

WE NAME THE BEST GAMES EVER



What's the best:

- ☐ Shoot 'Em Up
- ☐ Combat Game
- ☐ Platform Game
- ☐ Flight Sim
- ☐ Sports Sim
- ☐ Arcade Adventure
- ☐ Racing Sim
- ☐ Cheapo
- ☐ Adventure

The toughest team of reviewers in the business name 'em.

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This seemed like a good idea when we started and a pretty simple one at that. Pick out the best games and categorise them suitably. So we scribbled down a few ideas in the pub and went back to the office satisfied. Boy did we blow it!

The closer we looked at it the harder it became. Entire sections were added rapidly and all kinds of horrible difficulties in categorising things cropped up. How would you describe *Fort II*, *Hacker*, or *Little Computer People*? Games don't always fit perfect, neat little pigeon holes (thank God).

SUPERSTARS isn't intended primarily as a guide (although you can use it as such) because it's just not comprehensive enough. We'd need to write a book for that (anyone listening out there)? Treat it as more of a **C.U. REVIEWER'S CHOICE** than a bible.

We picked nine of the most important categories that games seem to fall into. That took a bit of doing. The ones you are about to read include some games that incorporate many other aspects. Perhaps among you will probably towel at finding **ELITE** and **MERCENARY** described as arcade adventures, but how else do you fit them in? Trading games? How name nine other good ones. Tough isn't it?

So you've got to accept there are omissions here. Ball bearing games for example — we nearly classed them as arcade adventures as well, but then decided to give them a miss, not because we don't like them or we don't think there are any good versions, but simply because we didn't have the space.

So no more apologies, you'll have to accept our arbitrary decisions on categories. You're perfectly welcome, of course, to disagree with our choices and chart placings of the games — and if you do then we begin and tell us about it as well. But at least we've had our say and you'll understand just what turns us on every time we give a game a Screen Star, or more importantly a Superstar, which from now on will be awarded to games which really make the earth move.

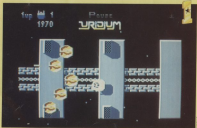
Hopefully the whole booklet will be out of date in six months, and we won't care because that'll mean there's some excellent new games on the way! Now if you'll excuse us we've got a collective headache and we'd like to be down for a while...

3	Shoot 'Em Ups	15	Arcade Adventure
6	Combat Games	18	Racing Sims
9	Platform Games	20	Budget Games
10	Flight Sims	21	Adventures
12	Sports Sims		

SHOOT 'EM UPS

Probably the most popular form of game at home or in the arcades is the shoot 'em up. This is the kind of video game which allows you to indulge the worst aspects of your nature. Blow away everything in sight. Wipe out anything that moves and often anything that won't. Great jets of laser fire, bolts of photon torpedoes, flamethrowers, rockets, bullets, knives, it doesn't matter as long as plenty of the enemy get wasted in the process. It's all hand-to-eye co-ordination, there's no real thinking involved, just speed of reactions and fast accurate shooting.

The shoot 'em up never really waned in popularity, not even when arcade adventures or icos were the flavour of the month. There were always a few knocking around. Until this year that is, when we went into full scale blast mania. Dozens of finger twitching games have appeared, many clones, but most of them straight from the arcades. If you agree with this, then it'll be a miracle, but most of them deserve a place on the roll-of-honour.



When you consider it all began with Space Invaders it's pretty ridiculous that there's never been a half-decent version of it available. Maybe though that's because people were concentrating on the new breed of arcade games when the 64 appeared. That's why one of our top shoot 'em ups comes on this box — and that's going back a bit. When Defender was the best action game to play there were a number of clones appearing. Best of all, and totally unimproved, was Atari's version, GUARDIAN. It often pulled out everything the coin-op did.

You could help out reduce the debt DROFZOME owed Defender as well. Programmer Richer Macken took that and mixed it with Gun Gun to produce a stunningly fast shooter. The sparks from the explosions looked as if they could burn your controls out, and it seemed as if there was never a moment's peace from one volcano or another as you tried to like humankind's frailty.



There's no toughness in it, putting, Arcade.

You can't really sit and write something about shoot 'em ups and Defender without mentioning Jeff Minter. From the moment the gas that game Llamasoft's bigger box-speed out games inspired by the horizontally scrolling roller blader and fashioned by his pen, arm, animal-headed imagination. There's a whole host of them for bigger happy gamers. If you like his style you can choose from Mutant Camels, Mama Llama, Meta-

galactic Llamas, Into Aids and Llamasoft but our favourite is B&B's for combining all the best aspects of the other axis games selections are. Colour, speed, playability and execution they're all there.

Most of the games in this section are either conversions or rip-offs from the arcade and since we're dipping back in time for some of these we've got to mention LAMDA. The Sega game has been superseded many ways since, but Dataeast's conversion was faithful and testing (well it was testing if you didn't use the cheat, and we don't need that do we?) Basically it was the 3D diagonal scrolling and rotated view that made it staggering.

Mario's DRAZY CORN is was also inspired by the arcade. Based on Tait's Space machine it pitches you into the stars to go berserk among myriad forms of galactic matter running wildly out of control. Spectacular, hectic and pretty all at



the same time.

Since then people have stopped looking to the arcades simply for inspiration and give the whole thing with licensed conversions by the dozen. The most gathered pace with two of the bigger conversions of the year, Capcom's version of *GREEN BERET* was eagerly awaited and now reviewed and supported. They did agree on one thing: much of the cash-up into the 84 with little apparent loss of playability. Excellent sound effects, realistic, colourful backgrounds, smooth scrolling and great animation were the hallmarks of an excellent all-round game that's lively today, high in any other character for a long time to come.



Two worthy attempts to break your wrist and put holes in your joints: finger came from *Elite*, the best, *GREEN AND SOBER* was as eagerly awaited as *Green Beret*. Although it takes you to a route to the end of the world, it's more of a puzzle than a shoot 'em up. It was a popular choice among arcade fans and a faithful conversion pleased about a few.

Less polished and impressive (just like the arcade machine in the regard) was this version of 1942, one which shoot 'em up was based on lightning off different flight patterns. It had that degree of toughness and playability that means you just couldn't put down *1942* as you get back to it.

One game though wasn't immediately recognisable as an arcade conversion, let's just say it was another of those titles in which what was in the arcade, that a talented programmer, Andrew Grayson, took and fashioned into his own game.

UNICORN was Starforce 7 tipped on its side and adapted to the home computer. Super slick scrolling, fast blasting, a touch of thought needed as you played and plenty of stamina. For its instant playability and its ensuring entertainment we rate this as the best so far.

A game like *Unicorn* opens plenty of doors itself — most of them bad. One that wasn't was *SAMURAI*, a promising start from a new software

house, *Thalamus*. With games like this and their forthcoming *Delta* and *DT2* *Lightforce* is a new generation of sophisticated looking already on the way.

Last year, 1989 was the Year of the Shoot 'em Up, but *Thunder Blazing* is likely to continue well into next year with the conversions of *Space Harrier*, *Andross* and *Temp Crest* just being completed. There'll be more for the week. The battle's only just begun!

C 16 AND PLUS/4

Naturally there's also selected shoot 'em ups for these machines including a fair share of the arcade conversions. *REACH FOR THE SKY* was an average rip-off of 1942, whilst *Dino's Commands* proved rather easy meat for seasoned gamers when it appeared on the C16.

The old classics have appeared suitably enough, though I took *Jeff Minter* long enough to produce a version of *Unicorn* gone. Among

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN meanwhile is a pretty useful version of the old war game, whilst *Rock* have successfully cloned *Green Beret* in *WROGGERHEAD* and *Spindell* have put together every useful version of *Migault's Command* in *WHO DARES WINS II*. It's all pretty average stuff to trigger happy gamers but I think this is one category we definitely will see an improvement in this year.

POS.	GAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WHEN REVIEWED	CRITIC'S TOP
1	<i>UNICORN</i> Current status: the yet-blasting. A new version in the pipeline	House Consultants (Bucknell)	March 89	■
2	<i>Chaos</i> The ultimate defense strategy game. Exhausting, tedious	US Gold	Aug 88	
3	<i>Green Beret</i> A classic in arcade conversions. Fantastic, entertaining and cheap	Capcom	July 88	■
4	<i>Quantum</i> Shouldn't you want your computer to be... Only available on completion now	Aligata	NA	
5	<i>Dino's Commands</i> More exciting blasting among the dinosaurs and a great soundtrack	Marble	Dec 88	
6	<i>Shots in Space</i> A more fun sci-fi shoot 'em up scenario with some strategy	Elite	July 88	■
7	<i>Samurai</i> Combines just about every element of Jeff Minter's games	Lampsoft	Nov 88	
8	<i>1942</i> Not a dream to watch, but certainly a nightmare to play. Tough and with the	Elite	Nov 88	■
9	<i>Jason</i> Responsive shoot 'em up with 3D graphics and superb scrolling. Settle your wits about on 'em	US Gold	Dec 88	■
10	<i>Samurai</i> By the sword it conquers. <i>Aligata's</i> reimagined — almost a masterpiece in its own right	Thalamus	Nov 88	

COMBAT GAMES

This category includes just about anything which involves doing physical damage to someone or something without any severe overworking of the old grey matter. The combat game or beat 'em up, is all down to timing and skill as you attempt to make contact with your adversary using fists, feet or weapons.

The best beat 'em ups give you an innate sense of satisfaction when you overcome an opponent. They make you walk tall, act mean and talk tough. That's because they give you the impression you're responsible for the damage inflicted on your opponent. It's all macho manipulation and role play but it's good fun and no more violent than 'Tom and Jerry'.



1 PLAYER

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If you rule out Bruce Lee as a platform game, you have to look to Melbourne House's epic *THE EXPLODING FIST* as the closest thing to the real thing. It really is the grandfather of combat games and in some respects it still is the best. Nothing like it had ever appeared on the 64. Much to inspiration from the *Punchy Champ* arcade machine and in many ways improved it in terms of speed and sound — an achievement in itself. *FIST* offered the player large sprites, neat, colourful graphics and sixteen possible moves. You were in total control of the fight.

Fist Club is Melbourne's, our office went mad with people queuing up to play (circulating the computer home at the weekends). Subsequently the game went on to sell over a quarter of a million and spawn about dozen. Most of them awful — with one exception. *INTERNATIONAL KARATE*, which barely made any attempt to change the style or format of the game when it was released a year later. What it did do was enhance just about every element of the Melbourne House game. It was basically: much faster, had better sound and sped effects courtesy Rob Hubbard and all round gameplay. It was, deep breath, big time — date of

the art. That's why it's our top fought. Numerous.

Melbourne House meanwhile, had already continued their line of innovation with *ROCK AND WRESTLE*, sprunt and puppie game which tried to take the *FIST* gameplay one further. The graphic effect was 3D, enabling you to look the ring and even stand on the ropes. They went for a massive twenty-two moves — more skill and more thought was needed — but more playtime wasn't. No one's likely to do

anything as bold since which is sorry. We live in hope. *Exp's Championship Wrestling* has picked up the theme and turned it in a very playable game indeed.

The boxing games that appeared just over a year ago constitute a separate area of text left up. These took their inspiration from the arcade (where it's) which were full of machines like *Rocky* and *Super Ruckus* at the time. Of these the most innovative was Elite's *FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING* which copied



Super Funcher and gave us a well-trained Frank Bruno. Activision's **BARBIE** (MCGRAW) AND **WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BOXING** was really an action game, while **U.S. SOCCER FIGHT** (NEC) was quite playable, but pretty tough.

The FDS clones keep coming from the die cheats like **Ning Mader** is the sick representations like **UCHI MADA** which acted for jobs instead of looks for a good quality. However, the arcade machine criterion figure rights in our chart. **U.S. SOCCER FIGHT** (F), **MASTER** and **Queen**, **REAR KICKING** (F) and **U.S.** Both were pretty good representations of the arcade machine and make you fighting opponent after opponent. In **REAR** if you walk across the screen like **FIGHTING** (F), **MASTER** — the sprites are larger and more distinct, but both games have a limited amount of moves.

Melbourne House was again at the forefront with games which armed you with weapons when they released **FIGHTING** (MAGNET). The number of fighting moves attempted to mirror FDS's options, but the game wasn't a success. **Demolition** (U.S. FDS) was an improvement but not as good as its Spectrum predecessor, while **KNIGHT GAMES** was a sort of medieval sports sim with its shooting options being the most playable. The well-animated sword and axe fighting was still a bit of the free button and hope to be enduringly playable. And the usual about legend of Page the better.

KARATEKA brought an arcade adventure approach to the genre and succeeded. It takes some getting used to this one and in fact plays as if it's running in slow-mo. The other approach is the **FIGHT** it, of course, which not only has a new fighting tournament on the second side but offers an immediate playing area like the first, despite the bugs, and although it falls between two categories we rate it as another step forward.

Considering the central game is such a popular genre, it's surprising how poor quality most of it is. Games

like **THAI BOXING** which look graphically appealing and offer a fairly focused in some way, in this case by simply being too easy. We've already dismissed the infamous **Ning Mader** as a dreadful cheat, but what can be said in mitigation of games like **MAZDA ROMAN**, which was so close to **Gold** didn't even dare send us a review copy? No more busy clones.

The future will no doubt open more

market segments. Everyone's eagerly awaiting **System F** (NEC) 16-bit, which sounds like a FDS clone and will probably take us long to wait.

Will it take another Melbourne House-type prodigy to turn games into greater things — more control, more moves? Grasshopper, we're strictly limited by our imagination and programming skill...

C 16 AND PLUS/4

Martial arts games couldn't help but transfer to the C16 and Plus/4 but the transition hasn't been too happy, it probably takes a bit too much of the machine's memory and lack of sprites, which makes decent animation difficult. Based on the bunch really has to be **FRANK BRUNO'S** (Jagex) from Elite, which managed not to lose moving figures but still isn't that playable. Otherwise you have to look to Endeavour Games' version of **INTERNATIONAL KARATE**, which is graphically good again, has all the

moves, but is tremendously easy.

With a typical imagination, **REAR KICKING** which was graphically fine but really buggy. The only other games of this kind we can think of is **FIGHTING** (F) from Gremlin and **THAI BOXING** which even embarrassed Amos.

It's a bit bit that someone else is going to try again for these two computers, so just better hope they do better than this lot, because they certainly can't to anyone. Can they?

FDS GAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WHEN REVIEWED	SYSTEM RATING
1 International Karate Not too bad, but a bit out of control about many aspects.	System 1	June 85	
2 Ward the Exploding Fist The best, the inspiration and still hugely entertaining.	Melbourne House	July 85	■
3 Fight — The Legend Continues The next step. Slightly out of control and a bit boring.	Melbourne House	Nov 85	■
4 Karateka Clever and elegant, but flawed in some ways by loading problems.	Imagines	Nov 85	
5 The Fighting Fists An improved sequel. More than a bit rough, but moves to get you in the ring.	Imagines	Dec 85	
6 King of the Ring Successful conversion with limited moves but plenty of opponents.	U.S. Gold	Mar 86	
7 Rock and a Hard Place Speed but ambitious attempt to take the genre to a new level.	Melbourne House	Feb 86	■
8 Kick Me A new angle, quite technically proficient, accurate representation.	Martin	Nov 86	
9 Way of the Tiger Combat game with weapons — not without merit, but it's a bit odd.	Gremlin	Aug 86	
10 Kick Me Old ideas about the boxing game, really boring and the most boring.	Elite	Oct 86	

PLATFORMS

Late '84 and early '85 saw the games business totally dominated by the platform game. Every software house in the land had jumped (sic) on the bandwagon. Some truly brilliant inventive games came out of what appears to be a limited style.



There's a thing about the platform game: it that it looks like becoming rapidly extinct.

At the beginning of '85 platform games were the height of good gaming taste. Software houses moved sheep-like into development of ever more complex platforms.

The early Hong clones featured a simple vertical climb. Once you got to the top of one screen and found yourself at the bottom of the next.

JET-SET WILLIE changed all this by adding movement in three other directions. It now became necessary to flap the playing area as they became even bigger. You needed to start collecting things as you travelled — using them on certain screens.

Apart from the odd chaos not much seems to have happened this year: it was a classic, but inevitable case of overkill. It's more than 124 when you consider this category boasts what we consider to be just about the best game of all time — IMPOSSIBLE MISSION.

Don't write off the platform game yet, after all, who would have thought that shoot 'em ups would have dominated the charts this year?

C 16 AND PLUS-4

Things went full circle with the release of the C16 and Plus-4. The first releases all seemed to be conversions of 16-bit platform games. Though it's only in the last few months that strictly useful versions of Jet Set Willie appeared. Synex's also great job converting MONTEY 1-0, P.U.N. They packed just about

everything including some very sweet and colourful graphics. Software Projects didn't do quite such a good job as Minter, Minter, but it's still head and shoulders above most of the cheap table-top fare. But it's a pity much of the C16 software isn't like Jet Set Willie.

POS	GAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WHEN RELEASED	NOTES
1	Impossible Mission	Eigen	April 85	Probably the best platform game in the line-up. Best graphics, best sound effects, an interesting obstacle that challenges. Simply superb.
2	Manique De Run	Demis Graphics	Oct 85	Much more than a game with a superb soundtrack. Really tough screens — but achieving all this and more in one game. A platform game on platform game.
3	Goldfish	Paces Software	June 85	Austere platform game a stage further. More atmosphere and not graphically overwhelming.
4	Basic Miner	Suplora	Sept 84	Introduced totally new PC techniques like mine mining, traps, and multiple teleports.
5	Dynaball Gun	Mintersoft	Dec 85	Scores are in originally — but if you like your platform game your collection is out of control without this one.
6	Wagner	Aligata		Aligata came up with the original idea of a computer to the world the best of modernity. Colorful, the music is great. The game is well and truly a masterpiece.
7	Foot	Subsoft	March 85	Thought, action, style, animation in a platform game to the extreme.
8	Head Hat Man			Only the second American game in the line-up. It offered some real tricks like a certain fire to Man, and was long and interesting.
9	Beauty Ball: The Challenge	UFGAL	June 85	Sequel to Minter 2048. Combines collecting pills and standard platform fare.
10	Runabout 2	Oscon	Aug 85	Designed by various readers to begin with their own game, and finally.

FLIGHT SIMS

Since they first appeared in an attempt to provide the thrills of real-life flight simulations, video game sims have been getting more and more sophisticated. Not quite as popular in the UK as they are in the States where you quite often see flight sims topping the charts, CU takes flight sims very seriously — just like you do. That's why we have a Concorde pilot, Captain John Hutchinson, reviewing these games for us. Here is our pick of the best.

"What? Bill Stealey of Microprose tells a good story about how he and an ex-fighter pilot 'buddy' were pumping

quarters into primitive coin-op flight sims when his friend says "I could do that." "If you can do that on a home

computer I can sell it," says Stealey and Microprose was born.

You have to start off by talking about Microprose in any discussion of flight sims. Chance of becoming a pilot? Well, notice that they company have the top three games. Quite simply Microprose pioneered simulated flight on home computers.

"What? Bill's boys are the parents of the flight simulation. They chose an aircraft — a Cessna 172 in *Solo Flight* or a BQ-16 *Aerobatics*. Let in *Acro* let by



example — and then attempt to represent it as accurately as possible on the PC.

They pride themselves on the authenticity of the situation — how near it is to the real thing. This is only when they make comparisons with other simulations — F15 Strike Eagle versus Fighter Pilot, for example. They will boost the number of F15-authentic features their game has over the Digital Integration one.

Digital didn't set out to produce a straight simulation — Fighter Pilot blends an element of arcade game with the simulation, but this illustrates the clear division that has now happened in the flight simulation business.

There are two distinct types, the arcade-style best represented by games like ACE OF ACES and Demobuster.

These games feature multi-screen control over the aircraft. A screen for choosing the combain Demobuster, or a dramatic view across the wing in ace of Aces for the flight engineer's role.

As we have noted the Microprose games are the best examples of traditional flight simulation. Games like SOLO FLIGHT are characterised by a one-screen cockpit view. The controls are as authentic as they can be and you have to make them in the same way as you would the instruments in the real thing.

You really learn about the airplanes in Microprose sims. F15 Strike Eagle for example has a 40 page booklet telling you all about the U.S.A.F. fighter.



F15 Strike Eagle by Microprose

is Microsoft's STRIKE FORCE HARVER. This provides as near a simulation as possible but then goes and adds several fictitious instruments that don't exist, mixes combinations and arcade game challenges. I would classify this new type of game as Arcade Simulation, but the feelings are going to be a bit of these games in

the near future.

"It looks like being an exciting year for flight sims. We know about two excellent sims under development by Microprose and Digital Integration. Both are chopper combat games. Keep watching this space for a head-to-head review as soon as we get our hands on them. Happy flying.

POS	GAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WHEN REVIEWED	SCREENS
1	SOLO FLIGHT (Simply the best. Not wonderful graphics, speech, and several difficulty levels at your helm. Simulates the Cessna 172)	Microprose	June 86	
2	F15 Strike Eagle (So authentic! The Russian Embassy in Moscow dispatched a suicide bus couple of them from the Big Apple's leading top shop. The nearest you are going to get is foreign submarine's sighter)	Microprose	Mar 86	
3	ACE OF ACES (The flight simulator flight sim. A combain is a massive variable jet! Showing on your 64)	Microprose	July 86	
4	Strike Force Harver (Best combination of pure game and flight sim yet. Capt. John Good's and he's what it's all about)	Microsoft	Nov 86	
5	Fighter Pilot (was Short Potentia's best flight sim. Its combat mode more than makes up for its lack of authenticity as an assigned military fighter)	Digital Integration	Jan 86	4
6	ACE OF ACES (Looks like a follow up to Demobuster but with greater depth of gameplay and graphics)	US Gold	Dec 86	4
7	ACE (Every decent flight sim for the CPT and the 64)	Cascade	Dec 86	
8	Spitfire 8C (The romantic World War II fighter brought home, instantly on the 64)	Microsoft		
9	Super Huey II (Capt. Good's good work but then the best chopper sim yet)	US Gold	Dec 86	
10	Demobuster (The best sim to make arcade style play — instantly on the 64)	US Gold	March 86	4



Ace of Aces by Microprose

There is a third and newer type of flight sim which complicates matters even further. The best example of this

SPORTS SIMS

It has to be said that gaming isn't the most healthy pastime you can indulge in. Shut indoors in dim light, armchair-bound, sleeping short fitful hours with a subconscious mind full of flaming ships and scrolling backgrounds, you aren't exactly going to become Adonis or Venus. In fact it's all pretty unhealthy.

So it's quite ironic that so many games offer sporting scenarios. This goes right back to the early consoles as well. These dated, horrible units that offered you mind-blowing experiences with a small block rebounding off a larger one. They were called names that required a massive flight of imagination and suspension of disbelief to play names like tennis, football and cricket.



Rome computers began in the frame of mind, but soon progressed with characteristic leaps and bounds with games like *DEATHFUM* and shortly after Daley Thompson's *Decathlon* — two games which offered you more in one cassette — sportslike — than ten average games did. And they actually tried to introduce a sense of exertion in them as well. Joysticks came and snugged at the hands of coaxed waggles, propelling them through ten grueling events one after the other.

These multi-event thrashers represented the zenith of sports sims another mile up the hill. Then Eps burst onto the scene breaking all the gaming records with a succession of classic attempts. It began with *SUMMER GAMES I* which immediately had and should shake the back and legs. There was an added dimension in graphics and more importantly gameplay.

The impression was consolidated with the sequel *SUMMER GAMES II*, an outright classic. Few games at any time touched it in terms of graphic animation, but the gameplay also offered a wealth of variation and enduring appeal. It packed some of the thrills other companies were making how it was possible when they put out games which contained more of the sweat than just good.

There was no suggestion that this was one off when they followed it up with *WINTER EVENTS*. It offered everything the other had — and more. Again you were asked to use your wile more rather than trust the stick withy from right to left. Only the duplication of skating events let it down.

The Eps collections kept coming — most recently with the quirky touch qualified *WORLD GAMES*. If you were real you'd actually enjoy a game that asked you to do the caber you'd have laughed — well on to try it.

The only other truly worthy attempt in this format is Ocean's *HYPER SPORTS* convention. It's not quite in the same league as the Eps games, but few games are. Good fun nevertheless.



Fixing exhausted the multi-event classic, which clearly led to the release of the top players' chart, we're left with a mixed single sport simulation. Some of these are impossible for enthusiasts and will run through the best growing miserably poor attempts at minor sports like horse jumping.

Football is the highest on everyone's gaming priorities and nothing has yet surpassed an old war horse. Andrew Spencer's *INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL* may be a bit long on the football it's head and shoulders above any codey young upstarts like *Mohitos*. Five-a-side Soccer (despite its penalty option) and *US Gold's Archery* and *Cup Soccer* — all of which are second class.

Any company wishing to make a game on a sport could do a lot worse than look at Andrew Spencer's style. Leg to let it be actually well animated sports, very effective controls and simple but absorbing gameplay. When Commodore decided to manipulate International Soccer's code and turn it into a basketball game they walked all over the likes of One on One, Two on Two etc.

Access understood that when they made *LEAGUEBOARD* which along with AmigaSoft's paint-making prepared for Commodore's *Getrow* other golf games to shame. Each into

best way attempts to capture the spirit of the sport and achieve a little bit more in the process. In the best sports sims you don't have to be a fan of the particular games involved to enjoy them.

You could even enjoy being a casual spectator. American Accolade being out something as sweet as *HARDWARE*. Naturally knows all the other tactical games out right. If a player who's keen to click it and we can't do the same thing. The best we managed with is large smoothly animated sprites was Audiogenic's Graham Gooch's *Red Cooled* — for which a 128 version is to appear in '87. Equal doesn't ask enough if you enjoy it.

If there is an area crying out for a good representation on the home computer, it's with racquet sports. There's been enough, from *Jonah Banington's Squash* (with digitized experts to take turns). The best effort here was Imaginix's *Rammi* coin-op conversion, but even that's too early and rather dull after a while. Tennis games are without exception at a poor quality even Commodore's. Does it take another of the big American companies to do something in this area as well? Sadly, probably does. They seem to have grasped what a good sports sim is.

C 16 AND PLUS/4

The success of the Egg titles must have made the C&A company green with envy. With the memory limitations involved, you're not going to get a Summer Games on it. What a tribute wasn't there WINTER EVENTS from Amsoft Services. Another out Screen Star which makes just about every piece of software released in this format save a couple of Games better efforts look silly. Naturally enough it was a copy of Winter Games with few changes. It must have done already, but certainly you want to have Synesoft's Winter Games.

The choice unsurprisingly narrow, after this. There's Imagine's Astro Series Baseball, which is pretty average and a version of Steve Davis Snooker. Two other multi-event games do figure rightly though. Get Home GALT THOMPSON'S (SCOTCH) just about made it into the machine and more recently an improved Synesoft's European Games.

R/O	NAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WHEN REVIEWED	SCORE/50
1	Summer Games II Emulates just about everything, so even better sports on. Great sound enjoyment	Capitol/G&G	Aug 85	■
2	World Games One year on they still keep appearing. More about events, but a great sense of humor	Capitol/G&G	Dec 85	■
3	Winter Games Just beating the last three. Too much about events that take the most out of anything Cap could ever do	Capitol/G&G	Nov 85	■
4	Hypersports 36 events, but not quite in the Cap league of enjoyability	Imagine/Parsons	Sept 85	■
5	International Football Going back with four with no progress in its game. Not done	Continuum	Oct 85	■
6	Masterboard Soft Construction let was more precise, but this was more playful. Beautiful color and animation	Access/De-Good	July 85	■
7	Snooker The best of the pocket ball games. Enjoying it all	Robson	Oct 84	■
8	Baseball Also, most graphic representation of baseball... what is it after that the last	Robson	Mar 86	■
9	Summer Games I The best single Star. Clearly dated in comparison to others	Capitol/G&G	Dec 84	■
10	Ping Pong A lot of single games go down here, but most. All very tough.	Imagine	April 85	■

■ Reviewed before review date was first used but highly recommended software



ARCADE ADVENTURE

This was the toughest category to narrow down. Try it yourself. I bet you can think of dozens of arcade adventures that were raved about by the reviewers. It is just about the most popular format ever.

Last year we entered a whole new era of more-sophisticated gaming. The number of screens multiplied with programmers starting to out-do each other in leaps of fifty, then a hundred and so on. The graphics dazzled and the puzzles—and objects to be collected—became more and more sophisticated.

It looked as if arcade adventures would go on for ever — but then almost as quickly as the flood gathered momentum it petered out and coin-ops, beat 'em ups and shoot 'em ups replaced the arcade adventure as favior of the month. Still there's one hell of a choice so large gulp, hold nose — here goes.



Arcade adventure purists will tout as the idea of Dile as the best arcade adventure platform. True definition of this type of game is all to do with mapping, capturing, collecting objects and using them.

SLIT doesn't have any of these characteristics but it does create a real universe more convincing than any other game.

It is a feeling that you are actually living part of an adventure that sets Dile apart. Your rating becomes much more than just a game. It's serious — mind-bendingly, heavy-eyed soul-housers at the machine series.

Like many great works of art Dile is a combination of several artists. What Slater and Bell brought to Dile themselves was the best 3D vector graphics that anyone had seen before and an attention to detail that still hasn't been bettered. Finished three in the best packaging money could buy, a novel, and a poster which altogether make Dile our number one arcade adventure of all time.

MORDEKAI was almost in the number one slot. It has most of what Dile has and adds better 3D



animation, challenging puzzles and that unquenchable quality that is so difficult to define and yet sets brilliant games apart from just good ones.

Dile SLIT is the best example of the map-and-collect game that has dominated the arcade adventure from the beginning. Its quality simply hugs. If you get your kids mapping these vast computer worlds then SLIT

is the one to go for. Graphics are superbly detailed — using two-colour line drawing.

Like our number one choice Dile is a winner because it takes the game together into a totally believable world. Travel in a strange time-slip dimension at HQ levels through a strange 3D world populated by weird and wonderful creatures. A rough and



board game.

Edison and Mercury have stepped to a new level in the arcade adventure — adding 3D animation. They feature prominently in the top ten list when you play this type of game; you are aware of how dull the list would have been by comparison. This is one direction the arcade adventure can develop if it is going to compete with simple, coin-up conversions.

As the recipient of our first screen Superior (SECRET) has to be mine. It's a unique game of skill and strategy set in a vast three-dimensional cubic landscape. Chess isn't its complexity; it's also one simple thing of you — move the Sentinel. Quite stunning.

SECRET ARMOUR OF ANTI-MAD is the work of Palace Software — one of the best producing exponents of the genre. This game is tough — without all the traps that are appearing for it. It goes too far because it features the best graphics and animation in any game launched this year. An arcade-adventure par excellence.

Another classic turn-of-the-pieces work is CHECK, from the initial halfway to follow in a hacker using the world. (But also adventure-like because it creates a world in which the game can have fun. It's interesting to note that there are two Activision games in this category — Dodon was the other — and both tell you something useful to know about this type of game — that it takes the best game company can do to produce a good game of this type. Test Hacker for example — it needed the best graphics, game design, and teaching to put it all together.

For sheer wickedness and fun the SPY VS SPY games are in a class of their own. Using booty traps to get your opponent makes for the type games, but the appeal is that they are a head-to-head challenge and arcade adventure in their own right.

ULTIMATE™ can claim to have pioneered the arcade-adventure for Spectrum with games like the Atac, Sabre Mut, and Knight Lore. It took a long time to launch onto the

Commodore but when they did they quickly built up a huge following who bought everything they launched. The best of the Ultimate games is ENTOMBED. The hallmarks of the games are pretty graphics, tough arcade-style challenges and a complicated rule.

Demon Designs introduced icon-driven controls with SHADOWS OF DARKNESS. That now looks a bit if

may have been a bit out of the game was good enough into our right. Strongly developed characters and a good storyline are the things that make Shadows stand out from the crowd.

What have we forgotten? Well loads of things. Starquake, for example, Stronghold, Melody, Crusader. The list goes on. The games mentioned are a deliberately chosen selection.

C 16 AND PLUS/4

C16 and plus/4 owners have been served of this sophisticated type of game. Programmers have to be not wanted to push the smaller Commodore's other limits required to produce a good arcade adventure.

Of the games that have been launched the best has to be ROM FIGHTER — the graphics are still made

but it's unbeatable for depth. Otherwise you can choose from The Great Enemy which is good for C16, SCILLION 8 which is good for C16 — quality graphics and enjoyable puzzle built in the nearest thing to the game going to give you C16 Project New, Gemini Graphics.

POS	GAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WHEN RELEASED	SCREEN RATING
1	Ultimate	Potter	May 85	
Highest mix of all game ideas that have been taken into deeply convincing and uniquely addictive.				
2	Melody	Protagon	Feb 85	+
A game that checks perfectly for both its graphics and the quality and complexity of the puzzle.				
3	Sentinel	Palace	Jan 85	+
Not absorbing game of breathtaking originality.				
4	Edon	Activision	Mar 85	
Impressive graphics, superb 3D animation, and a hell of a puzzle.				
5	Fortress	The Edge	May 85	
An amazingly clever idea involving Fort, and quality of puzzle reflecting the clever idea — though it does not always succeed.				
6	Secret Armour of Antid	Palace	Feb 85	
Not the toughest ever, but certainly the best.				
7	Warrior	Activision	Feb 85	
Right original blend of strategy problem solving.				
8	Spy vs Spy	Byron	Aug 85	
The Mad comic cartoon strip comes alive.				
9	Crusader	Ultimate	June 85	+
Ultimate's highest class of graphics and game design in the genre. The game also avoids that many of their problems but more elegantly.				
10	Shadow	Byron	May 85	
Shadow introduces a new and claims to offer a game launched in the following six months followed suit.				

RACING SIMS

A small but highly popular category of arcade games. Considering the popularity of racing games in the arcades (Enduro Racer, TT Racer, GT, etc.) it's surprising that there haven't been more conversions or original ideas. We struggled to find more than a dozen and one of those was *Tour De France* — the bicycle game! So helmet on, belt up and throttle hard down.

All a racing simulation has to have is a track, a head-on-view, and a strong sense of motion. Most of the versions on the market are for cars, but the few bike sims figure highly on our playlist.

The first real game to accommodate bikers and speed freaks alike was Digital's *MSX DRIVEN* (currently on the market as a budget cheapie from Wabsterhouse). The wheel was challenged

until US Gold imported the Epyx arcade conversion of Hang On, *SUPER CYCLE*. Complete with ten different tracks, superb banking control and eye-blinking speed that launched itself into the top five arcade racing games. The only other possible contender was *EUROTRA SLIDE*, English Softworks' futuristic (at version which shipped).

Still struggling for out of the top are the old dependencies, Atari's *POLE POSITION* conversion and Epyx' (surprise) *POREUP II*. Please always



were by sighted lap time, or in fact, partly because of it, as type changes. Not only were the graphics superior and free from the glitches which occasionally allowed one car to pass through another in F1 but an added strategy element. As a bonus suggests you had to keep an eye on tyre wear and make crucial choices to change tyres. At no time did this work better than in its player mode, which with its split screen effect was exciting and original. PC has a certain downward slide, not through speed but through the Alan Ford of racing games.

There is one possible contender in R20, sitting there in bay 2, fully turned right up, secure in the knowledge that it was far more a simulation than any other racing game ever produced. The cockpit view, gear transmission, and camera effect was quite breathtaking. Other cars even appeared in your wing mirrors. Then F1 ended and added a potentiometer joystick instead of a standard one, and a potential classic was transformed into a one-note sound on the keyboard — finger spread all over the ship. We returned to the



The only other real contender are the two American style games. RICHARD PATTY'S TALLADega which was a representation of American super car racing, featuring enormous engine noises, tapping around a banked oval. Audigore's game particularly on PC but added a couple of nice touches, such as a slow-mo effect when your car turned a lighter colour and was saved as fuel. Very big games indeed.

If life length were a consideration Audigore's THE GREAT AMERICAN CROSS COUNTRY ROAD RACE would win awards. Instead it was avoided. It

was an attempt to capture the spirit of all those classic road movies. The backgrounds shifted through large expanses of countryside to cities and then back to your car's speedometer while adding speed traps, cones and running out of gas.

SCALDITAC was the only other really worthy effort in the game. Picking up the idea of constructing your own track and racing head to head with someone, but as the old adid. Trouble is you could never get complex courses.

C 16 AND PLUS/4

Well, it has to be said that there is something of a paucity of racing games for these machines. Indeed we thought of bay

DEATH RACE 30 is more a camera eye view that a typical cockpit job. It's biggest problem is that when overtaking you have no sense of catching them, but rather of them catching you. Space invaders.

to join up! Although course your mode didn't really seem to affect the game and the layout was the same — a kind of two player PP.

It seems likely that if more racing games appear they'll be as a result of arcade conversions — the standard of which gets better and better. Games in the arcade attempt to occur in your own sound and visual experience by putting you inside what when you play and giving you more than one screen view. Let us T11 close.

Disappointing.

Master's touch. FORMULA ONE SIMULATOR is something of an improvement on that effort. The courses, though are boring and the operation more likely to force you into a corner by their lack of speed.

That's a pretty poor state of affairs really, so most of the software houses are capable of much more.

POS.	GAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WHEN REVIEWED	SCREEN COUNT
1	Petrol	Level 9 Software	Nov 85	1
After all this time it's still got everything and more. Heads, head, strategy, two changes to it.				
2	Race	Target	Jan 86	1
The best bought aim — speaks by fully made in control keyboard. Shame.				
3	Super Cars	US Gold Type	Oct 85	1
The best game in the lot, not taking into account graphics. Well, not.				
4	RoadRacer	US Gold	May 86	1
Still a very playable game — knocking top screen as in a 1000 conversion.				
5	Speed King	Digitizer	Sept 85	1
Consider for a while champ. In Super Cars, not taking into account graphics.				
6	Richard Petty's Talladega	Audigore	June 85	1
American style game. Super cars, steering round a oval, some non-stop, funny, long wheel.				
7	Great American Cross Country Road Race	Activision	Sept 85	1
Different approach to racing area. More of a race game but not as playable as it might have been.				
8	Scaldrac	Software Games	Feb 86	1
No more than really but well executed. The best looking game in the lot.				
9	Formula One	Target Software	April 86	1
Again, well thought. Not a game, but a simulation and a challenge.				
10	Turn 94	MicroPower	Feb 86	1
Early 3D effort, more by shape and style than by content.				

CHEAPO

Cheapos were without exception ruff at first and all the magazines gave them a universal thumbs down. One company changed all that — Mastertronic. They started producing reasonable quality games at pocket money prices and a budget boom was ushered in. Now there are half-a-dozen companies producing superb games some of them re-released full price titles for under £3.00. At ten pounds a game the cheapos were bound to be attractive — so attractive that some companies wanted them excluded from the charts.

CU was quick to respond to the budget boom with our Cheapo-of-the-Month accolade. Here are the games that received the award and some other not-to-be-missed budget bargains.



Thrux

If it were full price Thrux would certainly be awarded. But at two quid it's a delight. Inspired by the arcade game Q*bert — this budget price coin-op conversion is hellishly addictive. Gently tweaking the controls makes your ship float forward. An incredible feeling of floating, momentum and inertia.

If you fancy superfast shoot 'em up with metallic box-plot graphics BATTLEBOX is the boy. A bit like a vertically scrolling Arkanoid. Features frenetic shoot burst firing where your laser becomes super-charged.

Asports aims some GO FOR GOLD isn't quite in the Epyx league but this was once a full price game. Evidence of the dozens of excellent games in the US Gold back catalogue that are costing to appear as cheapos.

The spriting car-race game Thrux 160 was best known for its

impressive car dash which took up about two thirds of the screen.

GO is not just remarkable because of the glorious digitised speech — it really brings the pub game home to the 64.

SONIC1 never got the recognition it deserved — either as a full price game, or later, as an American Cheapo. It's a sort of Star Wars. 3D shoot 'em up. It also features galactic maps and sophisticated light controls.

The grand of ultimate shoot up in 1984 — an arcade adventure which needed many a full price game when it was first tried. Beautifully detailed — two colour animation.

Even BCCY thinks of Thrux as the map as a Cheapo masterpiece. It's interesting to note that they have four games in the shop. Their Cheapos do seem to be getting better all the time but so are everybody's.

POS	GAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WHEN REVIEWED	CHEAPO OF THE MONTH
1	Thrux	Prestel	May 86	✓
2	Battlebox	Prestel	Nov 86	✓
3	Go For Gold	US Gold/American	Nov 86	✓
4	The Last V8	Mastertronic/Mat Games	Jan 86	
5	GO	Mastertronic	Dec 86	✓
6	Sentinel	US Gold/American	June 86	✓
7	Q*bert	Prestel	Sept 85	
8	Rocky	Prestel	Oct 86	
9	Master of Magic	Mastertronic	March 86	
10	Arkanoid	Mastertronic	May 85	

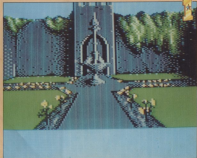
ADVENTURES

The best adventures are so absorbing, so compelling, so devious, and such fun, that you just can't stop playing them. When I play an adventure I look for these reactions, but I also take into consideration excellence in programming, credibility of plot and problems, and above all — humour. One thing I can't stand is an adventure that takes itself ever so seriously!

Within these constraints I have tried to bring you a variety that would grace any ordinary desert island, given a power supply suitable for a Commodore-64, together with screen and disk drive.

It begins with the best state-of-the-art adventure, written for the best generation of hardware, the FORTH. It proves that with excellence of programming, what the 16-bit machines can do is just the good old 8-bit Commodore-64. Rich 3D graphics, complex puzzles, huge vocabularies.

In his quest the player comes up against problems after devious problems. These are scary and varied, and so interlocked, that The Pawn has a long



playing the 15-numbered intro saved with unrestrained gusto, in a few seconds, again and again.

The Player is now the standard by which all adventures will be judged, but will not keep its No. 1 position for long. Who can doubt or hope that Magnus's Scrolls will come up with something bigger and better with even more startling features, in the not too distant future?

Naturally there have to be an Inform game and an ideal introduction is WITCHHUNTERS. A long weekend's work to release only if a bit of humor, and quite obvious that the author knows what you're up to in any given time. It's also dramatic and readable in places.

As the pastboy in the tranquillidage of the town, a simple good ol' evening's letter to the Magicbe Shoppe on the hill has results you hadn't bargained for. On your return, everything has changed. The atmosphere is heavily threatening, yet somehow vaguely familiar.

As usual, you not only get up close in the dark Redbringer stone, but a unique chance to view a Grah's nest — from the inside!

Yet also released in the hefty box the red jewel (KARLETT) has a meaningful and detailed picture held in memory for each of the game's 92 locations. These are displayed instantly, and map are extremely handy. Add to that a multi-word parser (GMA) and QUADRAM commands, and a PCOM (Back One Move) command, and the has now to be the most technically advanced adventure yet to be produced on cassette.

But that alone doesn't guarantee an enjoyable game. KarleTT has plenty of devious puzzles, and no shortage of wit — much of which will have you at your wits' end. In this so it says, you are a programmerable chess board, a spawning and must escape to seek out and kill the enemy — Raydell!

Probably the clearest adventure ever written is the SORDOR OF CLAMORQUE CASTLE, simply

collecting and storing information is the objective. But the game is only the motivation to solving the secrets of the castle, by using a number of mysterious spells, properties unknown.

Decoding how each one works is up to the player. But sometimes they work, and sometimes they don't, and sometimes you're not clearly!

There is more than one solution to most problems, but only one correct way to complete the game. By solving a problem the "wrong" way, you'll find you haven't the means to solve one further on. And of course, the game is designed in such a way that it's the wrong ideas that come to you first!

The first adventure ever played was KONTURDLAND (back in 1980) and it got me hooked. I still return to it now and again, as one would to good food, to see how quickly I can get rid of those better treasures.

I fell to the journey down through the tree stump, the struggle with the



tees, the properties of mud, and the eventual dramatic awakening of the dragon! The time test adds to the cryptic mystery of the puzzles. The HLLP messages are designed for the beginner (I VERNON), who's a beginner when this game first turned up, but you have to work on them!

is the good old days when Level 5 produced text-only adventures. (SADWELL), a sci-fi drama about a deep-space trip to colonize Indian 4, cleared 7000 locations. About a huge, harmonious power-chip as well, where all the crew members are in deep (my friend) 1999, you, Kim Kimberly, wake. Something has gone wrong...

The text conveys a suspenseful atmosphere, producing mental images far more powerfully than graphics. Kim Kimberly went on to star in two more adventures now collected in the Falcon Dream Trilogy (the time with graphics: Return to Eden, and Return to Paradise, but they never came up to the level of Sadwell).

Time, suggestive, and lead, the incentive to solve the problems is not only through increasing your score, but through scoring in Hobbies (LATHER GODDESS OF PHOBOS — if you see what I mean!

Scuttled out of additional fun by the Leather Goddesses, you are transported to Phobos, and find in a cell with nothing, but a soundly from from both (broken) broken your private parts. An encounter with a girl of the (possibly sex in the confined stacked cage, a sultan who holds out the promise of the freedom of his harem, and a scolding frog, are among the more interesting situations in which you find yourself.

For nonsense adventures, 1995 THESIS is a fairly ramp into another dimension toward Tontown. With a language of all of its own, you must become witless, or "less," Tontown again, as the of the hands of arch-villain and property system, Franklin Frost.

Learn to read and act as the locals, or you'll be spotted as a tourist. You may feel a bit of a coney, but they have

tourists in Tontown.

Densely animated graphics, sound effects, and some wonderfully catchy music (real tone), make this an adventure that will keep you entertained all the way.

After a great original game to be found on cassette, MOONBOW'S QUEST is the biggest, you could find the parts of a machine. You'll travel from the depths of the ocean to the gladiator's ring in ancient Rome, but first you'll have to deal with a pugnacious

intention-stealing mother, and a very hungry plant.

My favorite among the filthy rich Adventures is CIRCUS. Out of petco, you can stop in a remote spot. There is an strangely quiet circustown a few miles north of a desert, save for the floating figure of a clown.

You control your tell on the trapeze or the tightrope, your courage is under stress, and see what it feels like to be stuck in a corner. But all these help you to fill your empty petco can!

C 16 AND PLUS 4

Though the C16 has plenty of memory and the Plus4 has little software developed directly for them, some adventures for these machines. Several Brian Howarth mysteries are available including Circus, though you

might have some difficulty obtaining them. Some of the Scott Adams classics have appeared as well, including the highly praised Sorcerer of Claymugue Castle.

POS.	GAME	SOFTWARE HOUSE	WHEN REVIEWED	SCREEN TEST
1	The Pawn	Magnetic Scrolls/Random	Nov 88	A
	The game that finally ended the debate over graphics in text-only. It proved you could have the best of both worlds and the best games in the genre.			
2	Whodunnit	Infocom	Oct 88	
	The American master of the best atmospheric New England's the setting for this one. Really well presented and really absorbing.			
3	Knight	US Gold/AdventureSoft	Feb 87	
	The new release combined with the Pawn is evidence that the adventure game is undergoing a serious shakeup.			
4	Sorcerer of Claymugue Castle	Adventure International	N/A	
	From the early pioneer of adventure games — pioneer Scott Adams. The manual is the best.			
5	Adventureland	Adventure International	N/A	
	One of Scott Adams' best games and also the game of Adventure.			
6	Traveller	Level 5/Random	N/A	
	Incredibly tough deep-space adventure made Love it's name to them.			
7	Leather Goddesses of Phobos	Infocom	Oct 88	
	The roughly but nice adventure by David Howarth has girls have the words in it even if it's tough, nothing unduly unusual.			
8	Sea Prince	Adventure	Oct 88	
	If Leather Goddesses was the worst this brought it to the border.			
9	Monsters Quest	MobyGames House	Sept 85	
	Master a virtual four-headed sea lion. Tough and absorbing.			
10	Circus	AdventureSoft	Aug 88	

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