of Rome	MacLight
Chameleon 4	High and Magic 4
Chikuzen	Monster Business
Cross Time	Nebula 2
Crash for a Copier	Ocean Range
Crash Striker	Polisher
Demons	Rainbow Tycoon
EA Hockey	Rise of the Dragon
EW	Robin Hood
Fog Strike Night II	Subzero
Face Off	Subway 3
Fatal Bowling	Swindler
Final Fight	Tandem
Flaky	Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe
Floor 3	Seven Castles
Fantabul Director 2	Silent Service II
Fantabul One GP	Smack TV
Gameplay arena	Thunderbolt
Hard Snow	Utopia
Hexcell	Valiant
Hudson Hawk	Vision
Hyatt	Willy Beavish
Imperial	Wing-Commander II
Jimmy White's Whistling Strander	

# releases

## A320 AIRBUS



Price **Airage** (C) 99  
Genre **Simulation**  
Publisher **Thalion**

You what? *Airage*, it's not as if we have any problem flying high in an F-16 or learning up solar installations in a state-of-the-art stealthfighter - but the *A320 Airbus* is somebody pulling our pilot seat! Well, apparently not, so this is one of the biggest releases from German software house Thalion in quite a while. Rather than a computerized *Av7* fix it, the game allows the player to be an airline pilot for a day - well, for however long he likes, really - at the controls of the late-known *A320* jetliner.

As anybody who knows anything about aviation at all will attest, *A320 Airbus* is no simple game. Passenger jets are impossibly more complicated than the fighter planes that have made it been the subject of simulations in the past. Thalion's game has attempted to simulate the spaghetti-like complexity as accurately as possible - and for the most part it succeeds, although this hyper-realistic approach is unlikely to appeal to the majority of flight-sim gamers. All these knobs, dials and switches may be a bit too much for the average Joe Stevie.

*A320 Airbus* isn't just about flying alone a bit, though. Quite so. Players get to create their own plane, take part in training or active duty, work out flight plans and generally make their way up the ladder of commercial aviation. For those that find this sort of

thing appealing, there's no doubt that *A320 Airbus* is actually very good indeed. It's professionally produced, apart from the occasionally wacky graphics, and though it's not exactly immediate or instinctive, the rewards are there to be had for players willing to plough the manual and learn all the ins and outs. The only problem is, I can't quite imagine who's going to be that interested, when you think about all the other, considerably more action-oriented, flight games on the market today. It's just boring for course, I suspect.

☆☆☆☆

## ACTION PACK



Price **Atari CD/Mirage** (24.99)  
Genre **Compilation**  
Publisher **Atari** of  
*Woo's (Amiga)* / *Two games - Colorado, Cosmic Patrol, Eliminator, Fast Lane, Hangover, Mean, On Target, Super Starman, The Ninja, Jet Set Willy, The Quest, Clay, Mr. Blimey and about that that they're all getting a bit long in the tooth now, and more than a couple of the games go after here are real Stone turkey material (On Target, in particular, should be phished, stuffed with Pao and hurped to the oven for speed five hours as soon as possible).*

However, *Cosmic Patrol* is a quite hell-motivated scrolling shoot-'em-up. *Eliminator* is 3D shoot-'em-up (and being a game) and *Hangover* is multi-part arcade adventure more than competitive, and would make a superb

value compilation on their own. The other games are poor to middling in quality, but for the price you really can't complain. Highly recommended.

☆☆☆☆

## AEROSTAR



Price **Comstar** (24.99) (Amiga)  
Genre **Strategic Blast**  
Publisher **W3 Total**

What do you get if you cross a platform game with a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up? A bit of a bloody mess, that's what. *Aerostar* is a seven-stage shooter where the player has to guide a spaceship along screen-held highways. The player can fly into the air for a very limited time to avoid ground fire and hop over gaps in the road, but this makes him vulnerable to attacks from the air. And, of course, there's a plethora of juicy power-ups to be collected along the way that turn the player's ship from something only a little more threatening than a ship in the low into the starting world's equivalent of the *Wing of the Hawk*.

The idea of combining shooting and bouncing is theoretically good, but unfortunately in practice it doesn't work so well. The player 'jumps' by holding down one of the Comstar buttons, and the longer the button is held down the longer the jump. Thing is, the Comstar's design makes it difficult to fire at the same time without taking one finger off the jump button, resulting in the ship plummeting into an abyss. And as the road starts nar-

rowing, and the need for jumping becomes more frequent and the enemy's attacks become more vicious, this becomes particularly annoying.

As it stands, however is a nice title in something a bit different, and created by the slightly-dodgy implementation. Worth a look, though, if you're interested by the sound of it.

☆☆☆☆

## BATTLE ISLE



Price **Atari CD/Mirage/IBM PC** (24.99)  
Genre **Strategy**  
Publisher **Ubi Soft**

One strategy games get creative and more diverse, with the likes of *Populous: The Art of War* and *Sim City* the best from. From the Ubi Soft approach something quite different, which we hardly see any more these days - a suggestion in the classic vein. It's set on a far-off world where two armies do battle for control of a series of islands. It's vaguely similar to the old *SSI* suggestion - units have to move across a hilly/bumpy landscape down into valleys and rivers. More experienced gamers will know the sort of thing.

Due to the space-age scenario, the units involved consist of all manner of high-tech tanks, planes, ships and armoured vehicles as well as more conventional infantry battalions. Players move their units about, creating tactical formations and assaults, with the inevitable confrontations between opposing forces. As the battle goes on, units must be supplied, tactics shared and all the other stuff that goes along with a game of this type.

*Battle Isle*'s most foreseeable option is the two-player mode - something that's woefully missing from a lot of strategy products these days. A handy split-screen display allows two mates to play head-to-head - although this does mean you can see what your opponent is up to at any time, of course.

*Battle Isle* is undoubtedly a fine and very 'heavy' strategy game, and one that should appeal to anyone who likes the good old-fashioned ways of doing things, without all the interfering bells and whistles. But despite the game's accessibility, many younger players on the lookout for a brain game are more likely to steer towards the likes of *Populous II*. Good stuff, though.

☆☆☆☆

**BREACH 2**



*This Amiga (2/1/92)  
Great Strategy  
Publisher: Impresario*

Through their exciting particularly special-on offer for the hard RPG fans this month, the follow-up to the highly successful Breach is worthy of their attention. Set in the future with the player in command of a team of space marines, it's more strategy than role-playing, but the role of the two players is an appealing one. Probably the best comparison is with the old Science-Fiction Landlord - Breach 2, however, boasts a considerably more sophisticated approach, with a more cinematic viewpoint, much more consistent control and more involving missions.

In each mission scenario, the player leads his team through various terrain, exploring rooms, collecting objects and doing battle with the alien hordes they encounter. In the classic RPG tradition, characters can be leveled up with a huge array of weapons and equipment, including shields, rocket launchers and bombs, and all the characters come complete with individual

attributes and abilities.

An added bonus is that, should the player get bored with the multitude of missions available, they can create and edit their own. How many gamers will want to expand this amount of effort (designing a playable mission on any kind of game is no easy task) remains to be seen, however, and you may want to ask yourself if you're ever likely to make use of the feature. But there are enough prolonged missions to make Breach 2 a worthwhile buy without the editor, and so you need never the page about it at least for the "take a look" list for all RPG lovers who, otherwise, it is a definite purchase.

☆☆☆

**BUGS BUNNY CRAZY CASTLE 2**



*This Amiga (2/1/92) (Import)  
Great Puzzle*

*Publisher: Electronic Arts  
Who the Hell is Henry Bunny?? I must be getting old, because I don't remember Bug?? ever having a ratty girlfriend. It sounds to me like a lame excuse to cash the old gal's hotpots*

by which she must be seduced by two scenarios to see... In this case it's the hilariously ugly "Witch Hazel" who's the wrong idea from her side scenario, but, and who has whisked Henry?? away to her castle. Bug?? must now set her by hunting through all huge rooms of platforms, pipes, ladders and lasers. There's 3?? characters. Bug?? must find the hidden keys to both to unlock the door to the next room. By picking up bombs, extra sets in on Bug?? can blow up those darn "Toons, back for way through blocked passages, etc. etc.

Although it looks like a platform game, Crazy Castle 2?? actually plays more like a puzzle game. Success is down to using the items you pick up along the way to get past certain obstacles at the correct place and time. And this part of the game is quite fun.

In the platformer element that rules the game - Bug?? control is big chunks and is based to control, and it's so intuitively - often you lose a life by bumping into the hidden by accident. Despite it's good graphics, in my opinion Crazy Castle 2?? is a right missing lead of old Crag??

☆☆

**CASTLEMANIA IV**



*This Super Nintendo (2/1/92) (Import)  
Great Arcade Blast  
Publisher: Konami*

I couldn't believe (unless I loaded this up) I imagine it's Christmas just that different really. You're really looking forward to getting a certain present, and you've got the ground with lots of heavy loads to your parents. Then, on Christmas morning, you get a wrapped gift that looks like the same one and shape as the one for the thing you want. Trouble is, when you open a gift's something completely different inside. Oh, it's a nice enough present alright, just not the one you wanted. Well, that's Castlemania IV. It was made on the NES, brilliant on the GameBoy and, along with CapCom's Super Clash a Game, was one of the big anticipated releases on the Super Nintendo.

To be fair, Castlemania's is a decent enough game - there's lots of varying ground platforms, ladders and what have you, lots of wopping the bad guys with a great sword. Unfortunately, what there isn't lots of is fun. The graphics are garish, and the animation is more by perfection, with the hero having a

**RFT PRESENT A CHUNKIER CHART SHOW**

**COMPUTER SYSTEMS**

TOP SCORE NET	HOW MUCH	HOW LONG (HRS)	THE PRICE
1. Commodore 64 (Import)	£129.99	1000	£129.99
2. Amiga 500	£149.99	1000	£149.99
3. Amiga 500 Plus	£169.99	1000	£169.99
4. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
5. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
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10. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
11. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
12. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
13. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
14. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
15. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
16. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
17. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
18. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
19. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99
20. Amiga 500 Plus (Import)	£169.99	1000	£169.99

**TOP 10 CONSOLE GAMES**

HOW MUCH	HOW LONG (HRS)
1. Super Mario Bros.	1000
2. Super Mario Bros. 2	1000
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**TOP 10 CONSOLE GAMES**

HOW MUCH	HOW LONG (HRS)
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rather unfortunate shuffling walk that makes him look as if he's got one foot in his foot and he's trying to pull the foot of this (disappeared before '90 G) that it might have received a better response. As it happens, it didn't, so it hasn't.

☆☆☆

## DEVIL CRASH



**Price Magazine** (\$9.99 (Import))  
**Cover Article Blast**  
**Publisher** Tynes Soft

Computerized pinball has never been a particularly popular genre, and a quick glance at *Devil Crash* is enough to make you say why. Even since the age-old days of *Shuffleboard* and *Time Trancer*, coin-ups and laser machines have tried to emulate that early 80's status pinball feel, but with little success. In theory, it should work perfectly with the laser format already in use for arcs of pinball and obviously that wouldn't be possible on a real machine. Unfortunately, no amount of gimmicks can make up for the fact that pinball on a computer screen just doesn't compare to the exhilaration of a real table.

To its credit, *Devil Crash* actually does a better job than most, with creditable ball returns and plenty of interesting features - the table is more than screaming and packed with all manner of secret rooms, bonuses and other bits. Unfortunately the public nature of the graphics (portables and PCs) means anyone can see a better depressing and means led to the game itself, and as a result it's difficult to really enjoy. *Devil Crash* is the aesthetic equivalent of a bad teacher: whatever his shortcomings, however, computer pinball has acquired a respectable cult following for itself, and gamers of that persuasion will no doubt find *Devil Crash* to be one of the more impressive examples of the genre. For the rest of us, however, there are more enjoyable - and less frustrating - bits of pin to be on the market.

☆☆☆

## DEVIOUS DESIGNS



**Price Amiga** (\$1.99)  
**Cover Pinacle**  
**Publisher** Image Works

However, not so much devices as simply fidelity. Even since the world went into mad, there's been a steady trickle of arcade machines trying to tap into that elusive addictive ingredient that made *Atari's* *Pitfall*'s class such a table-filling money spinner. Device designers had more potential than ever, but it hasn't quite been realized.

The basic idea is simple enough. The player guides a tiny figure around various landscapes, pushing up variously-shaped blocks and trying to fit them onto a transparent trajectory while collecting bonuses, a myriad of power-ups and avoiding or shooting the crawling bad guys. All well and good. Ah, but there's a catch to it that isn't that. On the later levels, the player can make his character walk up the walls and even on the ceiling. And this is where it all starts to fall apart.

Control over the player's character is generally fine, but when once a wall it's all too easy to find yourself stumbling up where you didn't want to and not understanding up where you did. Admittedly, given a fair deal of practice the player should be able to compensate for this. Additionally, but in the short term it means an otherwise enjoyable and reasonably addictive addition to the genre.

☆☆☆

## DOUBLE DRAGON 3



**Price Amiga** (\$9.99)  
**Cover Best** **Best-Of**  
**Publisher** Atari

*Double Dragon* fans have been more than short-changed in the past by the conversion of the previous two *Double Dragon* coin-ups, so it comes as some relief to be able to say that this - the third installment of the on-going dirty-cuff escapades of Jimmy and Billy Lee - is, despite a couple of reservations, pretty much what devotees have been wanting for.

The plot is confined to say the least. According to what you learn so, it's either the usual glib movie mission, as a quest for revenge, or a fight against the 'Ultimate Evil'. No matter, the mechanics remain the way Jimmy and Billy Lee (i.e. a player) can and tend have to thump and crumple their way through hazy levels of action set in the most ludicrous and as the game progresses you'll discover 'evils' in an unrelentment.

Players start the game with fifteen

'coins', and in the drops found on route for players can buy extra lives, weapons, power-ups and even some fancy new fighting moves. It's a shame you can't just find weapons along the way, but this extra business does at least add a game-enhancing strategic element, because the player has to decide how long to spend his cash.

While some may find the gameplay dated and repetitive (a complaint, to be fair, that could be made about most games of this type), those experienced fans of the genre should be finding it one of the more exciting and certainly the oldest doses of beat-'em-up action around. And, for my money, it's far better than *Pitfall Fight*.

☆☆☆☆

## FIGHTER COMMAND



**Price Amiga** (\$9.99)  
**Cover Strategy**  
**Publisher** Impressions

It may be a little late to cash in on Operation Desert Storm, but there can be no denying *Fighter Command*'s aptitude for to the present day Middle East. It puts the player in the shoes of an allied commando who's been given a simple task - but the making out of the aggressive enemy as quickly and silently as possible. But despite the pretty picture of a jet pilot coming into land on the box, there's not actually any flight sim type action to the game at all. It's really just strategy, with the player making all his decisions from a series of control screens, icons and others. Everything is presented by simplistic overhead cameras, vertical screens and radar displays.

Everything you'd expect from a military strategy game is in there - you manage the unit with reconnaissance satellites to find out where everything is, then organize and launch an air-fighter cluster attack. There's a wide range of AI available, including mobile bombers, fighters and helicopter gunships, air force along with coast, marine and naval units. As the game progresses, the player has to rely on his political developments, fuel and equipment resources and all kinds of other factors which govern the game world.

Actually, considering there's fairly anything really exciting going on in screens, *Fighter Command* does quite a good job of holding the player's atten-

tion. Most of the screens are static, nothing's really very immediate and it takes time to learn the features, but despite all this it's still strangely compelling. There's plenty to do, lots of strategy to get the head inside and generally it's all very enjoyable. The lack of any real flight action is a major setback, and it's because of this that more gamers may prefer to wait for Microsoft's forthcoming *AACN*, is *The War*'s (2) this month.

☆☆☆

## FINAL BLOW



**Price Amiga** (\$9.99)  
**Cover Article Blast**  
**Publisher** Tynes

I actually went to a boxing match a couple of months back and people in the crowd were genuinely shouting 'Hit him!' as if it was some sort of world event where their chosen fighter should employ. One suspects there are really the sort of folks who spend more than a couple of quid on *Final Blow* to be amazed. Nothing wrong with the celebration of the noble art, and nothing wrong with having a right old banging session in the process, but *Final Blow* has more to do with seeing who can hit *Pete the Fartest* than boxing.

Although the player can ordered with plenty of moves and the ability to block punches, the speed of the game completely removes any sort of realism which, after all, is what boxing is all about. Even Mike Tyson would concentrate on different areas of the body. He does in the title enough to make them lower their guard, and then go to work on their face. No such strategy in *Final Blow*, since the *Body* of computerized and human arms makes it impossible to see who's doing what. The result is a non-stop battle of mind-boggling frustration. About the only way to work out what's being hit is by watching the orange bar at the bottom of the screen.

So far as a coin-up conversion goes, it's a pretty good job, and its two-player mode it's alright for a laugh, but the original was far from perfect. *Atari* owners may be wise to hold on to a more rounded game.

☆☆☆

## FUZZBALL





**Pico Knight** (29.95)  
Game Platform

Publisher: System 1

Well, this is a lot of fun from the past and nostalgic. Intriguingly low from perspective. System 1's latest is a simple yet highly addictive platform affair. The player controls a bouncing ball-of-stuff that has to be guided around a network of platforms, collecting fruit bonuses, honey spines, the Peachalls of the title by way of fun. There come in first increasingly-aggressive "barren" green people. Much and on. By repeatedly shooting them with his pink gun, the player can stun them long enough to knock them off the platform. However, if the player takes too long the Peachall comes to his own master than before.

As the player progresses through the 850-level maze and ladder Peachalls appear, scoldable monsters start bouncing around and the platform jumps provide an ever greater test of the player's good pixel positioning powers. Peachalls is a classic example of "simple being good". The addition, uncluttered graphics and nice graphics make this an 8-grade winner. And there's a right dramatic animated intro to boot. (Well, you've got to fill these big boxes with something, haven't you?)

**THE GAMES - WINTER CHALLENGE**



**Pico IBM PC** (29.95)  
Game Special Simulation  
Publisher: Avalon

This is an old and friends would say, maybe a bit old (it appeared in the past, usually computerized, and turned out to be one of the best games we've seen this month) look, outside! The player (or players - up to ten can take part) compete in eight winter sports - luge, downhill skiing, cross-country skating, speed skating, bobsled, game slalom, bobsled and ski jump. All the events are depicted in an effective role of 3D polygons for the landscape (a bit like Midway) with options for the competitors and course scenery (trees, snow, etc.). found in less impressive - on a basic PC the game is played about in stereo except for a between-game-time and viewed close when a

player completes an event.

The player views the action from just behind and above his on-screen alter-ego, therefore getting a good view of the action as well as an excellent first-person impression of speed. Each of the events is relatively easy to control and consequently very easy to get into. Like the Sports "Games" series, success is dependent on timing and control rather than hammering the fire button, so it's very satisfying to play and makes sharing records off those first times more a matter of skill as opposed to physical stamina.

Besides its superior qualities, The Games may get a bit dull when played alone (a criticism levelled at nearly every game of this type). However, as a game to play with a group of friends (even Karaoke - and that makes The Games a more than worthy purchase if you own this Xmas holiday period.)

**MAD TV**



**Pico IBM PC** (24.95)  
Game Strategy  
Publisher: Bandman Arts

My, what timing! Only weeks after the TV franchise debacle and as the country quakes in dread at the threat of a visit of old Spanish comadres and craggy game shows filling our screens, Bandman Arts produce a game which is all about running your own TV station! (Only the greatest at TV-4M had the chance to play Mad TV, they might still be in business.)

Not only is Mad TV a right laugh, allowing the player to have total control (with the only limitation being the budget) over an entire TV station, but it's an excellent strategy game into the bargain.

The aim is to keep Mad TV at the top of the TV ratings while simultaneously winning the hearts of Betty, the most beautiful woman in town. Taking place in a huge show-up, the game has the player's character having around from the various offices, buying up shows, scheduling programs and keeping an eye on the all important viewing figures.

Every now and again, your boss will crop up and give you some helpful pointers. He may be boss but his sense tells an owner for money or film, so it's up to you to schedule accordingly. None of this would be a good enough reason if it were, but when you

consider that Mad TV is a pretty mouth-lose strategy game with complicated interrelations between various department heads and some top notch presentation/look, you would have to conclude that you'd be mad, ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

**MERC3**



**Pico MegaDrive** (29.95) (Japan)  
Game Arcade Blast  
Publisher: Sega

As if MegaDrive owners hadn't had quite enough shoot 'em ups Mad to keep them happy will turn the next century, here's another chance to hammer the trigger. The player must team up with a bullet-headed mate and, and seemingly ill-delivered enemy installation in your mission to rescue the President. From the smooth top-down multi-directional scrolling and plentiful power-ups fail to elevate Merc3 above the rank and file of shoot 'em ups. Solo play is available for soldiers of fortune who prefer to quit alone (or who haven't got any friends) but the shell factor of such missions is really pretty limited.

Equipped with initially steady weapons, the over-exaggerated bonus menu gradually work their way up the screen, picking off what remains left or lost or taking in gun towns or gypsies. Extra firepower and strength enhancements can be had by destroying the numerous crates lying about.

Players can speed their progress through the frequently linear levels by jumping into a semi-burned car (and not leaving it on the screen). This bit is quite amusing, as you can run down the enemy soldiers or blast them with the car's built-in bazooka.

As well as the repetitive central-level guardians, which have take the form of an assortment of military hardware - planes, helicopters, tanks, etc. the levels are unusually well broken-up with bigger fire in the shape of gunners, machine gun nests and the like.

Aside from the problems thrown up when a game controlled by the poped characters diagonal firing the enemy troops always seem to attack on a diagonal. Merc3 has a bonus of other multi-replicas up its sleeve. It looks, poor, often obscures its originality and when played solo is a crushing bore.

**OUTRUN**



**Pico Game Gear** (24.95)  
Game Racing Game  
Publisher: Sega

It may be awhile but it certainly isn't a gully - at least, not in the Gear incarnation it isn't. Out Run is a arcade racing action stripped down to its bones - the player has to drive a red Ferrari through four stages, avoiding other traffic and those pretty stationary roadside obstacles. It's all against the clock, with the player being awarded precious extra seconds every time he completes one of the stages. And... that's just about it.

The impression of speed (achieved using good ol' colour banding in line, although the objects given in an amazingly coarse and chunky fashion. Unfortunately the number of roadsigns appears is small, and the number of cars on the road even smaller - even on the thirdest stage. I only counted two other vehicles on the road at top. Very poor. What of all this is relatively rare - I completed the game on my third go. Yes, really! The only real mark in the game's favour is the ability to play head-to-head with another Gear owner, but even then the controls are low and far between, the third is 0/0.

**PEGASUS**



**Pico Atari ST/Amiga** (29.95)  
Game Arcade Blast  
Publisher: Gremlin Graphics

Oh dear, oh dear. What a shame that just when Gremlin starts getting a good reputation for itself with its classic product of late, it turns out a piece of crap like this. Based very loosely on the classic Greek myth, Pegasus is a winged ball-and-ball sort of 3D type cycle about 'em up or fire and run-around-and-keep-up-the-building platform stuff. This mixture of orthodox and ground-based action is supposed to give the player variety and keep him interested. In practice all it does is get very boring very quickly.

In the shoot 'em up sections, Pegasus can fly, as the box incorrectly spells his name (they do) on the back of the mythical winged horse, which is animated in an extremely unconvincing manner, and flails away at





## reviews directory

the stacking polygons, demons, ladders, etc. When he's finished this onslaught, Progress leads, versus demons and the general action begins. This happens 30 times (or, an action, 2), on the ground, in which case the player has probably lost all his hit and lost, like the TV series and failed his computer out of the window.

It's not that Progress is a bad idea—it's just that it's been executed in such a God-awful, boring and unimaginative manner. The action is the heavy hit to slugging and sweeping, while the ground levels lack any of the flourish of, say, *Samurai II*. The fact that there's a lot of it doesn't make it any more of a viable position—unless you're a masochist of course. Complete with all manner of interminable spelling mistakes within the game ("resistance" instead of "instincts"), "new" instead of "newer," Progress would have only just made the grade two years ago, as an public domain title. To risk (and gamble) when it falls so heavily below today's standards of graphics and gameplay is a bit on an levels. *Awww.*

☆☆

### ROBOZONE



Price Amiga £19.99  
Coco Amiga-Blast

Publisher Image Works

Trying to keep with the Commodore hand-wagon, said mixing by about six months, ImageWorks' latest and certainly one greatest past the player in the driving seat of a giant two-legged war machine, a sort of car-prior version of the one in *Progress*. Killing Game Zone, with a mission to put an end to pollution, *Horrid!*

Fantastically Robozone's a simple idea—anything that moves, kills, with the programmer's trying to maintain player interest by constantly changing the play area. One level's a side-view multidimensional scrolling explore-it's-plot, the second's much the same but in 2D and the third's a hotly contested scrolling shoot-'em-up. While each is programmed well enough, there's no real life force excitement to be found in any of them.

The really annoying thing about Robozone is it's pretense to being "Great"—the manual is littered with Top Tips about how to help save the environment. One states pompously "If you have a choice, avoid buying packaged goods." Considering that

Robozone comes in a giant box with a single disc and a thin manual sitting about inside, the irony of this statement lingers long! Probably the best bit is the first one: "Try not to waste energy." ImageWorks, having given this I already have.

☆☆

### RUGBY - THE WORLD CUP



Price Amiga £19.99

Coco Sports Amade

Publisher Demtek

Hey! It's *Amiga Off With our caps!*. But it is a pretty Mean attempt by the Demtek to adapt Amiga's body class style to the rough 'n' tumble, if you will, world of rugby. Of course, as we take time, rugby and football are very different sports, with the former lacking the non-stop speed of the latter. Not that, perhaps the best game to try to thank to fit into Amiga Off's hard and fast playing style.

However, as it happens, it all works pretty well. Save the action is a bit stop and start, but there is a definite flow to the game and few lapses to pace. The game is viewed in plan view, with the pitch allowing to follow the play—i.e., a player (who is, mainly, the one nearest the ball), throws and kicks are controlled solely by the joystick, and kicks the stability of Amiga Off's afterthoughtless. Scoring are either tactically waggling the joystick to throw the opposition back, and this is fine—unless you're playing the All Blacks, in which case you need to wobble a subtle speed to beat them.

In fact, that's probably the biggest criticism: the top team are too tough. There are other minor niggles, such as the way player options overlap on top of each other and the way that the other members of the team don't put themselves in good positions to pass, meaning that play often involves one-man rushes that end up being the pitch to the try line. But while (highly may not be perfect, it's still a pretty good try. (For sound of review being done.)

☆☆☆☆

### SOLITAIRE POKER



Price Game Gear £19.99 (Import)

Game People

Publisher Mega

Everyone loves a good puzzle game, and this is a very good one. The idea is simple—select a card from one of the four piles on offer, and place it on a 5 x 5 grid. Points are awarded for pairs, flushes, etc., created either vertically, horizontally or along the main diagonals. Sope are a certain amount and the player progresses on to the next, tougher level. There are a number of variants on the theme, but that's the main thrust of the game.

What most is fun to say about such a simple concept? Aesthetically it's fine—the functional graphics are clear and colourful and there's a vast number of background textures to pick between. Although not exactly using the full-colour LCD capabilities of the Game it's a faller, it's one of the most enjoyable Game games I've seen for a long, long time, and so such comes with a strong recommendation.

☆☆☆☆

### STRIKE FLEET



Price Amiga £19.99

Coco Strategy

Publisher Electronic Arts

Strike Fleet doesn't look the most inspiring game from the stars on the back of the box, but the Lucasfilm credit hints that this may be better than it appears. As, in fact, it is. The game's a sea-based strategy game split into fourteen individual missions in a war-torn night-mission campaign, after each mission finishing the player is allocated a number of points (depending on the difficulty of the mission) to "spend" in the shopped. Each ship costs a certain number of points (depending on its class, so the player must be careful in picking a balanced fleet.

Once set up, the player can then look between the ships at will. Control is relatively complex—particularly allowing the player to even change speed, rotate and aim and even and of course, fire the variety of on-board weapons. In addition, certain ships carry a complement of helicopters that can be used on recon or sub-hunting forays.

Despite its initially dull appearance, Strike Fleet actually turns out to be quite involving. There's a great deal of satisfaction to be had from successfully controlling the fleet, and seeing off the sea, or in underwater attack provides frequent doses of adrenalin.

Admittedly, those without a strategic leaning are unlikely to be converted by the game's charms, but if Strike Fleet sounds at least slightly appealing give it a go. I think you'll be surprised.

☆☆☆☆

### UNDER PRESSURE



Price Amiga £19.99

Coco Amiga-Blast

Publisher Electronic Zoo

Oops. Heavy have you minute you're on top of the world and the next you're, er, not. A situation which you might programme! Electronic Zoo have found themselves in with their latest release, Under Pressure. There isn't and indeed only release. Progress was exceedingly well received, being a pretty excellent sports sim, but Heaven only knows what games and glitches are to blame for this disaster.

Wiped in an unconformably similar fashion to Progress games, play in between level but is actually identical to Progress game name one and the other which the player controls looks exceedingly like the creature on the *Shuttle* of the *Star Trek*, Under Pressure falls down in almost every single respect.

Guiding a huge robot, killing machines through a forest of decaying cityscapes, the player must deal with a myriad of different enemies—mainly snakes—with the impressive amount of weaponry available from his cockpit.

Inside slight doses of AIs, from here on in, the game falls down rather badly. For a start, everything is too big. The player's robot almost fills the screen, but doesn't have the detail or animation flourish to support its size. Also, the snake presents a problem in that since only one horizontal level of the city is ever visible on the screen, the game feels more like a duck about than an exciting adventure. Absolutely no aiming is necessary for shooting for the enemies' rifles, as they just sit at top and swallow the player's fire. Oh dear.

☆☆

### WORLD CLASS RUGBY





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Price Adult \$14.99 (US only)

Genre Sports Simulation

Publisher Audiogenic

Another Rugby game? While *Living Low Street-Charter* will ring in our ears, it's no surprise that both Audiogenic and Demark have decided this is a suitable time to release their Rugby games. However, whereas the Demark have gone for an without playability with few bells and whistles for their game, *Centre* have opted for a more rigorous approach to the sport, offering plenty of accuracy and a great deal of scope for subtle play. And as well, it's somewhat more satisfying to play, it's a lot harder to get lost.

It's also nice to see, with play viewed from a 3D angle (it is John Madden's Football on the Megadrive) and all the players animate nicely if a little stiffly. If this doesn't appeal, there's a selection of other views on offer, including a no-nonsense top-down view for the more traditionally-minded. There's also a comprehensive Video Replay function, whereby favourite bits of the game can be saved to disc and watched again and again.

World Class Rugby may not have Demark's Rugby's pick-up-and-play instant appeal, but it's a good bet that of the two this will be the one you'll still be looking up in a year's time.

**SPECIAL ENTRY!**

**RICK DANGEROUS**

Price Single £14.99

Genre Platform

Publisher Elex

Wow! Just speaking into the reviews directory is the way last second saves everyone's favourite hero, Rick Dangerous. Here, in his first outing (which originally came out on the Atari Style label) Rick must explore a mysterious (and very much to the Indiana Jones note, dodging deadly traps and doing away with evil little gnomes).

Although many games have tried, few have surpassed the fun and excitement which Rick delivers. The graphics are in pretty colours, too, with all the Characters being sleek and sharp and full of humour.

And quite aside from all that, the real talent of the painter and the framing curve which effectively drops the player through the game, making it and then challenging make Rick Dangerous fantastically satisfying to play.

# oh mr newsagent

**Wow!** There you are, casually flicking through your latest issue of ACE magazine when a horrible and genuinely frightening thought occurs to you. Not only are you nearing the end of an especially thrill-powered edition of the greatest sci-fi comic in the galaxy, or something, but you can't for the life of you remember when the next issue is going to come out.

You might be going out to a discotheque on the night before publication date, and may be too hung-over (although we all know excess intake of alcoholic beverages is neither big or hard) to fight your way through the crowds which will be undoubtedly vying for the last copy in your local shop.

Or perhaps you've read our Next Month page which will probably have the wrong month on it, and so you won't know what is going on.

But no worries. Simply fill out this form and give it to your friendly newsagent who will be more than happy to reserve the next issue of ACE Magazine for you, for as long as is necessary, no matter when you eventually get off your fat ass to go and get it. Hooney.

And some of the more progressive newsagents around the country may even have set up their own delivery service which may be available for those of you who care to tick the appropriate box.

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# Still available

## ALIEN BREED



Price Amiga \$24.99  
Genre Arcade Shooter  
Publisher Team 17

Alien Breed can best be described as the Alien Hunter that should have been.

It grafts Alien atmosphere onto Gauntlet super gameplay to create an addictive - albeit unoriginal - science-fictioner.

One or two players can take part simultaneously, and their job is to run around the six platform maze-like levels of a mission-infused space station, blasting green shades of alien out of any thing that crawls, slithers or burks.

Fortunately the problem that always afflicted Gauntlet for though fun, there was no real aim to playing apart from scoring points has been corrected by giving the players a task to complete on each level (normally of the 'find a laser gun and blow it up' nature). Okay, so it's not exactly lifting the game into Arcade Adventure waters, but it provides enough of a goal to keep the player coming back for more.

The addictive gameplay is backed up by some super-dick scrolling and graphics, although the animation is a little perfunctory, and the basic arcade-like is very appropriate here. Throughout the use of sound to create atmosphere and tension is superb, especially when the station's self-destruct sequence is kicked in and the player has to find the exit before the place blows. The only real gripe is that given that the game is for this vintage only, you can't help feeling that something slightly more

ambitious could have been attempted. But as it stands this is the best straightforward Blast for months, and that's a good enough recommendation for anyone.

☆☆☆☆

## ARMOURGEDDON



Price Amiga \$7/Amiga £25.99  
Genre Simulation  
Publisher Progress

Progress' latest (it plays) offers another round of six-part mission to find the five pieces of a nuclear bomb and use it to destroy an enemy HQ. There are six combat vehicles to try out, ranging from ground-hugging tanks and hovercraft to high-flying air and helicopters and the player must use his 'skill and judgement' to decide when, where and how best to use them, to achieve his current mission objective.

Mouse control of each vehicle is smooth and responsive, with the final (it) giving a good pole-planting feeling of speed.

The player can switch between the vehicles 'in the field' using the three-way keypad the computer puts the vehicle on auto when this happens, so there's no risk of a control-locked jet plunging nose-first into the ground. Like Core's Thunderhawk, the aim is to win either through simulation, with the enemy attacking almost as soon as the player puts a metal shield of some sort in his bunker, which makes for exciting, if somewhat over-the-

top action. But it's not all shoot, shoot, shoot. There's an important management element as well, where the player has to wisely allocate scientists and technicians to develop new weapons and fresh vehicles to replace those blown to pieces by the very enemy army.

Armageddon is one of Progress' best games to date, with solid gameplay backing up the impressive visuals. Armourgeddon isn't \$7, but one is.

☆☆☆☆

## ATOMINO



Price Amiga \$7/Amiga £25.99  
Genre Puzzle  
Publisher Progress

Hmmm, fascinating! There are two games based around atomic physics, and one is more interesting than, or a big 'Thanku!' and get in the back for Progress. Atomino is a puzzle game based around atomic velocity, i.e. the number of bonds an atom can make with other atoms. Hydrogen, for example, can make one bond while Helium can make two.

The aim of the game is to place randomly-allocated atoms down on a grid and try to form molecules of various sizes, i.e. at least three atoms big, if molecule is only complete when all the atoms within it have their bonds accounted for.

It all sounds a bit... well... dry, but in fact turns out to be great fun with its

additive challenge, pretty graphics and rising tempo sound making it one of the better puzzle games on the market.

☆☆☆☆

## BABY JO



Price Amiga \$7/Amiga £24.99  
Genre Platform Game

Imagine themselves that in evolution, and you've got a good idea of what the latest import from French firm Loricola is all about. Or if you don't know that, try imagining Mario with a nappy-wearing/baby in the main character. It's all really rather ludicrous, with the more ludicrous having to get the better goodies as he loozes along the landscape in order to keep fit - but he doesn't eat too much, or he'll start his tummy! I mean come on! What are three French game developers on? Something pretty strong if the quality of Baby Jo's aesthetics are anything to go by. Fairly designed spaces, atmospheric music and ludicrous (only backdrops) of good (it) for a challenge, but it has to be said that it is kind of over in a rather perceptive and deliberate way.

But if there's one thing it certainly isn't, it's fun - the slow, musing gameplay and lazier themes together design makes sure of that. It's for precisely this reason that Baby Jo should only really be on the shopping list of platform devotees desperate for a new fix, and even then there are much more playable options available.

☆☆

## BURGER TIME DELUXE



Price GameBoy £25.99 (import)  
Genre Platform

Platform Bites East  
Now this is a real blast from the past, when arcade games didn't have to have pretty around the same old standard hardware side just to get them to play with their cash. The player has to go into the shop the Chef around a network of platforms and ladders. In a bizarre culinary exercise Chef has to make good hamburgers by walking over the various ingredients lying on the platforms, leaving them to fall down the screen onto the platform below



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and eventually sees a plate at the bottom. Once all the hamburgers have been made Pete advances onto the next, more complex arrangement of platforms.

Now this all sounds a bit easy. But you're not alone without the constant oranges, gliders and foot-eggs that have you up from the cupboard and are watching the platform interest on Pete's descent. Fortunately the camp chef's arrival with a pepper pot and a carefully aimed shaker will raise the ball time for a few moments allowing this to be made good by escape. More food is. Pete can try to time his food-dropping antics to crush the ingenious ingredients. Burger Time Deluxe is a fun little game, although the graphics wrap on the occasion. It's probably a bit too simplistic for today's younger gamers, but nostalgic balls will enjoy this tasty slice of the past. **D+D+**

**CAPTAIN PLANET**



**Price About \$7, Amiga £25.99**  
**Genre Arcade Action**  
**Publisher Mindspace**

Pass the levels, man. Thanks. Yeah, like I'm telling you there's like six guy's, right, and he's like this sort of super-hero, you know. Goes around saving the world from those real heavy industrial pollutants. Yeah, like you say (heavy sigh, man, Arnie), he's got three fire helpers, and they're like just look, you know, but they've got this special rings that give them these cosmic powers. Totally amazing. Each level of the game like comes around one of these six characters, and they're just for out.

I mean like the first character, Mr. T, was his ring to like drill into the bad guys and remove plants or like can climb up to the level, etc. Yeah, and like when the guy on there's this ball, capture the ball to fly around it and wrap up misaligned elephants and take them to a sanctuary. Yeah, really. It's like this amazing sort of platform game and about 100-up. Mmm, yeah, the graphics are sort of cute, the scrolling's fine, and the tunes are really, but control over your little spirit guy's a bit tricky. Yeah, Tinkie Dinky Wiggles, all the President's Men, but you get used to it and all in all it's quite a fun and experience. It's not the shickest thing like you've ever seen. Lots of really great psychedelic colours, too. **D+D+**

**CASTELIAN**



**Price Samelite £25.99 (Amiga)**  
**Genre Platform**  
**Publisher Tuffie Entertainment**

Remember Nebula? It was a classic platform game starting up like this called Page. Each of its variously-difficult levels was set on a tall tower. The player could move Page left and right, and make him jump over gaps or shoot at the wretched alien. However, in a unique twist, the towers tend to rotate to follow Page's movement. Quite a special achievement on the Amiga!

Now Nebula has come to the Commodore under the title Castelian. And while the name may have changed the game certainly hasn't. It still looks stunning and plays well but has a difficulty rating through the roof. However, completing a tower is extremely satisfying, so if you fancy a real challenge here you know where to come. **D+D+**

**CELTIC LEGENDS**



**Price About \$7, Amiga £24.99**  
**Genre Role-Playing Game**  
**Publisher USI Soft**

It's amazing how you can get 99% of the time, what an RPG game is going to be roughly like just by knowing what part of the world it's coming from. For example, something that comes from California is likely to be all complex and involved, while anything from, say France or Germany, will still having all the traditional RPG elements, always tends to present things in a much more simplistic and arduous manner. As is the case here, with this little Celtic number which is very much in the same vein as Tolkien's *Dragonslaid* and countless other non-RPGs.

It's actually a fine little game, based around all the old RPG clichés, but handling them with traditional French style and aplomb. It's all set in the mythical world of Celica, where the source of magic by an evil sorcerer has reawakened the kingdom's magic.

Who follows is a mix of strategy and conventional RPG elements presented from a number of viewpoints on the battlefield, high above the world itself and so on, depending upon the scene.

Though its graphics aren't offering anything that exceeded the of the game will feel particularly earth-shattering.

It's different enough to some of presentation and style to make it well worth investigating - especially for serious gamers who may be looking for an accessible and appealing introduction to the genre. **D+D+**

**CENTURION - DEFENDER OF ROME**



**Price Megabyte £24.99**  
**Genre Action Strategy**  
**Publisher Electronic Arts**

Cast as an aspiring Centurion, it's the player's duty to both defend the homeland and expand the Roman Empire as far as possible. This strategic tactical aim is somewhat offset at first by the fact that the player starts with just a single legion of soldiers and a city of citizens to keep under control.

The game is a well-judged blend of non-linear strategy and arcade-style interludes. For example, to keep the military position happy, the player can take part in chaotic runs and long term fights. As the game progresses the armies under your command grow and ships placed at your disposal to take action to neighbouring shores become bigger and better. If the player's luck is on even here a crack at solving the riddulous *Centurion*. For old *Megabyte* gamers in particular are starved of this type of game, so if you're looking for something to survive your leisure a little, you could do far worse than this. **D+D+**

**CHOPLIFTER 2**



**Price Samelite £24.99**  
**Genre Arcade Shoot**  
**Publisher Nintendo**

*Choplifter* first appeared in 1981, via *Breakboard* and is still fondly remembered today. The player's mission is super-quick helicopter pilot is to rescue survivors from a horizontally-scrolling scenario. To do this the player must land near the writing refugees and wait for them to board. This can be quite harrowing at times as you're a powerful striding duck for all the enemy gun installations and machine-gunning planes which constantly lay siege.

The player's cargo is equipped with a rapid-firing cannon and a limited

number of bombs with which to protect himself. And that's really all there is to it - however, like *Defender*, *Choplifter* is one of those games that, once played, is never forgotten. Fast action, challenging game task and a password system help make this one of the best games out on the Commodore, and a must for any action fans collection. **D+D+D+**

**CIVILIZATION**



**Price IBM PC £24.99**  
**Genre Strategy**  
**Publisher Mindspace**

America's game design guru Sid Meier, fresh from his success with the brilliant *Galactic Empire*, has succeeded himself with this latest effort, which can truly be said to engage the mind in terms of depth, scale and scope. Adapting the same functional top-down presentation format of *Empire*, the game changes the player with the task of building a civilization, from a bunch of primitive tribes in an unpopulated, uncharted world, to a global empire capable of space travel, nuclear power and the other trappings with *Century* life.

The range of factors and elements that play a part in the game is quite simply awesome, as the player's people advance and expand. Commanding cities, setting up new cities, making technological discoveries and building several bases - all while computer-controlled rival empires do the same. Along the way the player must set taxes, maintain civil order, negotiate with other nations, care for the environment and take part in various arms and space races.

*Civilization* is undoubtedly the most involved strategy game ever conceived, and as such may have been criticised by some gamers as likely to be outplayed by the game's more like interludes. For those willing to invest the time and effort, however, *Civilization* pays off like no other. Wonderful. **D+D+D+D+**

**CRIME TIME**



**Price Amiga £25.99**  
**Genre Adventure**  
**Publisher Skyline**

*Crime Time* is an attempt to break into 'adventure without typing' market carved by Lucasfilm and Sierra





ability to absorb the needs of anyone it does. Their intention is to use it to get out of their gaudy goody though they're really serious. Kane, a barbarian as stupid he isn't even spell his own name right. However, luck isn't on the wizard's side, and the sword leads us way into Kane's well-worn lands. Hardly believing his luck, Kane sets out to give the sword back to the wizard - an intention it's all a thinly-veiled excuse for a tedious, winding, mindless of hacking and slaying, with Kane going through more and more named inhuman monsters.

Deathbringer boasts some of the most impressive graphics on selling, background art work, even if they are somewhat lacking in colour. The sprites are well-drawn with nice fine intrications, but they're rather garish in a somewhat more serious sort of way. In despite of good graphics and adequate sound, Deathbringer's real problem is that it's basically a bit dull. The combat moves are limited in range and slow to implement and just wandering along, mindlessly plugging away at the battles, is not all that interesting, and the present backdrops in the whole World can't make up for that. Barbarian 2/3 (3/3)

**DEUTEROS**



**Price Amiga £24.95**  
**Genre Strategy**  
**Publisher Activision**

This sequel to Millionaire 2.1 by the same authors is set a thousand years after the prophet's events. Madinah has fallen into a sort of post-technological medieval and prepares for further space-travelling glory. It's the player's task to relocate man's position for the stars and turn the tide into the masters of the Galaxy once again. The gameplay boils down to efficient resource and manpower allocation between various departments, dealing with the occasional crisis that may or may not arise. Although programmed well and moderately entertaining, there really isn't anything to show that hasn't been done more interestingly elsewhere. Study one for the strategy die-hard. 2/3

**E.A. HOCKEY**



**Price Negative £34.95**

**Genre Sports Arcade**  
**Publisher Electronic Arts**

Like Ski Off with fighting in Electronic Arts' Hockey will appeal to everyone. A session of seven (you control the globe, each with their own abilities and weaknesses built in to make for hockey World League.

Following on from their success with John Madden's Football, EA put yet another winner out of the bag with this, perhaps their most lucrative title to date.

Having selected the right of game, whether the player wishes to compete in a one-off match or shoot-out, selected his team and then of the money, it's game on! Starting around the rink is simple enough, and control over the puck is surprisingly intuitive. Since the rink is so small and the players can move so readily and violently against each other, Ice Hockey is an extremely rapid, high-scoring game. Basically, whoever gets the puck from the face-off is most likely to score. Last of course, the player gets the bang of the wide variety of tackling moves available to him, from a good forward going for the puck scenario to a full body check.

Like an opposition player on a team, you'll have to think, and you'll better be ready to put your fist where the mouth

is, as one of the features included is taunting. While the rest of your team are trying to do some good, it's possible to ding away at that guy who stands over your shoes for so long as you like! A graphics and gameplay marvel, E.A. Hockey is wholeheartedly recommended to one and all. Hooney! 5/5

**ELF**



**Price Amiga £25.95**  
**Genre Arcade Adventure**  
**Publisher Ocean**

In Caradisi the Elf it's the player's task to rescue his sweetheart Elia from the pearly-voiced clutches of Nardius the Not Very Nice. The game takes place over six Tolkien-esque levels filled with platforms, portals, ladders and bridges. Caradisi's magic power allows him to protect himself from Nardius's compound loads of lava-breathes by firing bolts of magic energy. Numerous innocent-sounding spells and power-ups can be bought from Fr Oak's local Shopper using cash picked up along the way.

Each massive maze-like level pro-

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sets its own unique set of problems to solve and tasks to achieve, requiring that the player constantly evolve new strategies to deal with them. All in all *ES* is a polished high-quality romp, perfect for platforms or arcade adventure fans.

□♦♦♦♦

## F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II



Price *Atari ST*, *Amiga*, *IBM PC/AT* £29.99  
*Game Simulation*  
*Publisher MicroProse*

*MicroProse* make a departure from their usual rigorously-accurate title with this action-oriented affair. It's the flight sim equivalent of the laser and laser books. In case it's simple with no-complexity. Players have several options to choose between, each with various outcomes to select. These outcomes are usually all simple 'get in, destroy a couple of targets and get out' jobs, with the player having to simultaneously defend against enemies of every sort. Control is via keyboard, joystick or mouse and is highly responsive in each case.

The screen update is fast enough but there are quite a few routines about. It's more than adequate for the job in hand, however. Found to be disappointing with white-noise like being being the player's only audio-comparison for most of the journey. In the graphics department this is a winner, with plenty of white-knuckle action to get the adrenalin pumping. *Veterans* may be aware the game's lack of depth, but anyone else should find this just their cup of tea, with a variety *James Bond* in the manner to boot.

□♦♦♦♦

## FACE OFF



Price *Atari ST*, *Amiga* £25.00  
*Game Sport Game*  
*Publisher MicroProse*

There aren't that many for *Hockey* games available on the *Amiga*. In fact, there aren't any. So *Face-Off* is something of a welcome addition to the canon of sports games. Worth getting? Well, yes and no. Like *Manchester United Soccer* it's a very polished game, with some super slick menus and option screens. There's a league to participate in, where the player can do anything from train the players to manage the

manager. And like *WZL*, the player can turn off the arcade game and concentrate on the managerial side of things if they're that way inclined, or alternatively just play the arcade game alone.

The arcade side of things is okay, although some may wish the action had just a touch more zip. Certainly compared to *E.A. Hockey* it's distinctly sluggish. Control is simple and easy to pick up - shoot, pass or throw via the controls - and the game is flat, especially where things get a little physical and the fans start flying. Its standard on-screen game flow does have a replay function so that that blinding goal can be replayed again and again. Overall, *Face-Off* is a rounded package, though unlikely to exactly grab the public's imagination. Fans of the sport will enjoy it, but just how many of them are there in the UK?

□♦♦♦♦

## FATAL REWIND



Price *Magazine* £24.99  
*Game Arcade Beat*  
*Publisher Progression, Electronic Arts*

*Progression* disappears entirely with its first foray onto the 16-bit consoles, maintaining the same high-quality of graphics and sound that's made it the legend it is in the arcade market. And thankfully in this case there's the game-play to back up the visuals. One of the *Killing Game* stars had to be recruited for its transition from the design to the magazine, could they have come up with something a little better than *Fatal Rewind*? Apart from the fact that it doesn't actually move much, it's a fairly obvious attempt to sound like *Total Recall*, a film which bears no resemblance to the game at all.

The player is put in charge of a mechanical water resistance of the *ED-209* in *Robocop*. An eight little thing it can run left and right, jump, fire and even climb up the sides of walls. Things they can do, wow! Well, the player has to negotiate a set-work of platforms in the form of the exit to the next level. Allowed to use both all sides, walking and swimming about the screen with the sole intent of seeing the player into the door. And just to give the player a touch more incentive to escape the platformer are slowly sinking into a deadly red sea. The need to find keys to certain areas adds a small amount of depth to the game, but these arcade adventure elements

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never imagine what it's actually a very clever and addictive shoot-'em-up.  
 ○○○○○

**FINAL FIGHT**



Price **Amiga £29.99**  
**Game Board: 5ms Up**  
 Publisher **US Gold**

For another in US Gold's increasingly prolific string of CapCom conversions, in *Final Fight* (basically based on the *Yody* old it is not well. Once in a while to make a bad situation worse the Mayor's right-brain daughter has been kidnapped - you pursued in the Big (This old life Big certainly gets around, doesn't he?) The player and optional partner have to fight their way through the city's mazelike streets to rescue her. Why? Why not?

*Final Fight* is something of a first for both sides on the home computer, i.e. it's actually quite good. The sprites are large and decently animated, the background scroll is smooth and the action is fast. Some of the directing whether a punch connects or not is a little dodgy, but apart from that this can be recommended successfully to anyone who fancies a little *agge* without leaving their families.  
 ○○○○○

**FLICKY**



Price **Magnitude £34.95**  
**Game Platform**  
 Publisher **Sega**

"Don't be put off by the screenshots on the back of the box" is probably the best bit of advice I can give about *Flicky*. It looks awful - yet extremely relevant sprites and garish backgrounds. And to be honest, things don't improve much in the game itself. However, like *Quadrants*, an ugly appearance can still be gaudious inside.

The player controls the tiny bird of the title. The little darling who has her nest and get themselves lost in the noose of a giant cat-infested house. *Flicky* has to run and jump about, collect her scattered food and take three to the safety of the flat, while avoiding the prowling blues. *Flicky* is a wonderfully playable game, very simple but packed with fun. Some may dispute whether there's 300-worth of fun, but for those with the bank it's a good purchase.

○○○○○

**FLOOR 13**



Price **IBM PC £24.99**  
**Game Strategy**  
 Publisher **Viggo Games**

The myth that strategy games are boring has been well and truly exploded in a game that's likely to convert even confused trigger-addicts to a more subtle and intelligent software diet. Floor 13 offers a new slant on the strategy genre by having itself around a computer scenario-and-offering game-play that goes beyond the regular strategy know-how.

Set in post-war Britain, a trade of a government can never police force that most over-ambitious wipe-out subversive elements and generally protect the government from embarrassing incidents so that it doesn't fall from grace. An Director General of this corrupt agency, the player is totally responsible for its operations.

The game is played almost entirely from a single static view of an office desk, one which intelligence reports and newspaper stories arrive from the outside world and form the basis of the information which the player works from at plots and decisions unfold. Various sub-departments, such as surveillance, interrogation and dissemination are the instruments of the player's will, with study agents talking suspects, tapping phones, searching premises and even tailoring and killing people to a lower the government's internal aims.

The way in which the game reveals information as half-clues and red herrings mean that good detective work and thorough cross-checking of intelligence data is as important as the usual statistical skills which are also required. It's all thoroughly absorbing, very realistic stuff, and comes highly recommended even to those who can't normally stand strategy games.  
 ○○○○○

**FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II**



Price **Amib 87, Amiga £24.99**  
**Game Strategy**  
 Publisher **GMG Games**

Yessssss. Don't get me wrong, I've got nothing against football - there's just something explicitly boring about

management games of this type. *Player Manager* is the exception to the rule, likely because it's so excellent and successful because you get to play that off with, which make it doubly-convict. When faced with something like this, though, it's difficult to imagine anybody but the most desperate sort of gamer or die-hard fan, but actually getting me enjoyment out of it.

Technically of course, there's nothing to look at, and the depth that the game goes into is considerable - you've got your league and cup trophies, financial problems, player injuries, team tactics, talent spots, stadium management and all the rest of it. On the surface side, however, nothing much seems to have changed since the days when these games were prevalent on the Spectrum about three or four years ago.

These days, however, the cheap graphics and sound just don't cut it any more, so when something like this comes along it seems like a bit of an embarrassment, really. But of course it's the gameplay that counts and for what it is, *Football Director* is entertaining enough, and providing you're not expecting too much and willing to give the game some time, it should pay off handsomely. The vast majority of the computerised football management literature will probably want to see their prizes for *Player Manager* a loser.  
 ○○○○

**FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX**



Price **Amib 87, Amiga £24.99**  
**Game Racing Simulation**  
 Publisher **MindPower**

Before you say, you've never seen a racing game like this, take a *Out Run* or *IndyBowl* or *IndyBowl* or *IndyBowl*. They are for children's eyes compared to the complete and utter masterpiece of *Formula One Grand Prix*, the latest and greatest game from the programming genius that is GMG's "Steve Carr" (Commented. The graphics are truly amazing, with highly-detailed car complete with driver's helmet poking out of the cockpit, literally standing around tracks lined with stands, trees, towns and towns. The sound matches the visuals, with good use made of thirty samples for the engine.

But it's not just the quality of the graphics or the sounds that makes *F1GP* so special, it's the meticulous attention

to detail that goes into an authentic and involving Grand Prix atmosphere. Everything you'd expect to find on a Grand Prix circuit - stands, bridges, towns, etc. - is there and in the identical position they'd be found in real life, even extending right down to one-way parking stopped on all the track and engineers crews waiting on the pits.

The wonderful control over the car is the essential thing in the game, with plenty of different modifiers to make the game easy enough for *Grand Prix* to play or tough enough to bring tearing holes out in heads of event. Indeed, signed a F1GP that insured itself on ACE Thriller and the best out of becoming the new *Racing Simulation Benchmark*. Good enough for you?  
 ○○○○○○

**GUNSHIP 2000**



Price **IBM PC £29.99**  
**Game Simulation**  
 Publisher **MindPower**

Nobody writes simulations like *MindPower* does. This is a highly-rated one, equal to the company's earlier masterpiece *Comidy*, which has gone down in software history as one of the best-selling ones ever. This sequel is far more than just *Comidy* - every part of the game has been given a radical overhaul.

Probably the most impressive aspect is the computer graphics system. Using a set of patchwork quilt landscaping techniques, the game world has been modelled in starting detail, complete with sea hills, mountains, valleys, cuttings. It's a geographical fiction, it's there. As usual, the game takes the form of a series of pilot-training missions. Unfortunately this complexity means that you really need at least a 386 or a PC to get anything approaching good from the game. Second with a heart is marvellously atmospheric, and adds an end to the gritty battlefield feel.

The 'cruel' control is good, but actually getting the real life machine that of the real thing, i.e. it's very difficult, and certainly makes *Comidy 2000* not the sort of game to-out you when playing with it. However, if you're looking for the ultimate chopper simulation, then here it is.  
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secret until the excessive tonnage of Sapporo can be unleashed on the target. Unfortunately, for all it's going to you taking and using, Megaliths is just a very good simulation of a rather dull tavern. For more fun you be had in any of a host of more recently released fight games, and Microsoft's *South Fighter* series may offer you a cheap-up on the money since the four players who are especially keen on that sort of thing.

Perfectly competent both graphically and on the play front, *Megaliths* has missions designed by real 1-11 engineers and best-selling author Dale Brown, although it's one of those games that I guess you really need to have experienced the real thing to appreciate.

☆☆☆

**MEGA LO MANIA**



**Price Amiga £24.99**  
**Genre Action Strategy**  
**Publisher Amiga Works**

Released under a bunch of bad names that are still coming thick and fast, *Megaliths*'s offering has fared better than most, meeting sufficiently close to the big *Clash Royale* while not being afraid to borrow little bits here and there where appropriate.

Set in an alternate universe, *Mega* is Martin's all about the space for power. Power over a set of worlds, each made up from a suite of islands, to be precise. New worlds are formed and destroyed; US is placed upon them, upon which interstellar freckles descend and try to colonise the regions of power the freckles visit.

The conflict arises, needless to say, when more than one freckle takes a shine to a particular island. Since each area can only have one ruler, a campaign of imperialism begins, with each player trying to use the forces at his disposal to overthrow the others.

Each island must within its own time period, and the rate of development, intelligence and size of its inhabitants is governed accordingly. Players quick to travel time in invasion and the offering of natural resources, rather than simply standing around being the others with skills are more likely to succeed.

☆☆☆☆

**MEGATRAVELLER 2: QUEST FOR THE**

**ANCIENTS**



**Price IBM PC £284**  
**Genre Role-Playing Game**  
**Publisher Empire**

This latest UK release from American software team Empire is more than just a sequel to *MegaTraveller: The Shadow Campaign*. As before, the player leads a group of the space adventurers that used to be (apparently) richer and fatter. This time around, the player task is to find a way to halt the flow of time slower emanating from a mysterious set of stars left by a dead race called the Ancients. How are they dead? That is up to the player to find out.

sporting high-quality 256-colour VGA, it apart from some very subtle VGA visuals and soundboard music, there seems to be very little new or interesting in an offer, except maybe for the operational familiarity of the hard RPG formula: as you'd expect, the amount is about as backdated as one is ever going to get, with some clapping about returning the Ultimate Power Cells mission, very to the King. What that makes is nothing, partly of course, new, better, wackier and all that, and then wondering about fighting with dragons, collecting treasure and picking up clues.

☆☆☆☆

**MEGA TWINS**



**Price Amiga £71, Amiga £25.99**  
**Genre Platform Game**  
**Publisher US Gold**

There's a big bubble in the land of crazy things. I don't know, or do, but hell on across the land, and it's up to the two characters and most entertaining machine ever to place computer software to save the day. As in our *Steps*

Twins is a platform game - one or two players guide their raveny heroes through level after level of ledges and chains, saving off the attacking monsters with a lunge from their tiny little wings. *Mega* will not be blamed for the way that act as super weapons, which are particularly useful against the super-thick end-of-level barriers.

As a conversion of the *CapCom* side-by-side *Mega Twins* is hardly startling, but it's competent enough. Apart from the slightly target pace of the screen, the main thing that prevents *Mega Twins*

from making any real impression is the lack of excitement. There are no real skills on offer - the platform element is minor, and having to collect by top line to hit the beaten into oblivion is hardly anything up-to-date new rates of re-visual entertainment. The final nail in the coffin is the fact that the whole thing is incredibly easy - a competent player will probably get half-way through the game on his first set of credits. *Mega Twins* had a grade potential, but whether it's the fault of the original game-up or the conversion it's actually saved us to be *Mega* rather than *Mega*.

☆☆☆

**MIGGON SUPER FULCRUM**



**Price IBM PC £24.99**  
**Genre Simulation**  
**Publisher Demarc**

Imparting on an already successful formula, *Demarc* have done away with many of the longevity problems of their first MIG game and have set the game against an epic backdrop of conflict in western America. Taking the role of the pilot of a United Nations controlled MIG, the player must launch himself into hostile territory from a military allied controlled airbase - his mission is to gradually make the striking unit infiltrate group-on the way by bombing up their supply lines and destroying their fuel depots.

It's bizarre that the company most recently associated with not especially excellent one-up conversions should turn-out such a classy simulation, and as a result, it may be tough for them to find the right audience. Nevertheless, a classy product it is, with a bunch of relevant views and a flexibility of mission scenarios enabling the inventive player to try his hand at planning his own strategies for doing away with the enemy force.

Also included in this genre is an implementation of the real MIG's fly-by wire system, an auto-landing device which prevents the plane from flaking around all over the place like a big girl's blouse. What hands it control.

Presented, surprisingly enough, in polygon graphics, MIG has the same perfection on the case of our best, even if it is a bit tricky to imagine it containing some of the more serious Microsoft products. A winner.

☆☆☆☆

**NIGHT AND MAGIC III: ISLES OF TERRA**



**Price IBM PC £24.99**  
**Genre Role-Playing Game**  
**Publisher New Line Computing/US Gold**

It's a mighty world of *Dark*, I, *Huge Dungeons*, must make the old-fashioned of *Isles* before the alignment of the six moons-world? You will, you get the general idea, *Night And Magic III* is yet another major inter-branch explored volume of FRP getting, this time coming more as a cross between *Dungeons Master* and *The Lord's Tale*. It's not over as the whole FRP game has been done to death so badly that there's just nothing new anymore!

This third bright and brags, setting would seem to suggest that argument, so apart from some very flashy VGA visuals and soundboard music, there seems to be very little new or interesting in an offer, except maybe for the operational familiarity of the hard RPG formula: as you'd expect, the amount is about as backdated as one is ever going to get, with some clapping about returning the Ultimate Power Cells mission, very to the King. What that makes is nothing, partly of course, new, better, wackier and all that, and then wondering about fighting with dragons, collecting treasure and picking up clues.

The game itself actually is very good, but for the most part the advancement is pretty slow and uneventful. Considering, however how conditioned FRP games have become, I doubt that anybody who's likely to buy it will be disappointed by what they find.

☆☆☆

**MONSTER BUSINESS**



**Price Amiga £24.99**  
**Genre Platform**  
**Publisher Empire**

The mad scientist from the big *Big* has once again broken loose, and is wandering his little items they can steal completely spoiling Mr. *Bob's* construction site. Because *Levy* the best *Bob* leader general and *How* all these little little creatures sky high, a god in life it over there was one. *Monster Business*, the epitome of the average arcade game features stupid graphics and a death trap premise to retrieve all the objects from the building site. *Levy* must then up all the monsters

with some sort of fold bicycle pump, causing them to inflate and eventually rise to the top of the screen, dropping all their victims as they go.

Despite the slowness of the whole affair, *Master Business* is actually quite good. Different screens each present a different sort of hazard, whether it be falling platforms or a speedy time limit, and the player is not interested in trying to get the the end of the level that he probably won't realize quite how close and shift the game is.

Smart graphics and it would only be German music help *Master Business* rise above the pack and shine out as an example of what arcade games should be about. It's like an Atari record, if you know what I mean. **D-D-D-D**

## NEBULUS 2



Price **Amiga £25.99**

Genre **Platform**

*Platform 2000 Century Entertainment* Kixing from the Hercules adobe like a phoenix looking exceptionally like what was it was before it was burnt, *Century Entertainment* aren't having much luck at the moment. Not only are they having some considerable difficulty with their Megadrive product, but the one game that looked like it could actually make them some money has turned out to be somewhat of a disappointment.

The European orders responsible for supplying John Phillips' original character done a lot of a tough job, making the gameplay that made the first game so excellent by piling on lots of extra and useless power-up type features. The classic formula has been totally revamped by the sheer weight of these new 'blows', and so each one body who enjoyed the first game is likely to be very disappointed by this. However, it is quite funny and, at least for those who haven't seen the first game, it's a total washout on the playability front, that while the first game has more ready than the addition of four times the level was. *Nebulus 2* says one it like it wasn't even there. Not recommended. **D-D**

## OUTRUN EUROPA



Price **Atari ST/Amiga £25.99**

### Genre **Racing Game**

Platform **MS-DOS**

So long last! A game that has become a legend, along with the likes of *Star Trek* and *Ball-of-Fire*, over the last couple of years, simply because it's taken so bloody long to come-out. The original idea was to release the product to cash in on the wave of euphoria from the original *Outrun* conversion - which should give you an idea of how long we've been waiting for it. We ended up getting the official word, *Star Outrun* first, which wasn't much cop, and now we've got this, which isn't either.

The basic idea is that the player has to take charge of a variety of vehicles - car, bike and boat - as the team over various levels and one stage to deliver a vital package, while international agencies are out to stop you. It's all a bit ludicrous really, and while's seemingly supposed to be a cross between *Outrun* and *Chase H.Q.*, with extra kinks on it is in fact a bit of a shoddy mess. The road sections aren't much fun to play because control of the vehicle is so bloody sensitive, and the enemy cars just keep on getting in the way in a way that isn't conducive to gameplay at all, but is just very frustrating. The level's don't even bear think about because they're so vague and difficult, and 99% of players will probably get their foot through the window screen within five minutes of loading-up. Talking of loading, the constant disk accessing is a pain in the prostate, and it all hardly seems worth it when it's not even very clear what's actually going on in the game. There are far better race games available so don't waste your precious time pondering over this one. **D**

## PITFIGHTER



Price **Amiga £25.99**

Genre **Beat 'em Up**

Platform **Amiga**

If ever there's a prime example of an excellent conversion of an arcade game into the Amiga it is, if you're on an arcade game then you're probably never been familiar with the game. With its giant monster screens, three sets of player controls and stand-out digitized graphics you could hardly miss it. Trouble was, underneath the unique fluidly-visuals and meanie sound lurked a distinctly dull beat-up, made even worse by the confusion caused by the gaudy-looking graphics. What's your copy 'bleat game'? Is he hitting me or not?

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You know the rest of the story. All in all, a less than rewarding experience.

In converting *Phalinger* to the home system, Topco London have actually improved it a little of a lot. Indeed, if you'll pardon the cliche, chances are you'll like the home game even more. The graphics, which have retained pretty much all of the flash appeal of the coin-up, are clearer, and the slower pace makes the game much easier to play. The joystick controls are a little unresponsive, but it only takes a few goes to get the feeling of things. Not as good a conversion as it is, it still can't compensate for the fact that fundamentally *Phalinger's* about as exciting as tapping the bar on a *Whoozy*. If, in *Phalinger* is pretty much what you spend all your time doing. **D D D**

## RAILROAD TYCOON



Price Amiga £25.99

Genre Strategy  
Publisher MicroPrice

The ACI Newmarket game makes it's way onto the Amiga, and what a fine conversion it is! Building a railroad empire across the USA is the name of the work. *Crusade* may sound like hard work, but for those who like slow strategy, but not too deep, Sid Meier's simulation of that very process is like Fun FUN! We know it's difficult to imagine here, but trust us, it is. The feeling of power is paramount as you lay your track from sea to shining sea, conduct big-time business and generally win loads of cash.

Beginning life as an entrepreneur in the early 40s, you commence a small scale into the biggest state in railroad industry history ever! By taking control of every element in the decision making process which makes the railroad work, the player must handle the details as well as broader political and economic issues, all at the same time as competing with a friend or rival who still works from home. And every element of the game is represented with top-quality graphics to make even the most number-crunching intense sections of the title easy to manage. Inevitably, conflict over territory and the sheer precision of the game design and balance compared with the top-notch power of the Amiga make this version of the game an outright winner. Highly recommended to all and sundry. **D D D D D**

## RISE OF THE DRAGO



Price Amiga £24.99

Genre Adventure  
Publisher Dynamic/Micro On-Line  
*Dragon* series have been ascending to become the first to purchase this the first in a new wave of *Dragon* games led by the perennially popular *Dynamic* team. But they should be warned. While *Amiga* owners get to enjoy just as many visual delights and plot twists as their PC Peas, they pay the price of swapping the console over to use as it slips in and out of your drive for the comparatively brief time.

However, if you're willing to pay the access-time price, this is an extremely rewarding product. The player takes the role of a futuristic detective, a real time-wipe type, chugging his way through a drug added city of chaos. The last remaining obstacle between the mysterious *Dragon* and total control of the entire planet *Planet* is less than obvious. The game uses the copy-right necessary control interface which *Amiga* have made their trademark.

This is another example of the impressive manner in which American companies are so fond of forcing their own flavors, but for once it isn't too bad. There is actually a story here! And there is actually some entertaining to do. The player must investigate the strange drug-related death of the Mayor's daughter, investigate occult activities and do all the other stuff that private investigators have to do. What tops opening other people's mail, hanging out in low-end strip joints. What a life.

And it's all in this lovely hard-driven graphics. Mind you... all these bits... **D D D D**

## ROBIN HOOD



Price IBM PC £26.99

Genre Adventure Strategy  
Publisher Millennium

Merely by not taking the publicity of the recent batch of Lucas games names, Millennium's completely unlicensed version of the tale is completely unimpeachable.

Presented in a classic style, the game sticks to the classic mythology of Robin of Locksley being hunted out of his lair by the evil Sheriff of Nottingham, deserted by his people and left to fend

for himself.

The player, taking the title role of course, must assemble a band of merry men and set about doing away with the many evil Sheriff men and his ilk. An equally important goal for the player is to convince all the peasants and other inhabitants of the forest and its environs that Rob isn't the murdering thieving blagger that the Sheriff has described to them but is a lovely kind hearted.

Aside from combat and shoot-outting, there's a refreshing amount of generally funny dialogue to the game too, with the characters coming up with ideas to the best of their ability.

It's an extremely enjoyable and interactive game adventure even strategy fans who play the game who've never felt they could be the first one so familiar the player is compelled to play through to the very end as much as it physically is, thus diminishing the appeal of extra lives. **D D D D**

## ROBOCOD



Price Amiga £25.99

Genre Platform  
Publisher Millennium

Had about time to. Computer owners have been waiting a long time for a platform game good enough to wear in the face of the many console games, something proud of their names and their names. And here it is.

*Robocod* may few resemble its originality, there are elements of just about every running or jumping game from *Mario*. *Amiga* owners to those somewhere, but thanks to careful design and wise mixing and matching of game styles the end result is far more than the sum of its parts.

As in *Mario IV*, the core game task is simple - get from one end of the level to the other, and jump on the heads of any bad guys/wander past. Of course, in practice there's far more to it than that. Some of the 30+ levels are *Robocod* travelling through the levels in a bounding cut, a splashing prop plane and even an old fashioned ball. There are even mini areas where *Col* swims around - much like he did in the game's proper *James Bond*.

In fact, it's the sheer variety of the game - along with the superbly smooth control over the shipy main character - that makes it make a joy to play. Every level features something new, either in graphics or gameplay, and there's

little chance of boredom setting in. The wonderfully cute sprites, bright and cheerful backgrounds and ring-droppable stars are excellent too. All in all, *Robocod* is a polished, playable and - thanks to *Col* - fun side of platform game that you'll have to be critically mean to be able to. **D D D D D**

## ROBOCOP 3



Price Amiga £25.99

Genre Arcade Beat  
Publisher Beam

*Robocop* is *3D*! Well, it'd never work - would it? Well, the good news is that it does! Indeed, Digital Image Design's sniper stance on the *Robocop* genre makes arguably make it the best to date.

In essence, *Robocop 3* isn't that different from about every other 3D title. It's an amalgam of several game sequences - a lot of shoot 'em-up, a bit of driving, a bit of beat 'em-up - where the simplistic gameplay is compensated for by the sheer variety on offer. However, in this case there's another factor - *3D's* ground-breaking *3D* *3D*.

Besides that watching some sprits leaping about a bit looking the player view the world through *Robo's* eyes as he patrols the streets of Old Detroit on foot, it's a police car and one to the air thanks to his own Gyrocock. The atmosphere generated, especially in the fast paced sequences, is quite incredible. The only weak link is an occasional (but incredibly wrong) chain as a couple of *Robo's* hand to hand combat sequences with a robot. *Wipe* means - no, the combat scenes are limited and the action sluggish.

However, those sequences apart, there are frequent occasions during the game that the player actually does feel as if he's taking part in a film. And at the end of the day, isn't that what you should be hoping a film to be? **D D D D**

## RODLAND



Price Amiga £26.99

Genre Platform  
Publisher Beam

Notwithstanding the fact it may be, but there's no denying that *Rodland* is a fun game. The player sets up man's

particularly noteworthy. Finding itself well in a sea of graphically excellent games upon its release. Now, however, the conversion seems to have crapped up when the highest-profile title game over the moment (Mighty Falcom) has failed to meet expectations.

The player must work his way through a massive suite of screens, collecting points or power-ups and killing monsters with his rod (effectively the taser) by leading them into the flow.

The end of each level is marked by the arrival of a monstrous end-of-level boss who acts as an elephant, who, despite looking about as threatening as a big ball of cotton wool in a leaded fog will do for the player forthwith. Interestingly enough, the player can opt to play a girl if he/she wants, but that it makes much difference in the playing style. And no to horses, the boy looks so bloody fantastic you'd never know anyway.

Overall a stock full of excellent visuals, translated in a fine conversion and it could even be argued to better its role-up parent, as control over the character has been improved. Certainly not a title for gamers into depth or going for Mastering, but a worthwhile worthwhile purchase for anyone else.

**SARAKON**



Price **Atari ST, Amiga, IBM PC £12.99**  
**Genre Puzzle**  
**Publisher: Virgin Games**

Games which call the player might an unlikely range down in history as great entertainers, yet Sarakon, despite making this final mistake in a perfectly decent top-off of the Ark jing tile-slipping business. Basically, if you bring one loop played with some old updated tables and with some complicated 'can't do that' rules, then you're getting close to imagining what Sarakon is all about.

The idea of the game is to click on similar tablets which sit in a particular orientation, eventually leading up with no tablets left, or at least as few as possible before the time limit runs out. Once done, the player is rewarded with a breakdown of his score and a comment from the computer as to his Sarakon ability.

Problems with these puzzle games, however, is that they all look similar enough to make the player want to pick them up and have a go, yet they mean an astonishingly tough rule substance to make doing just that impossible.

The result? The Ark jing player will feel informed that he can't make his normal every work.

The presentation is first class, apart from the clumsy sound effects and music which don't much create the ambience of the far flung as a grabby take-away in Finland.

If comparatively under mouse-clicking in your bag and your eyes are tired reading at the expense the ages while you search your head, Sarakon is the game for you.

© 1992

**SECRET WEAPONS OF THE LUFTWAFFE**



Price **IBM PC £40.99**  
**Genre Simulation**  
**Publisher: Laserline/US Gold**

Deep, deep, deep. Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe is a big old game and no mistake. It's also the request the critically acclaimed *Three Faces Alice*. The title comes packed with new goodies but brings the same problems of the first game; i.e. the flicky and rather horrible language graphics.

The player is offered the chance to

plot itself in a seemingly limitless number of historical missions, shooting or guarding planes and taking place in actual battles and scenarios of the Second World War.

However, played in a Wing Commander style with footage taking the place of the polygons so frequent it and occasionally used in other flight sims, Luftwaffe will have all but the owners of the game machines harrumphing down the dirt level in the attempt to get it to run at an acceptable rate. Ambitious players can fire differ their own missions to determine what history would have named one like if there was just one less Massachusetts 80000 in a particular combat situation. Luftwaffe is exactly the sort of game - an action from Wing Commander that you actually want to make excess fun. And that's simply down to the fact that under the by-hand graphics which actually look pretty almost every now and again, there is a quite brilliant game.

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**Price** *Amiga* £89.95, £29.99

**Genre** *Platform*

**Publisher** *Intelligence*

There, the game that started it all, may be getting on a bit tired, but there's always room for a new puzzle game on the market. The only problem is that the vast majority of puzzles that have been waiting upon these shores from America and Europe have either been of substandard low quality, or just too weird to get the local crowd.

Steve Colton from Intelligence, a company that prides itself on its self-taught skills, the struggle into the latter category. It's played over a large board made up of hundreds of tiny coloured diamonds where the objective is to change in many diamonds to your colour, spreading them like a virus across the screen faster than your opponent does. The first player to fill 50% of the screen area is the winner. It's difficult enough to understand when you're actually playing the game, so don't worry if you're a little foggy after that brief explanation.

In fact the major problem with the game is that it's not easy to understand, and because things just seem to happen it's not very easy to keep track, or indeed to work out what's going on at all. The confusing situa-

tion is further compounded because the instructions hardly explain anything at all. Pensive players may well get something out of it however, and there's a variety of game options to spice up the action if they do. Oh, and there's some very nice in-game classical music which suits the nature of the game perfectly and is very soothing indeed. In fact even if you get bored of the game, it's worth loading up every now and again just to be transported into quietude.

☆☆

**SILENT SERVICE II**



**Price** *Amiga* £29.99

**Genre** *Simulation*

**Publisher** *Microprose*

It may have taken five years, but the sequel to one of the most critically acclaimed and publicly adulated sim games is finally with us. *Silent Service II* features all the best bits from the first game as well as a host of original and new *dos*-bits.

Original graphics and sampled sounds simply confirm the *Service* as a game which is undoubtedly one of

the most detailed, accurate and realistic on the market, but new gamers should be warned that, just like *DO* on a real submarine, it's not all walking, or action.

No. There's a lot of the old *Service II*. The first half with tiring old options to scroll up on every warship without altering their color. And so on for that tank blowing stuff. I ask you!

Microprose are undoubtedly the single type of all things sim, but their policy of increasing the action and maintaining the *dis*wording as well as such good effects as *Play* *Strike* *Light* I would be well extended to this particular title.

For gamers wishing to purchase an accurate sub simulation, rest assured, there is absolutely none better. But those expecting to get their reprieve off straight away would be better to wait for a more accessible equivalent.

☆☆☆☆

**SMASH TV**



**Price** *Amiga* £29.99

**Genre** *Arcade Blast*

**Publisher** *Ocean*

"Good luck - you're gonna need it" screams the store's only computer, and never has there been more words said. This conversion of the incredibly violent Williams coin-op has translated surprisingly well to the home system, with nearly all the blood and thunder elements to be loved if the original period seems familiarly.

The game takes the form of a five-man game show, where once two contestants armed with a rapid-fire gun slug it out with a seemingly endless parade of things, bombs and guns to win big money and prizes in a single-screen arena. There's ups and eads of more bad guys add to the already phenomenal stage.

On a purely visual level, it's immensely satisfying as the plugged opponents explode into red gobs of flesh. Indeed, the splats are still enough to be almost anybody you want them to be, so you can imagine that you're shooting up real-life clones of your boss if you want to. Very dramatic.

As a single player game it's fine, though there's a serious risk that the *boom* may well set in seemingly early. The two-player game, on the other hand, is something else. There's not been player-to-player shooting like this

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since *Kill Off*.

The coin-op's two joystick ports to move, one to direct fire have translated adequately to a single controller, though if you have two there is an option to use both which makes the game far better.

A superb conversion, and more than deserving of your hard-earned pennies. On that, you decide your-  


## THUNDERHAWK



Price Amiga £20.99

Genre Simulation

Publisher Core Design

Most flight sims require a good deal of practice before any reward can be garnered from them. All these keyboard controls and interminable aircraft functions do quite a lot to put off anyone looking for a quick blast. Core Design have seen this gap in the market, and more than adequately filled it with *Thunderhawk*. All control is via the mouse, which makes everything, from weapon selection to helicopter control, quick and easy. It's a welcome change from the usual tawdry sea of clicks and non-clicks.

The game itself is broken down into a series of campaigns, each presented by a graphic briefing sequence indicating target and terrain type. Before taking to the sky the player must select the appropriate armaments for the *Thunderhawk*, although there's a default if this seems to much of a chore.

What makes the game a treat is the handling of the helicopter. The controls make flying intuitive, letting the player get on with the mission rather than fiddling to stay airborne. Graphics are smooth, and more at a fair click, though there isn't much background scenery. If you've never been trapped over a light air, then this is the game to change your attitude.  


## UTOPIA



Price Amiga £25.99

Genre Arcade Strategy

Publisher Demulce

The quality of life on earth, let's face it, sucks. And the world is screwed up so bad that nothing anyone can do can save it. We need to start again.

This is the premise of *Utopia*, another

or *Papillon*, *Teen-mage* style alien. Except this time the aim, rather than simply ruling a world or conquering it is to construct and run it, and to make all its inhabitants feel really good! The aim is to elevate the quality of life to earth - *Utopia*.

It's not difficult to grasp the aims and controls of the game. And it quickly becomes apparent that there are lots of problems thrown up by the idea of making everyone happy. For a start, if you spend all the money on hospitals, food production and month-long sports festivals, your population will be miserable. But without any visible defence when the inevitable computer-controlled alien attack comes.

Beginning from just a few key buildings, it's up to the player to construct the colony using iron-driven workers while improving the world to scientific *gD*. There are almost no rules in this society. You can do things virtually any way you want.

The only factor that is missing in the option to try and run things as a disinterested engine and make a certain part of the population very happy while keeping the workers ground-down into the dirt. Still, that never works, does it?  


## VOLFIED



Price Atari ST/Amiga £24.99

Genre Arcade Action

Publisher Demulce

*Qix* is back in town, and better than ever! No matter how widely quoted may differ among the gaminging fraternity, *Qix* is hard pushed to find anybody who doesn't enjoy a game of good old *Qix*. In its appeal is universal because it's so simple and addictive, and like *Breakout*, its gameplay has stood the test of time. What *Volfied* (powered from Data's coin-op) represents is a new version of the original classic - it's to *Qix* what *Atlantis* was to *Breakout* (keeping the original framework intact, but adding lots of fancy backgrounds, power-ups and extra features).

For the most part it's much the same - show boxes around the screen to fill up 75% or more of the screen area with the fireworks which make up the line itself getting hit by any of the muzzling enemies - which, instead of the old gawling foe, now takes the form of a giant mothbait that runs about spitting about bullets, and a con-

pile of pesky little helpers. Lasers and openings are among the collectibles, while high-tech backgrounds and *MX* provide the aesthetic overhaul.

Since *Qix*-style games are so thin on the ground, *Volfied*, with its classy execution and structural gameplay is a welcome addition to the software scene - and if you've got any street and admiration for the classic, you'll add your collection too.  


## VROOM



Price Atari ST £24.99

Genre Racing Game

Publisher Lambton

Without wanting to be nasty to our European counterparts, who with *Qix* and all that, it has to be said that most of the software that crosses over from the continent is a bit staid. *Vroom*, however, from French publisher Lambton, has proven itself to be the exception to the rule. Although it's not a patch on the likes of *IndyBench 300* or *Formula One Grand Prix*, *Vroom* is nevertheless a fully upper-echelon game, boasting very impressive speed as the player steers his way (hence the name) around a first-person environment.

It's got all the usual features and fittings - rear-view mirror, pitstop, overhead maps, bridges, dips and hills on the track, raining modes, qualifying laps, boxes of coconuts and some spectacular crash sequences. It's most interesting game that simulates, as controls and instrumentation has been kept to a minimum - there's nothing too much to worry about here apart from going very fast, avoiding the other cars and keeping on the road. And it works well enough, being very playable and smoothly game-computer, with the array of racing options adding to the game's longevity. The only design factor in that the *pitstop* option is restricted to the arcade mode - the more serious race options only allow manual control. Very handy indeed, but apart from that, not so all bad.  


## WILLY BEAMISH



Price IBM PC £24.99

Genre Adventure

Publisher Dynamix/ Sierra On-Line

The Adventures of Willy Beamish, is

given its full name, is somewhat of a oddity. Involving interactive cartoon, it's not of a serious nature. The *Wilder Years* and *The Simpson* *Willy* is the typical all-American trouble-making preteen schoolkid, complete with grabby hands, got frog and accordingly stereotypical family. Strange things are afoot in suburbia of Princeton, and *Willy* must investigate.

*Willy* is not another of those games that sounds a whole lot better than it actually is. That's not to say that it's bad, but the gameplay is very trial-and-error, with both often playing over of a part than skill or judgement. As such, more time is spent entering saved games than actually playing, and it can get quite frustrating at times, especially when you have to sit through the tutorial sequence for the complete time. As an interactive cartoon, it's excellent, with suitably stereotypical characters, some funny jokes and gorgeous visuals. As a game it's compelling, but not in a way that encourages and addition or involvement. You're unlikely to come back to again and again.  


## WING COMMANDER II



Price IBM PC £24.99

Genre Arcade Action

Publisher Origin

No matter what else you might say about the *Wing Commander* games, they look flawed. And, the trouble is, there isn't really much else to say about them. *Wing* pulls apart a little hard but here is the expert to the much talked-about and time-played original. It's very much a case of more of the same.

Interstellar war with the *Kilrathi* continues, and in the most recent *Kilrathi* history, the *Confederates* flagship *Tiger's Claw* has been destroyed by invincible *Kilrathi* death fighters. As the sole survivor of the assault, the player must first convince his Federation comrades that the attack did genuinely take place and then lead a *Rebellion* force to track them down and destroy them.

Graphically excellent although particularly processor heavy, *Wing Commander II* certainly isn't a billion games. It's a worthy sequel to its predecessor but in the end it's where that trio of games about trying before buying is really appropriate.  


# WIN!

## £2000 of software

1) How old are you (tick an appropriate)?

- 11
- 12
- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17-18
- 19-20
- 21-25
- 26-30
- Over 30

2) Are you

- At school
- At college
- At university
- In full-time employment
- In part-time employment

3) How frequently do you buy ACE?

- Occasionally
- Often
- Very often

4) Which computer(s) do you own?

- Amiga
- PC
- Atari
- Nintendo/Atari
- Sega Master System
- Super Nintendo
- Sega MegaDrive
- Yamaha
- Commodore
- Commodore
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

5) Which, if any, do you intend to buy within the next 6 months?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

6) Where do you buy your games?

- Mail order
- High street store
- Independent computer store

7) How much do you spend on games software each month?

- £0-£5
- £6-£10
- £10 or more

8) Do you intend to purchase any of the following over the next 6 months?

- Keyboard
- Second disk drive
- Mouse
- Monitor
- Sound Card for PC
- Memory upgrade
- Digitizer

9) Which type of games do you prefer (examples are in brackets)? (You can tick more than one)

- Arcade Blast (Strike)
- Arcade Adventure (Kodak)
- Sport Simulations (Nascar)
- Sports Arcade (Kick Off 1)
- Strategy (Civilization)
- Real Time (D&D)
- Racing Game (Street Car)
- Rating Simulation (Formula)
- Simulation (Chuck Yeager)
- Role Playing Games
- Adventure (Monkey Island)
- Action Strategy (Populous)
- Puzzle Games (Tetris)
- Platform Game (Mario)

10) What other magazines do you read regularly?

- PC Review
- CU Amiga
- PC Format
- Amiga Format
- Amiga Power
- Sega Power
- Nintendo Power
- Computer and Video Games
- ST The One
- Amiga The One
- Zen
- Game Zone

11) How many people other than you self will read the issue of ACE?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4-6
- 7 or more

12) Which of these games publishers do you consider to be the best?

- ES Gold
- Ocean
- Gremlin
- Image Works/Miramax
- Mikropose
- Prologix
- Vega
- Sony-on-Line
- Academy
- Core Design

13) Rank the following features in ACE from 1 to 10 (10 being the best)

- News
- Letters
- In The Works
- Cap White's Preview
- The 6-Page Newsletter
- The Console Page
- The Reviews Directory

14) Do you use the Reviews Directory to decide which games to buy?

- Yes
- No

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

If I win I would like software for the \_\_\_\_\_ machine.

Thanks for your time.

Yes. That's right. We want to know more about the sort of people who read ACE Magazine, and that means YOU. We're so interested in fact, that we're willing to offer TEN readers £200 worth of software, absolutely free. And all you need to do in order to become eligible one of the ten lucky recipients of some top quality software for your machine is to answer the questions below. Come on, don't be shy. By giving us this information, you can help us tweak and twiddle with ACE's finer points and make the magazine absolutely as you like it!





# the bitter end

**E**ven since Bulling Productions' games-jawed programmer Tom Cooper stepped onto the catwalk in the Chelsea Show Hotel of the Year finale (see reported in the March issue), it seems that all manner of games designers and programmers are opening up a file in his biography by getting a bit of tarty TV exposure for themselves.

The latest to jump on the media bandwagon is equally handy and career-inducing ex-ee Andrew Macken, who popped in to do a guest spot on ITV's oft-to-forever Saturday morning kids' show *Mammoth* this month.

Officially he was there to present his latest game, the rather jolly James White's *Whitewind* Genesis, but that didn't stop him getting in a few considerable looks to camera (if not exactly the right camera... it's the one with the red light on, itchy and generally emitting the faintest members of the audience into a state of nervous flaming ecstasy. It was probably all that talk about success and mammothed formats - that always gets the kids going, Blitter would like to clarify a couple of things, however, yes, if Archer's game is so bloody great how come newly presenter Andy Cross hasn't in a head-to-head putting race? And yes, why did Virgin only give *Mammoth* 7400 copies of the game to give away in the competition? Would you see you, your generosity will get us back up at this rate...

Every now and again, Blitter is worried just what a marketing bunch of boys the software industry is comprised of. It's a recent computer show in Cologne, a line of top-level delegates from three of the leading software houses decided to have a night on the town - apparently *Amstrad*'s considering around the hotel and filling the bills up with shares from the lobby presented to him then retiring and they sought entertainment of a hooping nature. Unfortunately, when they tried to get

into the hotel's nightclub they were turned away at the door by a lovely barman on the account of the fact that they were wearing jeans. So, while one of these aspiranters ran with the doorman, the other two waited off, annoyed their pants and came back money their pants. And although this was obviously hilarious, the legendarily knowledgeable German doorman was less than amused and thus proceeded to stick one up on the third member of the group? The real twist is that while the punished one was off to the hotel to put some ice on his squashed nose, the other two put some proper trousers on and were actually let into the club!

Talking of dodge going on at shows, word reaches us of a very interesting story concerning a certain member of a high-profile programming team. Apparently, while at a games exhibition in France, one celeb friend happened to temporarily swapped for cash on a night when he was supposed to be going out on the town. So, in desperate need of funds, he took a bunch of T-shirts, scrawled his autograph on each one and lowered them out to streetwise French punters for a hundred francs - gas in real money - a third! Our mate apparently did a roaring trade, and though the night was not had enough quite in his bid to have a night without nights out, it was just that price added to it. The John Harvey Jones had better watch out...

Call us old fashioned, but here at ACE we've always assumed that the only way a game could get a *Trailblazer* award was from the magazine's given one. This little point is obviously far too stale and old hat for progressive software house Core Design, who were shod and stuck a *Trailblazer* logo on

its advertising for riving game *Hamidul*, even though it only scored 899 last month and therefore didn't receive one. We took briefly with the idea of not giving Core's latest, *Whitewind*, the *Trailblazer* it deserves so as to even the score a bit, but Art Blitter Jim had already indicated it in, so we didn't have the heart to take it out.

Over the last few months, Blitter has learned a very important lesson - if you get invited to any kind of Microsoft party or function, DON'T GO. They're posed. Initially we thought it was just an isolated incident when a certain member of the ACE team had a bit of extremely bad luck a few months back at a Microsoft show. But then word reached us that Amiga Power editor Matt Kelly and Sega Power day editor Ned 'Dino's' West also seem also to have the dreaded Curse of Microsoft upon them.

Remembering that a Microsoft bash a few months back, the pair were embroiled (and thoroughly outmaneuvered, we are told) by a group of wags and roughed up. And only this month, while on the way home from another Microsoft party during *Future Publishing's* World of Commodore Show, the hapless pair were an open-door again. This time a mysterious unknown Scotswoman set about the fairly doc, dealing out a couple of wobbly-looking truck sandwiches. This, we feel, makes Ned and Matt the most disadvantaged tag team in software history. If you read any reviews by them of *Dino's* WWF over the next couple of months, don't pay any attention because they obviously don't know what they're talking about.

Staying with Microsoft for a bit longer, it seems that not everyone who has worked with the company is completely satisfied. Take the aforementioned

Commodore Show party for instance. Though a generous amount of money was put behind the bar, it didn't take long for it to get drunk. Actually, it didn't take anybody very long to get drunk. But anyway, the story is when the few booze finally ran out and the drinks started costing, the poor little warts at *AmigaPower* software couldn't afford to get another round in.

A fairly widespread rumour only two months later *Trailblazer*, a *First Party* and three games in real money. But never fear! All that was required was a quick trip over to see Microsoft's only party marketing Director Sean Brennan, and suddenly the boys were back in business. Big-hearted Sean whipped out his wallet and provided off two crisp hundred of his own money for the boys to go and have a drink with. It seems Captain Cash's days are numbered. So if you're short of a few bob, why not give them a call at the usual Microsoft number and no-doubt he'll be happy to give you some free money.

Andrew Braybrook has written a new game! Unfortunately you won't be able to play it - unless of course you run along to a new exhibition that's being organised by Powergen. It'll be to do with a new power station that's being opened by David Ingham or something, it's called *Substation*, and you have to run around this power station collecting coal and stuff - you know the sort of thing. So there you go.

We just remembered something else about Ned from out of *Sega Power*. He's so healthy that he can't even get into his own pants! Once again, it all happened at the Commodore Show, when organisers Future were staging an alternative and the party in the London Congress for their top industry mates. Though everyone knew Ingham was intended for top games only, Ned was apparently shooting his mouth off about how he was going to get in, so next, but when he turned up on the night, Future top-boys Greg Ingham and Steve Curry immediately refused to let him in! But never mind, he's not one of the bad lots of either top industry parties to go to. And as an added bonus, Ned is now (officially) credited in the *First Party* under of Unconventional Party Contributors.

Look out - he's back!

# PAPERBOY

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