

PC ZONE

#72 JAN 1999

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THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

TOMB RAIDER III

SETTLERS III

WAR OF THE WORLDS

HERETIC II

UNVEILED AT LAST

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

**TOP TIPS
COMPREHENSIVE
PLAYER GUIDES
TO SIN &
POPULOUS
3**

TINY COMPO
What's the full name of the
jet featured in Falcon 4?
First out of the list wins a
mystery prize - full details
on page 7.

**WHAT'S ON THE
COVER
DISC?**
FULL DETAILS PAGE 158

IF YOUR COVERMOUNT IS MISSING PLEASE CONSULT YOUR NEWSAGENT

**PLUS! KINGPIN • TANKTICS • ROGUE SQUADRON • STREETWARS: CONSTRUCTOR 98 •
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NOVALOGIC[®]

WHAT'S ON YOUR HARD DRIVE?

Once again **PC ZONE** collars a few gamers to find out what games are eating into your leisure time

★ WORDS/PHOTOS Andrew Martin



DAVID EDWARDS
29, sales executive

What's on your hard drive?
"I've got two laptops. My old one has *Civilization II* on it, the new one has nothing."
Will they mate and give birth to a grown-up PC?
"No, it's there to while away the hours when I'm not working, so I'll never be without a laptop. That's why I'm waiting for *Worms Armageddon*. It'll be a good laptop Christmas with that to carry around."



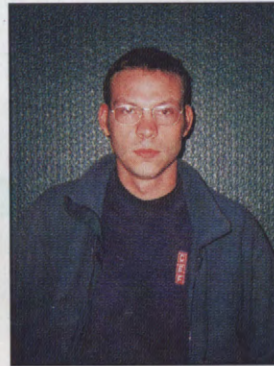
STEVEN HULME
27, customer services manager

What's on your hard drive?
"*Mechanic Warrior, Forsaken, Unreal, Grim Fandango*, and I can't wait for *TOCA 2*."
An armchair racer, then?
"Well, I've got the steering wheel and foot pedals ready to go. Now all I need is one or two fans mounted to the monitor so I can feel the wind race through my hair. And I might ask someone to throw mud at me as well so I can recreate the thrill of a real race."



CHRIS TUNNEY
24, refrigeration engineer

What's on your hard drive?
"*Sensible '98, World Cup '98, Links '99*."
Like to keep fit?
"Absolutely. I've installed *Civilization II, C&C* and *Monkey Island*, but never played any of them (*Obviously paid good, hard-earned cash for those, then - Ed*). I'm looking at *Grim Fandango* today as well, so I can install that and watch the intro from time to time."



JASON PALMER
24, ventilation engineer

What's on your hard drive?
"*Worms 2, Civilization II, Micro Machines v3*."
You like driving games then?
"Yes. I've got a new force feedback steering wheel, so I intend to become the new armchair 'Mika Heineken'. Then there's *Final Fantasy VII, Blade Runner, Tomb Raider III, Grim Fandango* and *Worms Armageddon* to think about once I'm world champion."



DAVID BUTLER
31, fabrication engineer

What's on your hard drive?
"*Unreal, MDK, Age Of Empires, MechCommander*."
Ever seen daylight?
"I have a vague memory of it. I've conquered *Age Of Empires*, so now I'm looking at the *Unreal Service Pack, StarCraft*, and *Half-Life* after that. It's not so much the variety that's good, it's how long it festers inside your PC and annoys you."



NATALKA MEARS
22, music producer

What's on your hard drive?
"*Red Alert, Civilization II, Tomb Raider III demo, Worms 2*."
So why are you buying Red Alert again?
"Well, things got a bit tense on one stage and I'm ashamed to say I threw the thing out of the window."
You threw your PC out of the window?
"No, the *Red Alert* CD. Although I'll happily throw my computer out of the window. It's thrown me out of Windows 98 enough times."



KERRIE FEENEY
21, nursery nurse

What's on your hard drive?
"*Sega Rally, Street Fighter Alpha, Jedi Knight, Forsaken*."
Shouldn't you have stuck with a Saturn?
"They say never work with animals or children, but I work with what at times can only be described as both. There's no better way of coping with a 12-hour shift than finishing the day's report, closing Excel, and giving someone a good multiplayer shoeing at *Forsaken*."



SAL 'CAPONE'
24, 'fashion gangsta'

What's on your hard drive?
"*Unreal, Sensible Soccer '98, World Cup '98, Worms 2*."
Do your mates come round a lot, then?
"Not at all. I tend to go round to theirs, so it's necessary for me to stay in training. *Unreal* is there for me to take out my frustrations when I've had a good pasting at *Worms 2*. I can see me going into hiding soon though, with the arrival of *Worms Armageddon* and *Quake III Arena*."



DAVE PINDER
28, site agent/night school student

What's on your hard drive?
"*Dungeon Keeper, Grim Fandango, Final Fantasy VII, Red Alert, Think And Talk French*."
Games for 'deep thinkers' with some added 'oo la la'?
"Well, I'm studying French so it seemed like a good idea. The others are just quality."
Do you know what 'merde le lit' means?
"Yes. It means 'shit the bed'."
Well done.



FATHER (DAVE) CHRISTMAS
500, chimney sweep

What's on your hard drive?
"*Blade Runner, Quake II, Unreal, GTA, SiN, Lula Virtual Babe, Puzzle Bobble*."
Interesting. You must have a lot of time on your hands.
"Business is good and there's been a lot of interest recently, so I haven't had time to play anything. I've got some holidays due soon though, so rest assured I'll be having a look at *Tomb Raider III*."

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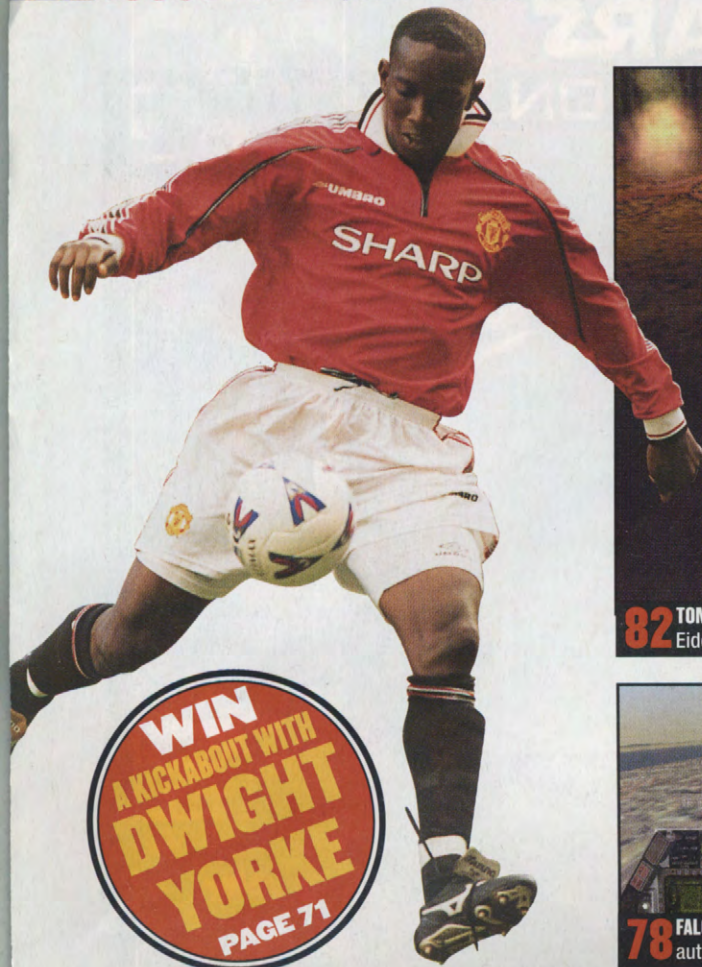
STRAP IN, YOUNG SKYWALKER



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WIN
A KICKABOUT WITH
DWIGHT YORKE
PAGE 71



WIN THE TOP 10 PC GAMES
SEE THE PC ZONE CHARTS
PAGE 22

82 TOMB RAIDER III The Lara Croft phenomenon continues to capture the imagination of gamers worldwide. Can Eidos make it three hits in a row with the latest game in the series?



78 FALCON 4.0 The most authentic flight sim ever.



90 SETTLERS III Little people, little houses, big fights.



96 THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT Silence is golden.

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REVIEWS

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

NEW GAMES

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The first game to challenge *Half-Life* for 3D shoot 'em up supremacy
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Instantly accessible futuristic racing thrills. But has it got staying power?
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Ubisoft's ultra-fast racer is one of the surprise hits of the month
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Rage's new RTS extravaganza
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It's a 3D shoot 'em up, without much shooting. No, really
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Not *literally* Michael Owen's, obviously, but it's got his name on it
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Activision's much-anticipated mix of spells and goblins is finally here
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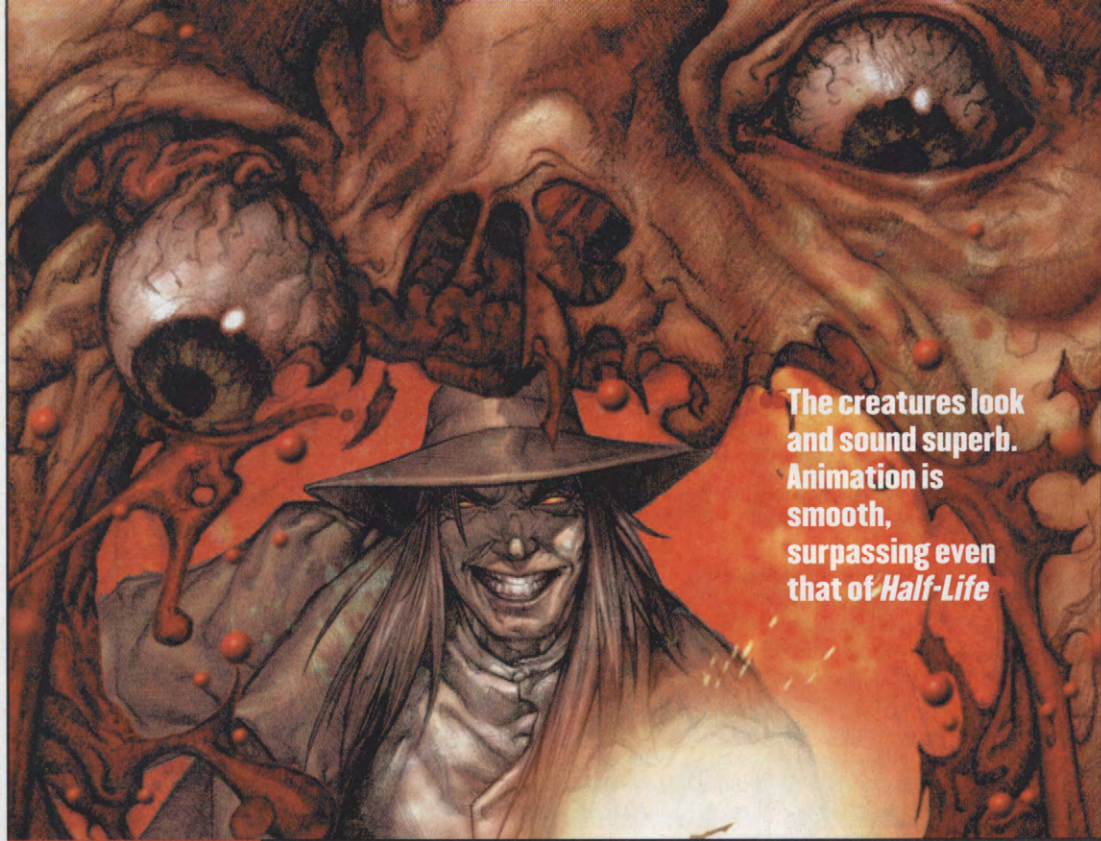
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The best of the bunch, tested and rated

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We air your views on the games we've recently reviewed in *PC ZONE*



The creatures look and sound superb. Animation is smooth, surpassing even that of *Half-Life*

COVER STORY 74-77 **BLOOD II** More blood, more guns, more blood, more enemies, more... blood. As a sequel to *Blood* (there's that word again), this game is more than worthy.

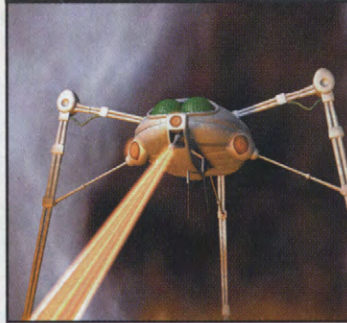
104 ACTUA SOCCER 3 Is it better than *FIFA 99*?



86 JANE'S WORLD WAR II FIGHTERS Kill Nazis. Lots of them. Go on.



94 JEFF WAYNE'S WAR OF THE WORLDS The game of the album.



BULLETIN

Quite literally the most definitive games news section in the universe

16-38 BULLETIN

Comprehensive gaming news from the four corners of the globe

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Current and retro PC game charts, plus a chance to win the Top 10 games

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A control freak with a passion for games

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The results of the awards voted for by you

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Lots of stuff about stuff. Or something

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See the panel on the top-right to find out what's in store

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The most extensive and comprehensive tips section in town

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Having trouble completing your favourite games? Let Keith show you how to cheat

136 POPULOUS

Part 1 of our guide, with a comprehensive walkthrough of the first 12 worlds, and tips on how to make the most of your spells and followers. Magic!

145 SiN

To get through *SiN*'s levels you need to know your primary and secondary objectives. We do, and you soon will

149 DEAR WAZZA

Your PC problems solved. (Wazza's got microchips inserted in his brain, you know! Never eats, never sleeps)

184 WATCHDOG

We take your gripes to the games publishers and see what they have to say for themselves

ON THE CD



FULL DETAILS PAGE 158

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

DON'T MISS DEMOS OF...

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD

ODDORLD: ABE'S EXODUS

HERETIC II

BLOOD II: THE CHOSEN

MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD

LEAGUE SOCCER '99

ANNO 1602

STAR WARS DROID WORKS

SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

GRAND TOURING

PLUS

A batch of new screenshots

The latest Compuserve and mIRC software

Tons of new patches and...

oh, just go to page 158 and see

END ZONE

Just when you thought the mag had ended... blimey, a whole lot more!

164 EXTENDED PLAY

Get more out of the games you already own with our guide to patches

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See how the *ZONE* team fared on Wireplay this month

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The ongoing story of life in the land of *Black And White*

170 SICK NOTES

Are you 'ard enough to write in?

Want to know who this weirdo is? Then take a stroll down to Sick Notes on page 170.



WIN! **THE COMPO NO ONE FINDS** Correctly answer this month's cover question and you could win a box full of PC goodies. Send your entry on the back of a postcard addressed to: **The Compo No One Finds (72), PC ZONE, 10 Belover Street, London W1P 7JL.** The first entry with the correct answer plucked out of the hat wins a Saitek X38 Flight Controller. The Ed's decision is final. Closing date: Monday 22 December. The winner of our December cover compo was Carl Walker of Harrogate, who correctly named the year Populous was released as 1989. Carl wins... a nice surprise in the post soon. Whoooo!

WE'RE ON YOUR SIDE

Welcome once again to PC ZONE Towers. We are confident you will find within these pages all the information and guidance you could ever possibly need to make your PC gaming life complete.

I'd like to say that this issue has been brought to you effortlessly, and that our dedicated team of PC gaming experts cheerfully fulfilled their reviewing duties without even breaking into a sweat along the way. But I can't, because that would clearly be a lie. Why so? Because many of the games that came in for review this issue are of a particular breed. They're the kind of games that refuse to reveal themselves to you even after several hours of play, instead hinting at hidden depths and alleged levels of sophistication that can only be discovered by playing the little buggers over and over

again, inside out. And backwards. And then any other way you can think of.

First offender: *Actua Soccer 3*. It came almost annoyingly close to equalling the incredibly high standards set by *FIFA 99*, but there was something that just wasn't quite right about it. It took Jeremy Wells, Steve Hill and I the best part of a week to find out what that 'something' was. Only then could we arrive at a score we all agreed upon.

Second offender: *Settlers III*. It arrived in the office a couple of months after office-favourite *Caesar III* had set new standards for the strategy genre. Unfortunately for Steve, *Settlers III* is exactly the kind of game that forces you to play it repeatedly, day and night, before you can be satisfied you've seen all it has to offer. This is exactly what he did (as you'll find out in his review on page 90) before arriving at a score. The fact

that we haven't seen him since is currently cause for concern.

Third offender: *Blood II*. Richie Shoemaker was presented with the daunting task of reviewing the first 3D shoot 'em up to come into the office in the wake of the genre-busting *Half-Life*. To give *Blood II* any chance of squaring up to *Half-Life*, he had to give it every possible chance under the sun, which meant playing the game to completion. Goodbye Richie for issue 72.

And so to the point. We at ZONE want you to know that you can trust us to play every game that comes in for review for as long as we need to before making that vital decision which determines whether or not it's worth your time and money. Whatever the genre, a review in PC ZONE is one you can trust.

All the best, and enjoy the issue.

Chris Anderson, Editor

MEET THE ZONE TEAM

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



Chris Anderson
What's on your hard drive? *Caesar III, Half-Life, Settlers III*
Best games ever: *Half-Life, X-COM Apocalypse, Final Fantasy VII (PSX), Ultima VII and Midwinter*
Favourite genres: RPGs, strategy and adventure
Game of the year: *Half-Life*, obviously
Brightest hope for 1999: *X-Com Alliance, Duke 4Ever*



Paul Mallinson
What's on your hard drive? *Half-Life, Populous III, Tomb Raider III*
Best games ever: *Resident Evil II, Super Tennis (SNES), Quake II and Half-Life*
Favourite genres: Real-time 3D action adventures
Game of the year: *Half-Life*
Brightest hope for 1999: *Deus Ex - Warren Spector's new game*



Richie Shoemaker
What's on your hard drive? *Blood II, War Of The Worlds, FIFA 99*
Best games ever: *Elite (BBC) and Half-Life*
Favourite genres: Real-time strategy and 3D shoot 'em ups
Game of the year: *Half-Life* - by a mile
Brightest hope for 1999: *TA: Kingdoms, Duke 4Ever, X-Com Alliance*



Jeremy Wells
What's on your hard drive? *Falcon 4.0, Jane's WWII Fighters, CM3*
Best games ever: *Quake II, CM2 97/98*
Favourite genres: Sports, driving and flight sims
Game of the year: *Half-Life*
Brightest hope for 1999: *The new Indiana Jones adventure*



Steve Hill
What's on your hard drive? *Settlers III, Actua Soccer 3*
Best games ever: *Sensible World Of Soccer, ISS 98 (N64)*
Favourite genres: Football, driving, 3D shoot 'em ups, RTS
Game of the year: *Half-Life (shock)*
Brightest hope for 1999: *Duke Nukem 4Ever*



Charlie Brooker
What's on your hard drive? *Half-Life, TR III, Carma II, WarGasm*
Best games ever: *Half-Life, Zelda (N64), Tekken 3 (PSX)*
Favourite genres: Action, strategy and point-and-click adventures
Game of the year: *Half-Life*
Brightest hope for 1999: *Kingpin, Black And White, Galleon*



Paul Presley
What's on your hard drive? *Unreal, Rainbow Six, Thief: The Dark Project*
Best games ever: *Minder (Spectrum), Ultima IV, The Secret Of Monkey Island*
Favourite genres: RPGs, adventures and flight sims
Game of the year: *Rainbow Six*
Brightest hope for 1999: *Homeworld, Babylon 5 game (so far untitled)*



Keith Pullin
What's on your hard drive? *Populous III, SIN*
Best games ever: *International Superstar Soccer (N64), Starquake (Spectrum)*
Favourite genres: Strategy and sport
Game of the year: *Populous III*
Brightest hope for 1999: *Championship Manager 3*



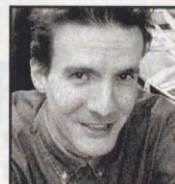
Adam Phillips
What's on your hard drive? *Ultima On-line, Populous III demo*
Best games ever: *Little Big Adventure 1 & 2, Syndicate Wars, GoldenEye (N64)*
Favourite genres: *Quake clones, driving games (with a twist), RTS and adventures*
Game of the year: *Commandos*
Brightest hope for 1999: *World peace*



David McCandless
What's on your hard drive? *Half-Life*
Best games ever: *Quake, Doom and Drink While You Think*
Favourite genres: 3D shooters
What are you expecting from Santa: A load of assorted nuts in a net bag
Game of the year: *Half-Life*
Brightest hope for 1999: *System Shock II, Quake III*



Warren Chrismas
What's on your hard drive? *Half-Life, Populous: The Beginning, Madden NFL 99, Acid*
Best games ever: *Tetris (Gameboy), CM2 and ISS 98 (N64)*
Favourite genres: Football and other sports titles, driving sims and RTS games
Game of the year: *Half-Life*
Brightest hope for 1999: *CM3, FIFA 2000*



Phil Wand
What's on your hard drive? *Total Anal Lotion, Doom 95 Shareware*
Best games ever: *Doom, TA and Satellite Warrior (CPC 464)*
Favourite genres: Real-time strategy and driving
Game of the year: *TA: Core Contingency*
Brightest hope for 1999: *C&C: Tiberian Sun*

DENNIS PUBLISHING LTD
 19 BOLSOVER STREET
 LONDON W1P 7HJ
 TEL: 0171 631 1433
 FAX: 0171 436 1321
 EMAIL: letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk
 WEBSITE: www.pczone.co.uk

ON THE TOWN
 Editor-in-Chief Mark Higham 0171 917 7791
 Editor Chris Anderson 0171 917 3901
 Reviews Editor Paul Mallinson 0171 917 3830
 Section Editor Richie Shoemaker 0171 917 5675
 Art Editor Phil Clark 0171 917 3911
 Production Editor Paul Henderson 0171 917 5676
 Production Editor Thea Marcuard 0171 917 3914
 Editor at Large Jeremy Wells

Designers David McCormack, Tim MacDonald
 Sub Editor Lynn Jones
 Writers Charlie Brooker, Warren Chrismas, Daniel Emery, Paul Hales, Steve Hill, Steve Jackson, Andy Martin, Adam Phillips, Paul Presley, Keith Pullin, Paul Rose, Phil Wand, Andrew Wright
 EPU Manager Sarah Gilliver 0171 917 7715
 CD Producer Alan Stonebridge 0171 917 7646
 CD Editor Daniel Emery 0171 917 7689
 Tips line Richard Crook 0171 917 7698

AT HOME IN FRONT OF THE FIRE
 Associate Publisher Helen Cribb 0171 917 5644
 Group Publisher Tim Ponting 0171 917 7666
 Consultant Creative Director Vici MacDonald
 Advertising & Promotions Manager Mike Shepherd 0171 917 3873
 Senior Sales Executive Emma Lewis 0171 917 7706
 Group Ad Manager Warren Woodbridge 0171 917 7622
 Production Manager Colin Robinson 0171 917 3937
 New Media Account Mgr Julia Smith 0171 917 7811
 Marketing Manager Cheryl Hamer 0171 917 7802
 Origination Elements 0171 323 0022
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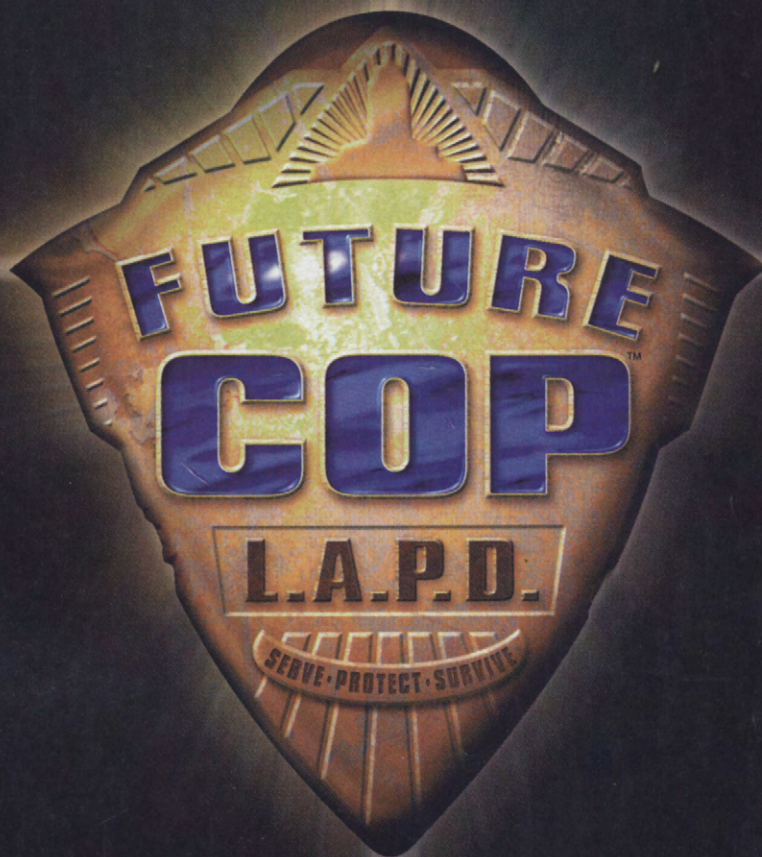
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 List Rental Executive Simon McCay 0171 917 3943
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 WIN! Who is the voice of Lara Croft in *Tomb Raider*? Send entries on the back of a postcard to: I've read the small print, PC ZONE (72), 19 Bolsover Street, London, W1P 7HJ by Monday 11 November. Winner and prize announced same place next issue. Sophie Goodman from Canterbury wins the ZONE grab bag of goodies from last month's compo.

TIPS LINE: 0171 917 7698
 Thursdays 1.30pm - 5.30pm only
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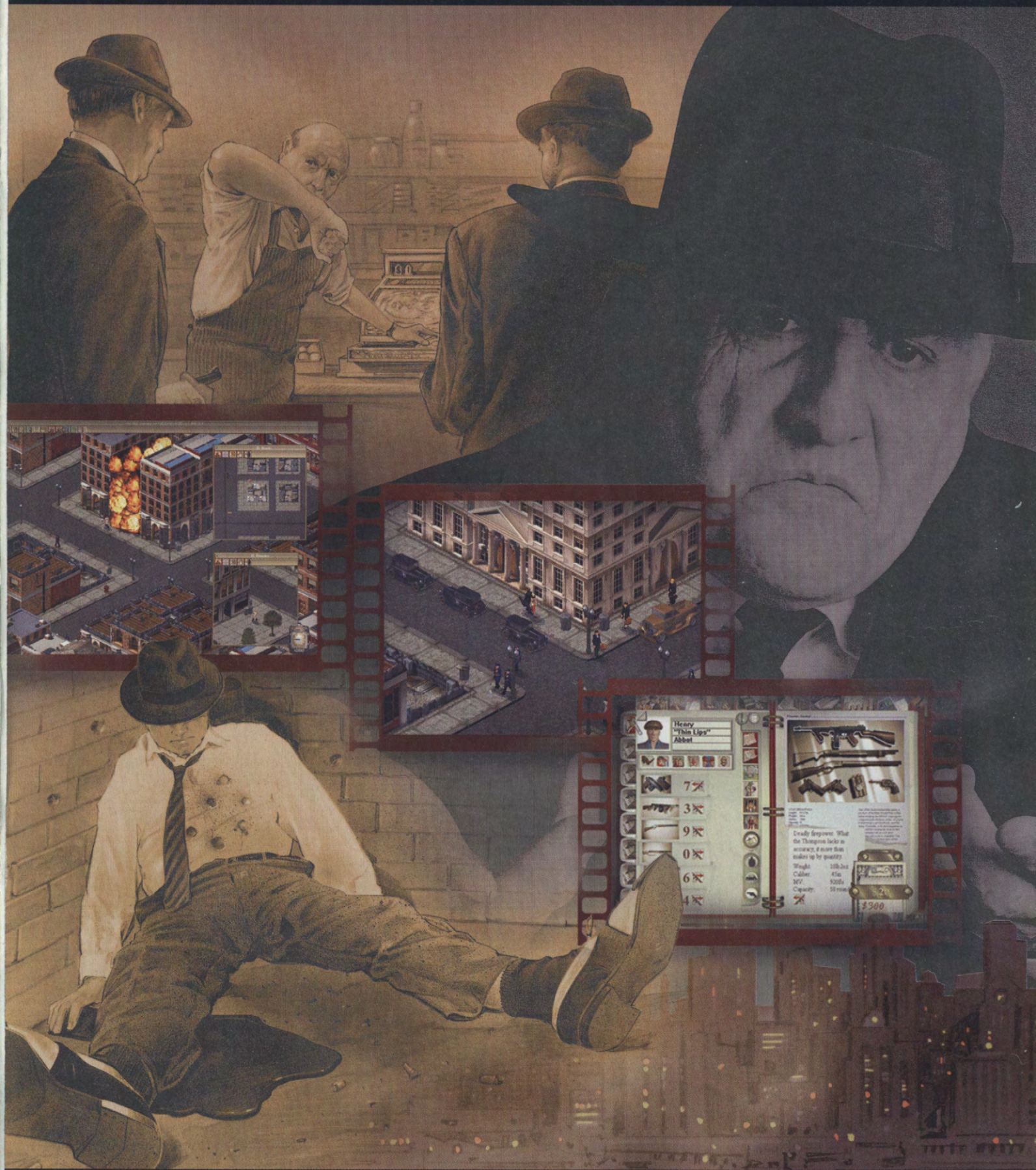
IT'S THE 22ND CENTURY. THE MEAN STREETS OF LOS ANGELES HAVE GOT EVEN MEANER. CRIMINAL GANGS BATTLE FOR CONTROL. BUT THEY HAVE A NEW ENEMY. YOU. CLAD IN CERAMIC ARMOUR AND WIELDING THE LATEST PLASMA TECHNOLOGY, YOUR MISSION IS TO WIPE OUT THE BAD GUYS. AND IF YOU CAN TAKE THE HEAT, GO HEAD-TO-HEAD IN 2-PLAYER SPLIT SCREEN MODE. OR BY TRYING.

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Caliber: .45in
Mfg: Smith
Capacity: 50 rounds

\$300



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EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

MAILBOX

A plea for protection from PR hype, a complaint that CM3 may be too late, and one poor reader is moved to tears over attacks on his favourite genre. Bless

★ ANSWERED BY Chris Anderson

LETTER OF THE MONTH

SANE BOSS SHOCK

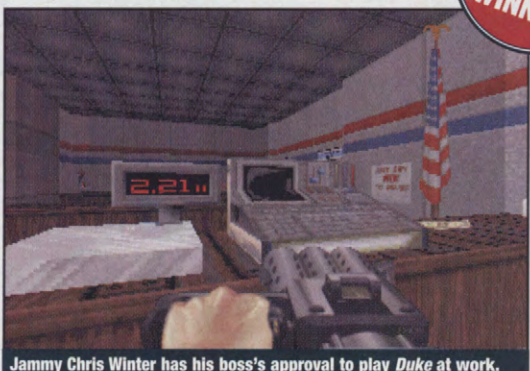
After glancing over your item on Gamerholics getting caught in the act at work (PCZ #70), I couldn't resist writing in with my little story, which may shed a ray of light in this dark, anti-gaming society that values work above mindless fun.

I spent months of evenings and weekends skilfully recreating our three-floor office building into a killer Duke Match Warzone. I had played it against Duke Bots but that wasn't enough. I needed to fox a human opponent by shooting out the lights and laying in wait in the dark. I wanted that rush that can only be achieved by training my RPG on an unwitting opponent who is wasting round after round on my trusty holoduke. I needed to play it at work. So, sure enough, being the IT helpdesk administrator, I decided that myself and a couple of friends could host the game on our hard drives. We are very good and only play at lunchtimes.

One dark day, my boss came up behind me. He had already seen the reconstruction and was impressed with its accuracy, but it was when my conversation broke from him to say "There he is!" and blast away an on-screen sprite that prompted his question: "Are you playing across the network, then?" Oh-oh, time to confess. However, once I explained that the game was hosted on the hard disk of each workstation, it was not a problem. I didn't even have to use my line about it using the IPX/SPX protocol, which has a minimal effect on the rest of the NT-based network which runs 100 per cent TCP/IP. Not only was he impressed with the office reconstruction, and not fazed by us playing during lunch, but he has also requested that I set up a mini-network of four PCs, all loaded with 'Office Duke' for the next sales directors' meeting in December. Now, is that a twist?

Chris Winter

★ Lucky you, eh? We can't see many other managers adopting this free and easy approach to network access for deathmatch purposes though. More's the pity.



Jammy Chris Winter has his boss's approval to play Duke at work.

LOADSA GOODIES WINNER!

CONTACT INFO

If your letter is selected as Letter of the Month we'll send you some promotional goodies, a game and maybe even some hardware!

WRITE TO Mailbox, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

CHAT FORUM If you've got something pressing to say, check out the 'lively' chat forum on our website. Point your browser at www.pczone.co.uk for further info

CM3 TOO LATE?

What's going on with *Championship Manager 3*? Surely the best time to release it would be at the start of (or just after) the new domestic season? One of the best things about the game is that we can play along with the season that is going on in real life. Although playing '97-'98 is still very enjoyable, I can't be arsed with going into the editor to try to keep up with the growing number of transfers, not just in this country but around the world. I've just heard that it's not due for release until Jan '99. This seems a little strange, as it will be halfway through the current season.

I know I'm going on, but I would have thought that a pre-Christmas release would make more sense. I'm sure that many others (maybe even yourselves) will be eagerly awaiting the next update for this great game.

Stuart Fleming

★ We're sure Eidos would love to be able to decide exactly when to release CM3, but unfortunately this game is as prone to slippage as any other, which is why it will be released as soon as it's finished, regardless of how far into the season we are at the time. The good news is

that the game promises to be an absolute corker when it finally arrives, which will hopefully help you to live with the fact that we'll be halfway through the season. Release is set for January '99 - but don't be surprised if it slips to February.

REALISM RANT

I can feel a rant coming on. Not at the price of games, nor at the insane rate at which technology advances these days, but at developers. Like Microsoft, for example. Can any one of you actually claim to give a damn whether a bullet which you just fired into a Messerschmitt spins a bit after impact, or just which part of the toilet roll it hit? No? Good. You now have a claim to sanity.

My point is this: developers seem to need a level of detail in their games which is of no use to man or beast. To take the *Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator* example again: in your preview you went into almost anal detail about the bullet

“Surely the best time to release CM3 would be at the start of the season? Wouldn't a pre-Christmas release make more sense?”

STUART FLEMING

physics. Great, I thought, that's really rather impressive. But just what is the point? Your review mentioned the lack of detail in the cities. Couldn't all those hours spent on the bullet physics have been spent on making the cities look a little less like lumps of stomach lining with the Eiffel Tower on them? Surely that would be a better investment of both time and money?

To be fair, it isn't just Microsoft who have been obsessive about the level of detail. I think it was Black Friar who developed *Apollo 18*. Yes, it's meant to be realistic, but on the box one of the main selling points is a 200-page manual. I think this is pathetic. Equally pathetic is that the only other two

selling points mentioned are the two CDs. I think it's ridiculous that top-class developers spend god knows how long and how much on the kind of things that the player either won't know about or won't care about. Am I alone in this view?

Alistair Campbell

★ No, you're not, but there are a hell of a lot of people who will disagree with you. Microsoft flight sims are renowned for realism, and this is what will attract many people to *Combat Flight Sim*. Our review reflects this, and we pointed out that although games like *European Air War* are less realistic, they are more fun to play. We can only give you the facts. What you decide to go for is obviously up to you.

FROM THE WEBSITE

Point your Web browser to the PC ZONE website at www.pczone.co.uk and have your say. It's faster than a letter and cheaper than a courier

★ Is anyone else sick of all the Millennium bug bullshit that is doing the rounds - the stuff that goes on about how many 'everyday appliances' have microchips in them which will obviously burst into flames the moment 2000 ticks into place? Who writes/thinks of this rubbish? Is there a special exam for people who want to write for the tabloids?

Robbo6

ON CARMA II...

★ Is it me, or is *Carmageddon II* complete crap? I got it yesterday and completed it this morning! As soon as you get the dump truck it's piss easy!

Simtel

★ Sorry you feel that way. I like it, but that's my opinion.

Eddie_A

★ I couldn't even get the bloody thing to work!

Dynamite

Bring Forth the Gods of War!

For centuries this land has witnessed savage, bloodthirsty battles between the three races of Humans, Elves and Greenskins.

Have you got what it takes to end it?

Complete tailoring of individual troops

- Three races to choose from featuring over 75 different troops and buildings
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You must take control of this epic war and lead your armies into battle in the most adventurous strategy game ever!

Rival Realms features everything that's great about real time strategy games; a great plot; a wide variety of characters, excellent AI, heart-stopping battles, bags of visual appeal, a user friendly interface and best of all total replayability!



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HE'S A BIT UPSET

After reading PC ZONE #70 I began to cry (Not literally, surely? - Ed), all because of the letter from Steve entitled 'The Blue Peter Approach' where he said that no first-person shooters after *Doom* were any good, as "none have added anything new, except for coloured lighting, higher resolutions and better enemy AI". Oh, and decent level design; brilliant plot and depth; truly inspired monsters; multiple path missions like *Jedi Knight* and *SiN*; haunting sound and music. And hours of entertainment. You know, nothing new.

Compared to the other genres, first-person shooters have advanced the most - *Doom* has now been bettered by games like *Klinton* and *SiN*. What we have here is a refusal on Steve's part to upgrade his computer: ie he's a tight-arse. Fair enough, Steve, you get new textures and new levels for *Quake* and save £30, while the rest of us play decent games.

Paul Fisher

★ 3D shooters have indeed progressed beyond recognition recently, as games like *Half-Life* (PCZ



Half-Life: it's the mutt's nuts.

#71, 95%) and *Thief* (reviewed on page 96) prove beyond doubt. But that shouldn't stop anyone from prolonging the life of games they already own with add-ons or Total Conversions. Not everyone can afford to upgrade just to play the latest games.

HYPOPHOBE

Delays with games and the subsequent hype is getting out of hand. It seems 95 per cent of software is delayed, and undeservedly so. Take *Unreal*: why such a massive delay? Once everyone had got over the gorgeous visuals and the excellent AI, was the wait really worth it? I expect many people will say, if they are honest, a definite 'no'.

Few games actually live up to their hype. *Final Fantasy VII* on the PlayStation does as, I hope, *Zelda* will on the N64.

Games that aren't hyped at

all can do surprisingly well. Take *Commandos*. This little gem stayed in the top two of the charts for three months. Once everyone knew it was at No 1 for a while, it was then hyped. *Might And Magic VI* is another game that just 'arrived' and did very well.

Finally, I would like to predict a few flops and a few top titles of the games that we are about to be inundated by. *Championship Manager 3*, *Grand Touring* and *X-COM: Alliance* will be a success, whereas *Duke Nukem 4 Ever*, *Daikatana* and *Tomb Raider III* will be disappointments. The last three will sell shitloads, but will leave most people annoyed and angry.

Darren Taylor

★ Don't worry about the hype, PC ZONE is always on hand to tell you whether publishers' PR machines have been telling the truth about their biggest games.

On your predictions, we think that *Championship Manager 3* and *Duke 4 Ever* will be huge, and we're confident that Romero will prove everyone wrong with *Daikatana*. For our thoughts on *TR3* and *Grand Touring* see pages 82 and 110.

LIFE WITHOUT PETER

Isn't it strange that the only games from Bullfrog at the moment are sequels or updates of Molyneux classics? With *Populous III*, *Theme Park 2* and *Dungeon Keeper 2* on the way, it looks like he was the only creative talent in the entire company.

Thomas Le-Luan

★ Ooh, that's harsh. If anything, *Populous III* proves that they don't need Peter's help to make a brilliant game. And you can hardly blame them for doing sequels of classic

“Once you've got over *Unreal's* gorgeous visuals and AI, was it worth the wait?”

games when every other publisher is doing it too (*Tomb Raider III*, *Quake III* anyone?). Wait for Bullfrog's first original title before making any rash judgements on their creative abilities.

IN HIS OPINION

This has been said before, but your reply was inconclusive. The problem with all reviews is that they are by nature subjective, because they are based entirely on opinions (I mean, I loved *SW:Supremacy*, but I know a lot hated it). While there's no real way to correct this, a 'second opinion' feature from another reviewer would be nice. (I know you print readers' comments on games, but they aren't on just-released ones, so I've only got one person's word as to whether or not the latest RTS is another cheap clone or a TA-beater.) And where's the 'In Perspective' box? That was really useful.

On a different note, have you heard anything about *Civilization III* yet? And what happened to *Alpha Centauri*?

Stuart Fraser

★ All major titles that come in for review are discussed by the team before we decide on a score. That way you get the general opinion of the team, and not just that of whoever's reviewing the game in question. We agree that the 'In Perspective' box was useful, which is why we now have the 'Also Consider' panel instead, which does much the same thing.

Civ III is a long way off, but we've heard rumours it's already looking fantastic. *Alpha Centauri* is scheduled for release in mid-February '99.

GAME OVER

How long do you test games to review them? Do you play them all the way through? Usually there's a cheat for skipping levels for adventures like *Monkey Island* or level-based games, but what about strategy games like *X-COM*, which take ages to complete? Do publishers supply you with special versions or savegames at various stages of the gameplay? It took me over 60 hours to complete *FFVII*, and I didn't bother with the optional bits. Do you really play every game for that long?

Pooka, Cambridge

★ It depends. Strategy games take longer to review than, say, adventure or sports games because they often have hidden depths that aren't immediately apparent.

As a rule we spend as much time as we need to with a game before making a scoring decision. And yes, that often means we need to complete it, as was the case with *X-COM 3*, for example. [W]

SHORT BUT SWEET

Keep your letter short and you're more likely to get a reply in PC ZONE



★ Just a minor niggle. In your November Hotline section you put the Scottish flag like the English flag, but blue and white. The blurb was true, but the flag was false. Did you think we would be to drunk to notice? I don't really care, because the rest of the magazine is brilliant.

And why on earth is everyone slagging off Charlie Brooker? He is perfectly fine. He just had a disturbed childhood. He also has a unique way of dealing with morons. I used to buy a rival mag because of its old £3.50 price, but when you went down to £2.99 it was totally amazing! It gives me two quid of my pocket money to buy stuff (that is, when I get pocket

money); £4.99 gives me 1p to spend. I can skip down to the newsagents and buy a cola bottle! Or I could save up for 2999 months and buy *Quake II*. Stay smegging brilliant.

Spugster (age 12)

★ Oi! Sassanack Scum! If you want to start slagging off us drunken Scots (PCZ #69, p41), fine, but you could at least get the friggin' flag right. RIGHT?!

John Brannan

Sorry about the flag guys. No, really. Honest.

★ Which 3D shooter should I get myself for Christmas? I've already got *Half-Life* - now I've got to choose between *SiN*, *Shogo: MAD*, *Klinton: Honour Guard*, *Heretic 2*, *Heavy Gear 2*, *Thief: The Dark Project* and *Blood II*. Agggghhhh! Too hard a decision. Anyone got any thoughts or know of a site

comparing the seven of them?

Ben Campbell

Buy *Shogo* or *SiN*. Next.

★ Last month my sister appeared in *Star Girl* magazine. She said that I couldn't get in any mag as long as I live. Please print this (I've got £5 bet on this one).

Louis Goff-Beardsley

He was wrong, clearly.

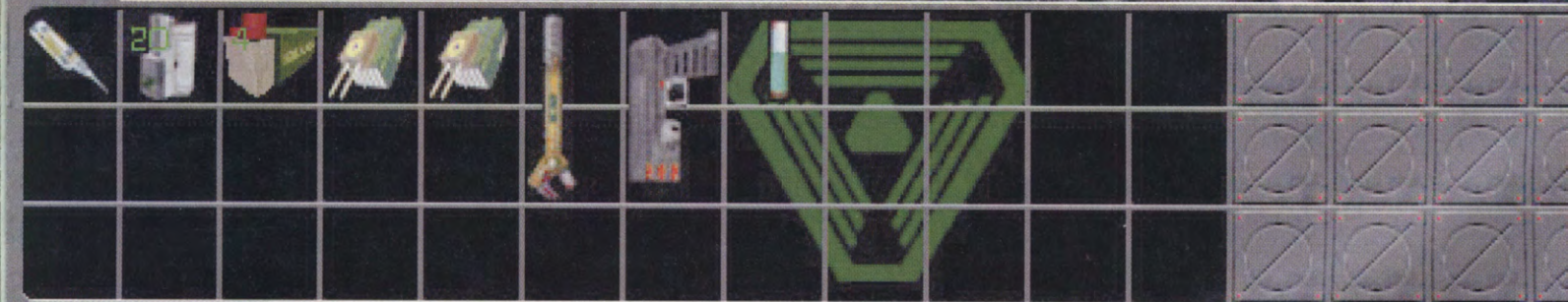
★ What happened to that game called *Sanitarium* that you had on one of your demo discs a few months back?

Stephen Crawford

We were just wondering the same thing. It's coming in for review soon, apparently. The early version we saw looked pretty good, so expect an in-depth review in the next issue or two.



Populous III: proof that Bullfrog can still do the business.



The game's look is similar to the original, with cyberpunk-style info everywhere.

30 hp
30 pp

skills

inventory

char

?

⏏

> A shotgun.

BACK TO THE FUTURE WITH

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Looking Glass Studios
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE Autumn '99

IN SUMMARY

A first-person role-playing game set in a 'cyberpunk' world with technology gone wrong. The first was a true classic of the role-playing genre and has yet to be equalled in terms of gameplay and atmosphere.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

The highly impressive Dark engine (used in *Thief*) makes a welcome reappearance – in a completely different setting.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

Worries that it might get lost in a sea of first-person action/adventure games.

SYSTEM SHOCK 2

A true gaming classic makes its return to the PC after almost five years in limbo

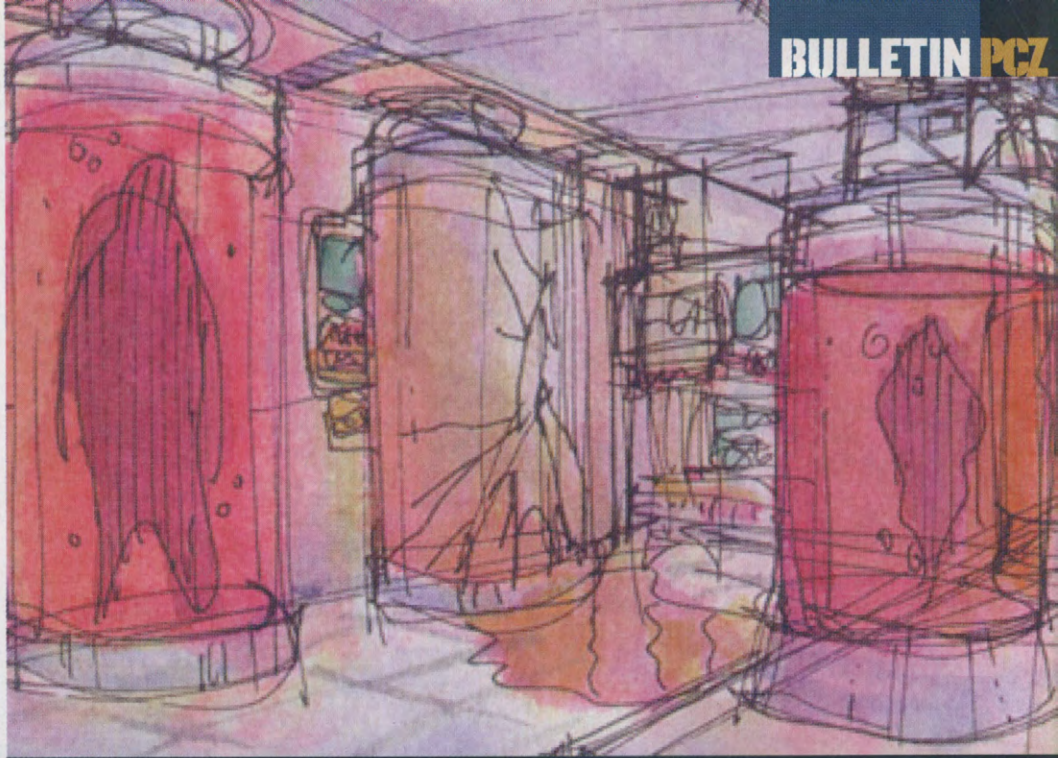
★ **REPORT** Paul Presley



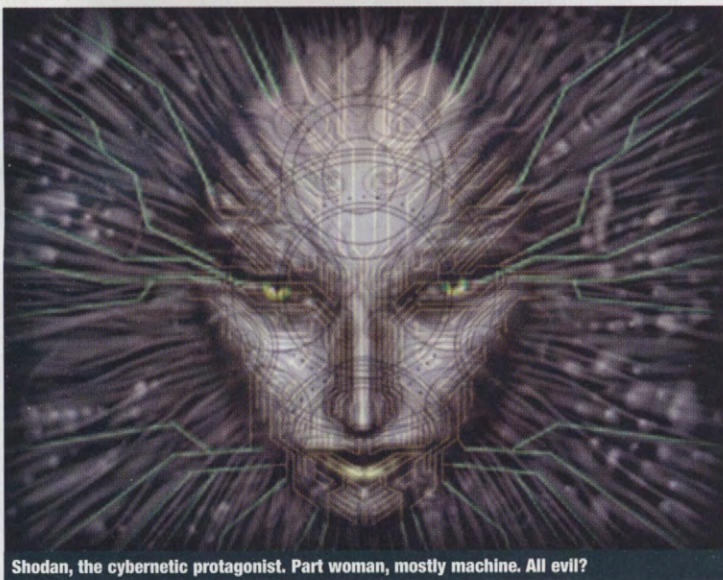
Ⓜ Robots will apparently play a huge part in the game, both helping and hindering.



A casino of the future.



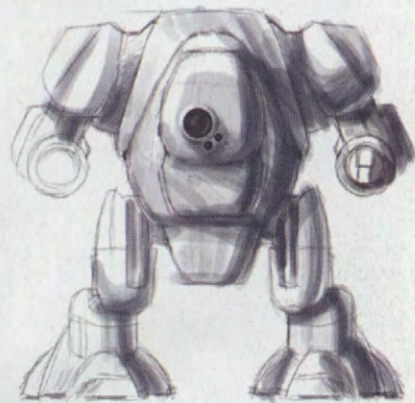
Some kind of bio-lab will presumably make an appearance.



Shodan, the cybernetic protagonist. Part woman, mostly machine. All evil?



The hero may look human, but inside there's a mass of wires.



A robot in the early stages. The finished product looks pretty mean.

Proof that we're idiots – No. 5 in a series of 38. When *Quake II* was thrown at us in a visceral fit of intestines and gore, everyone marvelled at the fact that you could simply

'duck' out of the way of incoming projectiles. "Ooh," we went as a missile flew over our heads and impacted on the wall behind us. An evolutionary moment in the developing history of first-person action games.

Except that Looking Glass' seminal *System Shock* did this five years ago.

This original, cyberpunk-inspired action/RPG was one of the truly great computer games of its time, and it seems amazing that it has taken so long for a sequel to appear.

Getting back to the point, not only could you duck in *System Shock*, you could also lean around walls, lie down and crawl around on all fours. Meaning the game environment became one of total immersion, a

kind that *Quake*-ers could only dream of. The recently announced sequel retains all these functions, utilising the advanced Dark engine seen recently in *Thief* (reviewed on page 96). As SSG's lead designer Ken Levine says: "It wouldn't be *System*

"In today's industry there is a lot of pressure to make games dumbed down. We don't buy into that logic"

KEN LEVINE, LEAD DESIGNER, LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS

Shock without them."

Another gaming holdover that *System Shock 2* will reintroduce is the concept of taking an engine and applying proper role-playing elements to it. As Ken says: "In today's game industry there is a lot of pressure to make games dumbed down, with slick visuals and nearly zero gameplay. We don't buy into that logic. The whole concept behind *System Shock 2* is to take the engaging, complex gameplay of a full-blown RPG and bring it into an engine

with technology for 1999, not 1989."

Thief provides proof that such a design philosophy is more than just empty words, and the concept of believable non-player character AI is to be used throughout the game. Security cameras will again play a

large part in the design of the game, with your character having to manipulate their functions in the realms of cyberspace. Other hacking functions give you access to the 'wandering monster' controls, lowering their re-spawning levels and the like.

External locations are being eschewed by the designers, not on the grounds of technical

limitations, but due to a sense of atmosphere. "We wanted to focus our energies on a game that gives that great *System Shock* sci-fi horror vibe, and indoor environments suit that better," explains Levine.

There isn't a great deal of information about the storyline at present, although we do know that Shodan, the original game's computer protagonist, will return, and your character will play a role in a large-scale military raiding force.

One curious titbit of information that Looking Glass haven't elaborated on is a quote on their website that compares the *System Shock 2* interface to those in *Conflict: Freespace* (PCZ #66, 89%) and *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* (PCZ #52, 89%), giving rise to speculation of vehicular movement in the game. Hopefully we'll be dispelling or confirming these and other rumours in a full ZONE preview in a future issue. [E]





Loose Cannon's in-game characters look uncannily realistic

DRIVING IN THE FAST LANE. WITH GUNS:

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

DEVELOPER Digital Anvil
PUBLISHER Microsoft
EXPECTED RELEASE DATE November 1999

IN SUMMARY

Seamless blend of fast-paced driving action and third-person combat. Complete freedom to explore the game environment as you see fit.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

In an industry obsessed with sequels and clones, Digital Anvil are attempting to create a game that's genuinely different from the norm. That, we think, is a very big deal indeed.

POTENTIAL PITFALLS

May turn out to be a little too ambitious for its own good, though current evidence suggests this is highly unlikely.

LOOSE CANNON

It's a new kind of driving game, in which you use your feet to get around. Confused? Read on...

★ **REPORT** Chris Anderson



Cities are linked by highways, obviously. Here's one we made earlier.



Buy bigger and better weapons at the aptly named 'weapon shop'.



“Gorgeous visuals, open-ended gameplay and a very strong storyline. An ambitious project indeed.”

“I’ll be darned if graphics in virtual reality videogames haven’t come a long way since I were a lad,” said Ashe, speculatively.



It’s a roadblock. A police roadblock. Plough through it, why don’t you.



Have Uzi, will maim. And kill. And generally cause bother.

☞ “Sexy sports cars for your in-game enjoyment, sir?”



☞ Meet Ashe, the character under your control. His destiny is in your hands, soldier.

Similar in terms of presentation to games like *Micro Machines* and *Grand Theft Auto* (PCZ #58, 92%), *Loose Cannon* features a miniature hero who drives around a top-down 3D environment in a miniature car. But the similarity between Digital Anvil’s potentially ground-breaking title and the aforementioned drive ‘em ups ends there.

Loose Cannon is far more ambitious than any motor-related virtual reality videogame we’ve come across, in that once you reach your previously defined mission objectives, you jump straight out of your motor and take on the enemies close-up and personal. The action sequences are not entirely dissimilar to those in games like *Tomb Raider* (PCZ #45, 95%) or *ODT* (PCZ #71, 69%), with the hero of the game walking around a true 3D environment wielding dangerous weapons and shooting

people he doesn’t like in the face. We’ve seen the ‘on-foot’ sequences in action, and to say they look anything other than sensational would clearly be an untruth.

A beautifully detailed 3D environment serves as a perfect backdrop for your clandestine activities, and a seriously cool sniping mode gives you the opportunity to pick off your targets from afar with absolute precision. This will be the targeting mode of choice for people who don’t want to rush into enemy territory with gay abandon and get their hands dirty in close-up action (or get their head blown off in any kind of action), and visually it’s a treat too, with the in-game camera zooming in on your unwitting targets who continue to go about their daily business blissfully unaware that you’re about to blow their head clean off.

Of course, *Loose Cannon* will stand or fall on the strength of its mission design, and thankfully Digital Anvil

have a cunning plan in place to ensure repetitive gameplay does not rear its ugly head. There are 20 set missions in the game, but you can choose to undertake all manner of sub-missions while you ponder the main plot. These include performing small tasks – such as rescuing hostages, assassinating local hoods, or simple reconnaissance missions – in return for money which you can use to upgrade your vehicle, or even buy a new one if you’re feeling a bit flush.

There are 15 customisable vehicles available in the game,

along with an impressive selection of weapons and armour, 12 countryside areas, and nine fully interactive cities to explore. The cities look particularly impressive, with highly detailed buildings, realistic traffic, pedestrians, and (of course) policemen wandering around trying to spoil everyone’s fun.

Loose Cannon seems to represent a seamless blending of genres, with gorgeous visuals, open-ended gameplay and a very strong storyline holding the whole thing together. An ambitious project indeed, and one which we’ll be following very closely in the pages of *PC ZONE*. [E]



LOOKING BACK

★ REPORT Paul Mallinson



The state of PC gaming today... Two years ago we marvelled at the ultra chic of 640x480 SVGA graphics (in 256 colours no less), and nowadays we can't play most new game releases without a super high-powered 3D accelerator card installed and 64Mb of RAM. It's great, isn't it? With the announcement of Voodoo3 (see page 34 for the full story), and with cards such as the Riva TNT already doing the rounds, it is with much excitement that we look forward to another year of technological leaps and advancements.

1999 is sure to be another majorly significant year in the evolution of computer gaming technology, but the past two years have been nothing short of phenomenal. When I first came to work on *PC ZONE*, 3D technology was in its infancy. We were mightily impressed by VideoLogic's initial PowerVR presentations and, only a short while later, by 3Dfx and their now-mighty Voodoo chipset. Now, card manufacturers are falling over themselves in a bid to grab a piece of the action and PC gamers are benefiting from this intense competition. Thankfully, the standards of game design remain very high. Sure, there are still many games released that should, by rights, never see the light of day (most of which will no doubt go on to sell well in Germany...), but on the whole, PC gaming has never been so sophisticated and so much fun.

Looking through this month's Bulletin, it seems that the development community has learnt a heck of a lot over the past few years, and is thriving from the introduction of 3D acceleration. It's been a blast to monitor it happening - to see new games announced, follow their development and see them unleashed on an unsuspecting public.

So let's raise a glass to the past, and propose a toast to a very rosy future. Cheers. Happy new year.

THE PCZONE CHARTS

More comprehensive than ever

P.22

ChartTrack

SPECIAL REPORT

Game Developer UK compo results

P.25



CHRIS ROBERTS GOES FREELANCE

The world is crying out for an on-line game in the style of *Privateer 2: The Darkening*. Digital Anvil are all-ears

★ UNDERCOVER Chris Anderson



Chris Roberts predicts *Freelancer* will be one of the biggest online games ever.

During a recent visit to the offices of Digital Anvil in Texas, we were given an early showing of most of their new titles for next year, all of which have been covered elsewhere in the mag (*Loose Cannon*, *Conquest*, *Starlancer*). Interesting and innovative though these titles may be (particularly *Loose Cannon* - see page 18), the real gem in Digital Anvil's crown was not shown at all. But there were words. Behind closed doors. Chris Roberts (creator of the legendary *Wing Commander* series) spoke at length to a group of intrigued and eager journalists about his private project, *Freelancer*.

Such is his enthusiasm for his new project that outrageous claims were made for the game along the lines of '*Freelancer* will be bigger and better than *Privateer 2: The Darkening*. It will support up to 100 players online, all of whom can trade or fight or

simply roam the universe at will. Individuals may set up their own servers to support their own gameworlds or jump straight into an existing *Freelancer* set-up.'

When asked how *Freelancer* will compare to current space combat trendsetter *Freespace*, Roberts proudly announced: "*Freelancer* will have hi-res 3D graphics that will make *Freespace* look tame in comparison, and a bigger more varied gameworld. The game is already looking better than any space combat sim currently available." Bold words, but surely if it's that good, why wouldn't they give us even a glimpse of this alleged on-line masterpiece? Chris explains: "*Freelancer* is not due for release until the end of 1999 at the earliest, and it may even come later than that. For that reason we're concentrating on the titles from Digital Anvil that gamers can look forward to next year." Chris also hinted strongly that *Freelancer* will be the key title for Digital Anvil going into the year 2000. We simply cannot wait. Fact.

EA BUY FOOTBALL

Electronic Arts have further extended their already formidable power in the lucrative football game market after acquiring the rights to the next two World Cups, Euro 2000, the German Bundesliga, plus an eight-year extension to their current FIFA licence. EA Sports, who also have exclusive rights to the FA Premier League and a number of top footballing personalities from around the world, now reportedly own 80 per cent of this hugely profitable sector and plan to release three big-name football licences every year from now on. On present form this is very good news.



ONLINE ZONE

Internet access for free, but just how reliable is it?

P:30



PLAYSTATION ZONE

Games that you'll never see on PC

P:31



TECH-HEAD

Read all abaaht it: 3Dfx announce Voodoo3!

P:34



HOTLINE

An at-a-glance guide to new game releases

P:38



DARK CLOUDS GATHER OVER ION STORM



Trouble at t'mill for John Romero and ION Storm

★ REPORT Paul Presley



Eidos say the release of *Daikatana* will remain unaffected by the walkouts.

In a potential blow to the April release of *Daikatana*, ION Storm have lost 11 key members of their development team, making a total of 17 departures from the high-brow Texas-based company in the past two months.

The walk-outs started with one fifth of the *Daikatana* team issuing a joint statement, stating they had individual reasons for leaving, but that they "all felt it was inevitable". The group are remaining together, however, forming a new development team - rumoured to be part of the Gathering Of Developers, headed by ex-Ion Storm/iD 'biz' guy, Mike Wilson.

The resignations were compounded two days later by director of technology Corrinne Yu's defection to rival developers 3D Realms, ostensibly to work on 3D engines for GT Interactive's *Prey* and *Duke Nukem 5*, and Skin Designer Ken Scott's move to

iD Software to work on *Quake III Arena*. Yu's appointment comes barely a month after 3D Realms sacked *Prey*'s project leaders, Paul Schuytema and William Scarboro.

Following the initial departures, Ion Storm founder John Romero stated publicly that *Daikatana* was unaffected and that this was happening at an "opportune time" since much of the game was in a final state and much of the coding had been completed. However, a leading UK games designer, who wishes to remain anonymous, told us that "the end of every project is a painstaking time. If a bug appears, the original programmer might fix it in half an hour. If he's not there, some other poor sod might spend three days just getting his head round the initial code. Plus, if *Daikatana* is as finished as Romero says, why are these guys passing up a chance to put it on their CVs?"

Publishers Eidos have also issued a calming statement claiming to be "fully confident in the team's ability to complete *Daikatana*, according to the current schedule". This was shortly followed by the resignation of ION Storm's chief financial officer, Carla J Smith, prompting industry speculation that the financial contracts at ION Storm were not as palatable as they perhaps should have been.

An unconfirmed report alleges that bonuses were left to the whims of senior management, with payment possibly stretched out over a five-year period.

We'll have more on this story, and (hopefully) a full update on *Daikatana*, in the next issue of *PC ZONE*.



Romero manages to look relaxed about his dwindling staff.



Paul Schuytema finds himself unemployed, while Corrinne Yu, former director of technology defects to 3D Realms.

CHARTS

The best PC games chart page in the entire universe, or so we're told, plus the buzz on the streets from you lot. Now read and digest it



What the world's been waiting for: MS Flight Sim with guns.

CHART COMMENT

In getting to the top two slots in the chart this month, *Combat Flight Sim* and *Rise Of Rome* have knocked some heavyweight games out of the way. Neither *SIN* nor *Settlers III* entered the chart at Number One, which has surprised some people here, but not others.

FA Premier Manager seems to have started its descent rather prematurely - *Championship Manager III* isn't going to be out until February. Having said that, Anco, Ubi Soft and Gremlin also have football management sims looming, so that could be affecting *FAPM's* placing as well.

Grim Fandango was Number One in the weekly Chart Track chart, but only stayed there for one week. It's now dropped to nine. Hopefully it'll recover. Prediction: *Half-Life* to debut at Number One next month.

Paul Mallinson

THE MEGASTORES TOP 10

NOV DEC	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REVIEW SCORE
- 1	SOUTH PARK DESKTOPS	TELSTAR	TELSTAR	NOT REVIEWED
- 2	CARMAGEDDON II	SCI	SCI	95%
- 3	GRIM FANDANGO	LUCASARTS	LUCASARTS	90%
- 4	SIN	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	91%
- 5	FA PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER 99	EA SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	72%
3 6	KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD	MICROPROSE	MICROPROSE	94%
- 7	STAR WARS: BEHIND THE MAGIC	LUCASARTS	LUCASARTS	NR%
4 8	AGE OF EMPIRES: RISE OF ROME	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	83%
5 9	COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES	EIDOS	EIDOS	88%
- 10	CAESAR III	SIERRA	CENDANT	92%

THE TOP 10

NOV DEC	TITLE	LABEL	GROUP	REV SCORE
- 1	COMBAT FLIGHT SIMULATOR	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	79%
10 2	AGE OF EMPIRES: RISE OF ROME	MICROSOFT	MICROSOFT	83%
- 3	POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING	BULLFROG	ELECTRONIC ARTS	92%
- 4	SETTLERS III	BLUE BYTE	BLUE BYTE	ADD
- 5	VIRTUAL SPRINGFIELD	FOX INTERACTIVE	EA	NR
1 6	FA PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER 99	EA SPORTS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	72%
- 7	SIN	ACTIVISION	ACTIVISION	91%
5 8	TITANTIC: ADVENTURE OUT OF TIME	EUROPRESS	EUROPRESS	NR
- 9	GRIM FANDANGO	LUCASARTS	LUCASARTS	90%
2 10	COLIN McRAE RALLY	CODEMASTERS	CODEMASTERS	93%

(Compiled by Chart Track © ELSPA 1998)

THE BUZZ ON THE STREETS

"Okay, so I was wrong about *Caesar III* being this month's Number One (See Chris's comment last issue - Ed). What the f**k happened? I bought *Rise Of Rome* and *Settlers III* and they're not a patch on *Caesar III*."

Chris Hall, Stoke-on-Trent

"Not bad! Seven out ten desirable games. Top of my 'wanted' list would have to be *Combat Flight Sim*, to fulfil my dream of shooting down some scum from a Spitfire... I mean Americans (of course). Er, you'd better not print that."

Peter Green, Belfast

"The fact that an add-on is at number two shows how well the original *Age Of Empires* must have sold."

Luke, Bishop's Stortford.

"Only *Grim Fandango* and *SIN* are worth buying; all the others are sports/strategy (ie not very interesting). Apart from *Virtual Springfield*. Wouldn't it be interesting if Maggie said something in it, or if Marge could exterminate the entire Simpson clan with an Uzi?"

Wendy Clark-Ward, Berkshire

"*Populous: The Beginning* looks deeply erotic and plays like a dream, but the introduction of a visible avatar takes a lot of the fun out of it. I want to be a god, not a collection of pixels cluttering up the screen."

Alex, Bristol

"There seems to be a sudden obsession with RTS and 'god' games. Why?"

Tom Fletcher, Glasgow

COMPETITION WIN THE ENTIRE VIRGIN TOP 10!

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

Question: If Bill Gates and (Wild) Bill Stealey had a fight, who would win?

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

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

Send your answers on a postcard to: PC ZONE Chart Compo (72), 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ. Closing date: Monday 11 January.

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

RETRO CHARTS

1 YEAR AGO...

- 1 *Champ Manager 97/98* Eidos
- 2 *Flight Sim 98* Microsoft
- 3 *Curse Of Monkey Island* LucasArts
- 4 *Age Of Empires* Microsoft
- 5 *Encarta 98 Deluxe* Microsoft

2 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *FIFA 97* EA Sports
- 2 *Screamer 2* Virgin
- 3 *Encarta 97* Microsoft
- 4 *Flight Sim 6* Microsoft
- 5 *Tomb Raider* Eidos

5 YEARS AGO...

- 1 *Day Of The Tentacle* US Gold
- 2 *The 7th Guest* Virgin
- 3 *Eye Of The Beholder Trilogy* US Gold
- 4 *Dune* Virgin
- 5 *Dracula Unleashed* Mindscape



Design and create your very own rollercoaster in the forthcoming *RollerCoaster Tycoon*.

Defying the laws of gravity is easy when the track editor is this flexible.

WHITE-KNUCKLE RIDE

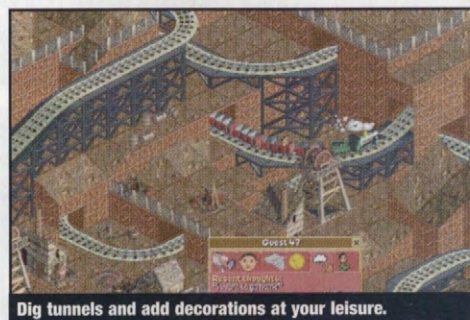
MicroProse and Hasbro strap themselves in for the ride of their lives in *RollerCoaster Tycoon*

★ WANTING TO GET OFF Paul Mallinson

Created and programmed by designer Chris Sawyer (of *Transport Tycoon* fame), *RollerCoaster Tycoon* – it must be said – does bear a striking resemblance to Bullfrog's classic *Theme Park* (PCZ #17, 93%). The isometric graphics, complete with customary cartoony feel, are but an initial clue. *RollerCoaster Tycoon* also complies to the resource/business management gaming model, and as such could be considered a bit of a bare-faced *Theme Park* rip-off. But... hold your horses – *Theme Park* is over four years old now, and things have moved on since then.

RollerCoaster Tycoon concerns itself far more with the design and maintenance of 'coasters themselves. From vertical loops to corkscrews, in-line twists to decapitating overhangs, suspended/inverted – it's up to you. Of course, on top of that you'll also get to fanny around with other amusement park items and issues (such as shops and stalls), but there's still no word on whether you'll be able to alter salting levels at the French fry kiosks. Know what we mean?

RollerCoaster Tycoon is released by MicroProse next spring.



Dig tunnels and add decorations at your leisure.

FOR THE RECORD

“You can get a 3Dfx card on the Web for 50 bucks. Every gamer should have one.”
Ken Levine, lead designer on *System Shock 2*.

“We didn't think anyone would use it.”
Anco spokesman commenting on the 3D section of *Player Manager Season 98/99*, which – we found – crashes with alarming regularity.

“They picked Stalin and Churchill, and I hate them both passionately. We wanted to distance ourselves from the line-up they chose. I like *FIFA '98* better anyway.”
Super Furry Animals lead singer Gruff Rhys at odds with Gremlin's *Actua Soccer 2* team selection.

“Half the fun is doing all that PR and marketing stuff.”
Ron Gilbert of Cavedog: games designer, or marketing skunk? You decide.

“Apparently little Johnny might get confused and think our short, fat charmers are actually a violent race game for the over-18s.”
Martyn Brown, Team 17, after changing the name of *Wormageddon* to *Worms Armageddon* under pressure from SCI.

SHORTS

KEEGAN RETURNS TO PREMIERSHIP

Kevin Keegan is the latest football 'personality' to put his name to a management game, following in the footsteps of 'Big' Ron Atkinson (*World Football Manager* – Ubi Soft) and Kevin Toms (*Football Manager* – Addictive Software). Gremlin's *Premier Manager '99* will now have Keegan – currently manager of Fulham – splashed all over the box, as well as voicing concerns about your management style as you play. *Premier Manager '99* is out on January 22.

WARGASM RECRUITMENT DRIVE

DID's wartime shoot 'em up *WarGasm* is to be used by the Royal Armoured Corps' Mobile Display Team to attract more young people to their ranks. *WarGasm* itself had roots in a commercial warfare simulator developed by DID for the military to help train gunners in 'Warrior' armoured fighting vehicles. At *ZONE* we fail to see the link between the game's fun, arcade-style gameplay and the horrors of real war.

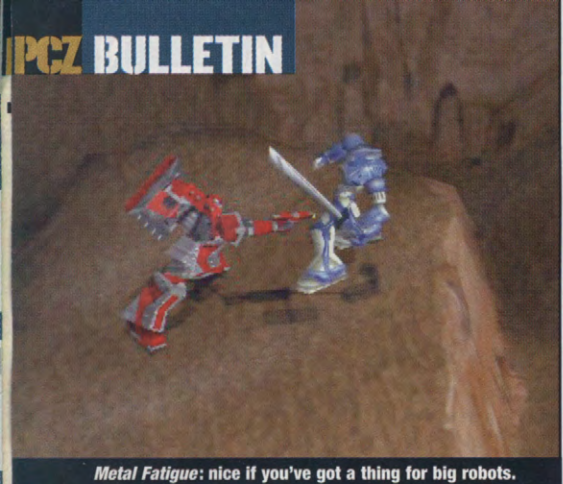
PLAY WITH THE TELETUBBIES

Asylum Entertainment have announced a real-time 3D adventure game based on the award-winning kids' characters The Teletubbies, the aim being to introduce a new generation of toddlers to the wonders of PC gaming. Although 'edutainment' is not a word we like using here at *PC ZONE*, we approve of the sentiment, and would like to think that this game is something of a recommendation to PC gaming parents, sick of wasting money on insipid 'multimedia' encyclopaedias and the like. This icon-less, object-oriented exploration game will feature a 'layered' control method which varies from simple mouse swings to precise, timed actions against the clock. This, and Ubi Soft's forthcoming *Play Mobil* game, could introduce a whole new generation of potential gamers to the emerging power of the desktop PC.

Play With The Teletubbies is out at Xmas from BBC Worldwide.



Made in collaboration with Ragdoll – the production company who make the television show.



Metal Fatigue: nice if you've got a thing for big robots.



The 'Combots' are fully customisable.



The AI engine promises realistic enemies.



It's all played out in real-time.

REAL-TIME ROBOT RUMBLE

Japanese giant-robot Animé genre to provide inspiration for giant robot strategy game

★ JAP'S EYE Paul Presley

More big robot tomfoolery in the shape of Psygnosis' *Metal Fatigue*, which is due to 'hit your screens' this coming May. Looking like something of a cross between *C&C*, *MechWarrior* and *Battle Of The Gobots*, *Metal Fatigue* lets you play around with giant 'Combots', fully customisable killing machines with oddly humanistic features for that added touch of pathos.

The fighting will take place in unique three-part

battlefields, utilising space, land and subterranean locales simultaneously. The AI engine will use (supposedly) advanced techniques to bring realistic and adaptable computer opponents, and the graphics are to include fully-rendered 3D units and terrain. The whole thing will play out in real-time.

Let's hope you won't be too fatigued by these games when it arrives in May. Guffaw.



Extreme G2: cycle-by shootings had to happen sometime.



The PC version promises to be faster than the N64.

XG TO PC

Dubbed somewhat trendily *XG2* by Acclaim's well-versed spin doctors, *Extreme G 2* is set to continue the trend of fast action shoot 'em ups from 3D specialists Probe Entertainment (previously responsible for *Forsaken* and *FX Fighter*). The original *Extreme G* – an unbelievably fast 'cyber cycle' racing game with shoot 'em up elements – was only available on Nintendo's N64 console. *Extreme G 2* – an even faster 'cyber cycle' racing game with even bigger shoot 'em up elements – will be released on PC as well this time. Expect major bells and whistles, at a flippin' fast frame rate, before Christmas (if all goes to plan).



SHORTS QUAKE II COLLECTIBLES

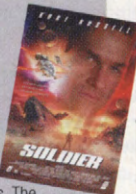
A range of highly-detailed collectible figures based on ID's *Quake II* characters will have gone on sale through the company's website by the time you read this. Apparently made from "100 per cent recycled Space Marines", the Iron Maiden (complete with two



interchangeable weapon arms), and the Parasite (which comes with a bendable brain-draining tentacle) seem an ideal stocking-filler for frag fans everywhere. More info: www.idsoftware.com.

KURT SOLDIERS ON

Soldier, Kurt Russell's forthcoming futuristic disaster/war flick, is to become a game come summer, thanks to developers Gigawatt Studios. The game will concentrate on the more militaristic aspects of the story, taking place in a fully-3D real-time strategy environment with plenty of rendered hardware to hand. No UK publisher has yet been announced.



BLUFFER'S Guide to...

DVD

★ What is it?

Digital Versatile Disc (not Digital Video Disc) is a highly-evolved compact disc that can hold up to 17 gigabytes of video, audio and data. DVD will encompass home entertainment and business information with one digital format, eventually replacing the audio CD, videotape, Laserdisc, CD-ROM, and even game console cartridges.

★ What does it do?

DVD-Video is the adopted name of the format designed for movies – essentially a box of tricks that works with the telly in your lounge. DVD-ROM is the name of the unit that will replace the CD-ROM drive (importantly, it is backwardly compatible) and DVD-RAM is the recordable version of it. DVD-Audio is a player designed to replace your CD player at home.

★ How does it work?

It uses MPEG2 file and compression to store visual data. MPEG2 has four times the resolution of MPEG1 images and can be delivered at twice the frame rate. Audio quality on DVD is superior to that of current audio compact discs.

★ Where can I find out more about it?

The best place to go is: www.bok.net/~tristan/MPEG/dvd.html

Winners, sponsors, presenters and mascots gather for the camera at the GDUK awards.



MEN IN SKIRTS

Scottish games awards ceremony prompts cross-dressing

★ WEARING TROUSERS Steve Hill

Stirling Castle provided the majestic setting for the inaugural Games Developer UK awards this Guy Fawkes Night, and PC ZONE was there, dressed properly and providing a bastion of sobriety amid the highland tomfoolery. Open to amateurs with no previous experience of the industry, the competition was effectively the game design equivalent of *Readers' Wives*, and attracted some 600 entries from all over the UK. The overall winner was Chris Chadwick, an unemployed 30-year-old from Yeovil, with the game *Blitter Boy In Operation Monster Mall*. We cornered him and asked what the hell it was all about.

"It's a bit weird," he began. "You basically go around shooting monsters, and you've got to save six babies by collecting them. They follow you around to a teleporter and they beam up to the next level."

Where did the idea come from?

"Not the way you think - I wasn't on drugs. I

started off wanting to do a basic conversion of a game called *Robotron*. It basically developed from there, really, and I started adding more and more things to it."

So, having pocketed six grand, what now?

"I'm going to finish it, which I've almost achieved. But with the actual game, I just wanted to use it to get noticed. I had no plans to have it released as a commercial game or anything. I've been invited up to see one of the Scottish development teams, Red Lemon, so I'll see what happens from there."

One of the judges for the competition was freelance journalist (and professional ligger) Steve Boxer, who explained how the panel settled on the overall winner. "It was just a huge bundle, and eventually, like all committees, we came to a decision. There was some very, very tough competition from the game design category, but we felt that *Blitter Boy* had it all, really. It was one of

the few finished games that worked as a whole complete game, and it could be argued that perhaps it had a bit of an advantage because of that. It's a very playable game with lots of humorous touches and a fantastic look. It was very well thought out."

So could *Blitter Boy* be commercially developed?

"It's difficult to say that. I mean, there is a gulf between amateur games and the ultra-polished stuff created by enormous teams that you see these days. But I certainly think he has a future in the games industry."

Following the success of GDUK '98, it is hoped that it will become an annual event. So if you fancy a job in this charming, fun-packed industry, we suggest you get off your lazy arse and think of some game ideas. [E2]

SPECIAL REPORT



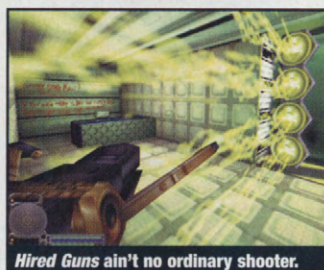
The bouncers arrive to eject Mr Hill from the building.

AND THE WINNERS ARE...

OVERALL WINNER	Chris Chadwick	£1000
BEST GAME	Richard Gatehouse/ Andy Southgate	£500 each
BEST ARTWORK/ANIMATION	Inga Paterson	£1000
BEST GAME DESIGN	Stuart Graham	£1000
BEST AUDIO	Kenny McAlpine	£1000
BEST NET YAROZE GAME	Chris Chadwick	£1000



Presenter Dominik Diamond announces the winner.



Hired Guns ain't no ordinary shooter.

Hired Guns: about to shake up the action/strategy genre come summer?

GUNS FOR HIRE

Psygnosis announce revolutionary update of Amiga strategy/action classic *Hired Guns*

★ PEN FOR HIRE Phil Wand

Using a throbbing *Unreal* power plant, *Hired Guns* follows the story of four mercenaries and their bid to escape a lifetime of slavery. But this ain't no ordinary third-person shooter. At the heart of Psygnosis' new title is the ability to view and control all four characters simultaneously through a unique quad-screen system. Knowing when to split everyone up, when to regroup and when to scarp is fundamental to your success. Couple this to an all-singing, all-dancing 3D engine and you have something that could shake up the whole action/strategy genre when the game unleashed upon the world in the summer.



North v South: re-enact major US battles and see how East (for a change) was won.

NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE

Unlike Infogrames' classic game of the same name (which realised the concept of Americans fighting each other was inherently funny), Interactive Magic's forthcoming *North v South* is a very serious affair. Set during the bloody and bleak American Civil War, you get to re-enact

ten major battles, including Gettysburg and Brandy Station, as well as a full campaign across the whole of the eastern USA. You can fight for either side (depending on your attitude towards slavery) or over a network. The game should be available by the time you read this.

SHORTS

QUAKE II: EXTREMITIES

The ever-powerful Quake bandwagon (deservedly) rolls ever onward with the announcement of Extremities – a compilation of non-commercial mods for Quake II. ID and Activision are hand-picking the best 'amateur' add-ons from the Quake II programming scene, such as EraserBot, Rocket Arena II and Action Quake II, and plan to release them as an 'official' Quake II product in time for Christmas.



FLY LIKE A PRO

The sequel to Sierra's civilian flight simulator *Pro Pilot* is due to hit the streets any time now. *Pro Pilot '99* is being designed to enhance the novice pilot's experience and serve as an excellent preparation and exercise utility for flight enthusiasts, aviation students and professional aviators alike. Six new aircraft are planned for inclusion.



SIERRA GET PISTE AGAIN

It'll be a white Christmas this year if Sierra's forthcoming *Ski Racing Extreme Edition* is anything to go by. The enhanced and updated version of their previously appalling ski game now features better, faster graphics, a new course at Mount Sierra Winter Park, and digital representation of six other world-class resorts.

SiN ADD-ON FOR FEB

More news is emerging about 2015's forthcoming official add-on for the ultra-violent shoot 'em up SiN. Seven new weapons are planned, new monster AI, new vehicles, plus a whole new story for Blade and JC to unravel. A host of new enemies are also planned ("more than any other add-on pack to date," the developers claim). Watch for a February release through Activision.



Conquest: it's early days but it looks pretty good already.



Starlancer: space combat from DA in late '99.

CONQUEST AND HOMEWORLD SET FOR SHOWDOWN

Conquest, from Digital Anvil, is an intergalactic real-time strategy game in true 3D – and it looks perilously similar to Cendant's *Homeworld* (Cendant's only surviving RTS now that Blizzard have disappeared, taking *Diablo 2* with them). *Conquest's* unique selling point appears to be the ability to zip round the enormous playing area through jump-gates. Also under construction at DA is *Starlancer*, a space combat sim in a *Wing Commander* stylee which is being put together by several members of the original *Privateer 2* team. Both games are expected to arrive towards the end of 1999, and we'll be taking a closer look at them both next issue (on sale Friday 15 January).

YOUR MOST WANTED

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

- 1 **Half-Life** (Cendant) _____ Just out
- 2 **Duke Nukem Forever** (GT) _____ Mid-'99
- 3 **Quake III/Arena** (Activision) _____ Spring '99
- 4 **X-Wing Alliance** (LucasArts) _____ March '98
- 5 **Driver** (Reflections) _____ Spring '99
- 6 **Championship Manager 3** (Eidos) _____ Just out
- 7 **Aliens versus Predator** (Fox) _____ Feb '99
- 8 **Civilization: Call To Power** (Activision) _____ Just out
- 9 **Diablo II** (Blizzard) _____ Spring '99
- 10 **Baldur's Gate** (Interplay) _____ December '98

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

**The best managers
know that the
real action
doesn't start
until after
Christmas.**

Championship
MANAGER 3

Release date February 1999



EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

www.eidosinteractive.co.uk

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ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE

More northern antics in this busy little gaming town

✦ REPORTER Andrew Martin

WHO LIVES IN A TOWN LIKE THIS?

EMMA WHITE
22, fitness instructor

Christmas shopping?

"Yes, unfortunately. A game for a nephew."

You're not a gamer as such, then?

"Games players are generally bloody unhealthy. I only ever play *Solitaire* – and it's only ever switched on when I'm sat around at home waiting for some wheezing, overweight bloke to turn up after a hard day at the office, smoking fags, eating fast food and playing *Quake*. And you ask me why I don't play games... Tsk."



IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE?

Simply referred to as Ashton by most of its inhabitants, this busy little market town is surrounded by Oldham, Manchester, Glossop and Huddersfield, creating a rich mix of countryside and council estates.

Its centre is the more familiar story of a bus station, pubs that Boddington's girl Melanie Sykes frequents, and a shopping centre – The Arcades – where the shop Game is located.

Scott Williams, 21, is assistant manager. Surprisingly, he is all too eager to speak to PC ZONE about Game's Christmas outlook.

"There's more to the PC market than people think. I'm not denying that the consoles are much more popular, but we only have Dixons and WH Smith to contend with as far as the PC is concerned, so we do much better."

As for big sellers: "*Carmageddon II* and *Grim Fandango* have sold very, very well," says Scott. "But the main interest at the moment is in *Half-Life*. Everyone seems to want it – when they're not asking about *Tomb Raider III*, that is."

So we can safely say that *TRIII* will top the chart this Christmas?

"Yes, even if they are, in my opinion, flogging a dead horse."

Scott predicts that Christmas sales will see "people buying *Tomb Raider III*, complete with a 3D card, with *SiN* and *Half-Life* bringing up the rear".

The Game boys predict a Lara, Lara Christmas.



IT'S ABOUT TO GO OFF...

DELTA FORCE™

NOVALOGIC

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ONLINEZONE

NOW PLAYING

Following complaints about the new FreeServe service, we take a closer look at the Dixons ISP and also at some alternatives

★ NET-HEAD Phil Wand

Delirious at the thought of free access to the Internet? You're not the only one. In the past two months more than half a million people have signed up with www.freeserve.net, the costless provider with the marketing might of Dixons and the technical know how of Energis. With that and the exponential growth of rival freebie dial-ups, alarm bells are now ringing at 'traditional' providers like Demon and Direct Connection.

But hold on a second. Sure, FreeServe won't cost you a penny, but is it any good? Several customers have contacted us to voice their concerns about both the client software and the network itself. The chief complaint was bungled



installations, where the FreeServe copy of *Internet Explorer* overwrote the existing version. Other complaints include engaged tones, spurious error messages, and being left on hold after phoning the quid-a-minute helpline.

If we take the increasing amount of anecdotal evidence seriously, it seems that FreeServe isn't all it's cracked up to be. Still, our own installation went smoothly, and we've not yet been

stuck up the same creek as some of our readers. Bottom line: if it doesn't work for you, quit and try somewhere else.

Which brings us nicely on to the swelling ranks of FreeServe competitors. TheMail at www.themail.co.uk, FreeNet at www.freenet.co.uk, BigWig at www.bigwig.net and Connect Free at www.connectfree.co.uk all offer pretty much the same service as FreeServe. Here at ZONE HQ we can only suggest that you try out the various free services and then settle down with the one that works best for you. Don't be too worried about your provider going under; the successful business model of www.germany.net shows this sort of thing can and does work.

Two games worthy of a squint

DELTA FORCE

www.novalogic.com/novaworld
Playing like a cross between *GoldenEye* and *Quake*, *Delta Force* puts you in the role of a US special forces agent specialising in counter-terrorism, hostage rescue and lunatic commando raids, with much sniping at enemies. Although NovaLogic's own Internet gaming service, NovaWorld, is a bit lacking in the bandwidth department, the fun to be had with multiplayer teamwork is immeasurable. Paintball fans will love it.



Delta Force: a sort of secret service version of Quake.

MERIDIAN 59

www.3do.com/meridian
Bragging that it's the "number one online role-playing game", *Meridian 59* is a constantly updated, ever changing environment populated by thousands of real people from around the globe. Each player has both a unique personality and appearance, and can choose to partake in quests, join a guild, or just kill everything that isn't already dead. The 3D game world encompasses more than 200 distinct areas, and over 125 magic spells and different skills can be used to combat dozens of creatures.



Thousands of players add to Meridian 59's atmosphere.

BETACALL

A couple of graphical action adventures in beta this month. Both have the same outward appearance, but very different goals

★ *The 4th Coming* is a third-person RPG that enables you to undertake quests, fight monsters and interact with other players, much like in *Ultima Online* or *Diablo*.
Website: www.the4thcoming.com/beta/
Email: support@the4thcoming.com

★ *Carnage.Net* is an RPG similar to *The 4th Coming* except the idea is to ruin the game for everyone who thought it would be a nice place to stop to make friends.
Website: www.carnage.net
Email: lords@carnage.net

SPESH SITE OF THE MONTH



Carmageddon for Spectrum? What's that all about then?

COLOR CLASH FOREVER

www.evitech.fi/~arttuyi/speccy
Color Clash Forever is a site dedicated to the wonderful world of Sir Clive Sinclair and his ageless Spectrum. Unlike other sites, it's much more than just a pretty wrapper around half a dozen 48K ROM downloads – there's looads of information here: a quiz to test your knowledge of all things Sinclair, a potted history of Sir Clive, a banned copy of *Elite*, and countless other odd bits and pieces. It's sure to have every ex-Spectrum owner going dewy-eyed at the thought of all that time playing *Jet Set Willy* when they should have been revising for their physics O-Level instead.

FREE ONLINE GAME OF THE MONTH



Chompster: a fine rendition of Pac Man.

FREE GAMES

freegames.org
A website with free games on it isn't exactly an original idea. After all, pay a visit to any popular filemine and you're certain to find a number of downloads that fit the bill. What makes the Free Games site special is that it gives itself over *entirely* to the things, and even includes a hugely useful ratings system. Essentially this means you can go straight to your favourite genre and download the pick of the bunch every time. The site database includes links to the homepage of each game, as well as the size of the file and the date it was last updated.

Advanced Tactics Editor

UEFA

Team	
No	Player
1	David Silberman
2	Nigel Writtelburn
3	Martin Kasowitz
4	Steve Bould
5	Nelson Vivas
6	Stephen Hughes
7	Marc Overmars
8	Freddie Ljungberg
9	Ray Parlour
24	Patsy Garcia
11	Nicolas Anelka

Stats	
Positioning Ratios	
Attacking (%)	47
Defending (%)	80
Strength	
Defence	Med
Midfield	Med
Attack	Med

Opposition Screen

Tactics Editor

Note: Right-sided Attack is strong.
Warning: Centre Attack is weak.
Note: Left-sided Attack is strong.
Quite considerable gaps are present despite good strengths in other areas.

UEFA Manager 1999: an advanced tactics editor will let you define formations.

UEFA RULING

A partnership between Infogrames and European football's ruling body, UEFA, is about to kick off

FOOTBALL HOOLIGAN Steve Hill

The first game to carry the endorsement will be *UEFA Manager 1999*, yet another management simulation. Fully approved by the UEFA authority, the game will feature an advanced tactics editor, which will enable you to define your own formations around the position of the ball.

Youth team management will also be covered in unprecedented depth, and the commentary will be provided by Alans Hansen and Green. Out in December, apparently.



The game has official UEFA approval.

RUSSIAN TANKS SAVE WORLD

The Estonian games industry isn't the largest in the world, but they're in there fighting, at least. Quite literally, in fact – thanks to action extravaganza *Thunder Brigade*, from Interactive Magic, developed by Tallinn-based designers Bluemoon Interactive.

Using a fractal engine to create detailed landscapes that move at a fair old lick, *Thunder Brigade* will put you in a futuristic hover tank, battling foes across the galaxy in the name of all that is good and proper. Random missions mix with pre-scripted storylines as you fight various foes with differing technology and tactics. All taking place in December, it says here.



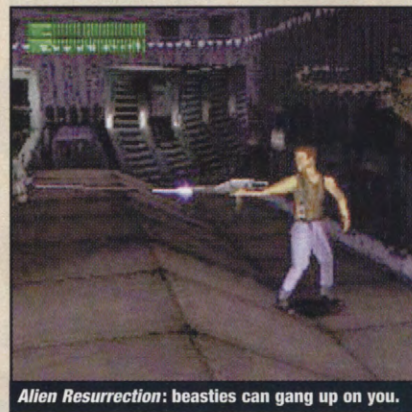
Thunder Brigade: random missions mixed with pre-scripted storylines.

PLAYSTATION ZONE

PC ZONE's regular look at what's hot in the world of the Sony PlayStation

CONSOLE CHIMP Paul Mallinson

THE BIG GAME: ALIEN RESURRECTION



Alien Resurrection: beasties can gang up on you.

History: Initially announced as a multi-format release, this better-late-than-never movie tie-in is now due out on PlayStation ONLY. Which is not nice.

Smells like: On first sighting, it looks like something of a cross between *The Fifth Element* and *Tomb Raider*. But then most third-person shoot 'em ups do.

Storyline: Ripley is resurrected (or 'cloned') from a blood sample retrieved from the previous film. Aliens, too, are cloned and all hell breaks loose. Cue Ripley, big guns, scanners that go 'beep, beep,

beeeeeep' and horrible monsters leaping out of dark corners.

Big deal: Although Fox are to release the game almost a year after the film first hit the big screens, the *Alien* brand is still amazingly popular and lends itself to a range of gaming styles. Oh, and UK-based Argonaut Software are developing the game, so proven track record there.

Low point: Not very original approach (but then, movie tie-ins rarely are), and (again) their timing sucks.

Tech stuff: Advanced AI enabling aliens to gang up on you. Multiple character play. Dual Shock support (you know, that pad that vibrates when you're hit).

Our impression: We like the fact that this game is dark and more tense than previous *Alien* games. Argonaut know their stuff, so it's unlikely to be crap.

TWO TO WATCH



Silent Hill: gothic horror, blood and guts.



Bust-A-Move 4 deserves attention.

SILENT HILL (Konami)

Already being dubbed by some as *Resident Evil* in full 3D, Konami's forthcoming *Silent Hill* is a disturbing mixture of beat 'em up punchiness and intense gothic horror which, if early impressions are anything to go by, promises to be one of the scariest games ever made. Content-wise, Konami are going to be pushing it, and the blood and guts quota will no doubt push the age rating up into the 18-plus bracket.

BUST-A-MOVE 4 (Taito)

The *Puzzle Bobble* series is not taken very seriously on PC. We've seen two versions of the original game, released through GT and Acclaim, but neither sold well, despite good reviews. This update of the currently console-only puzzle/bubble game could change all that if it ever got a push on PC. *Bust-A-Move 4*, as a sequel, improves on most aspects of this fast reaction game and should appeal to gamers everywhere.

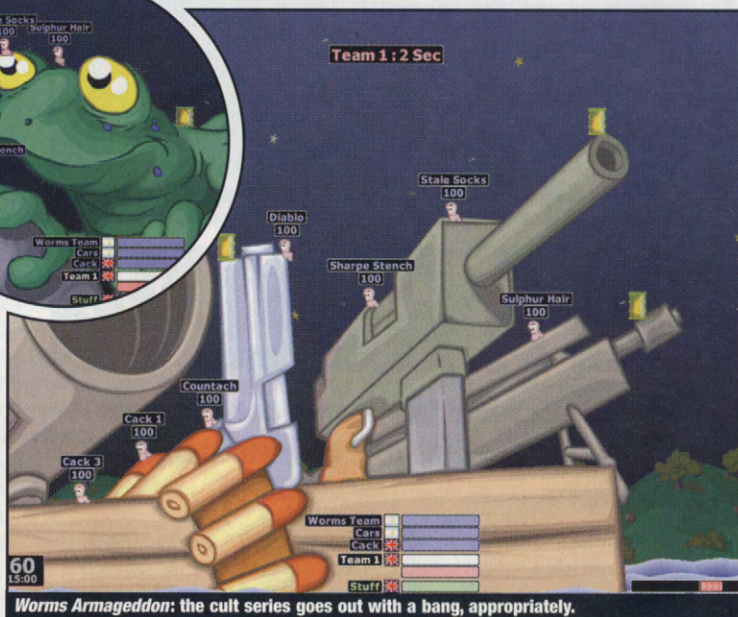
IT'S THE END OF THE WORM

...as we know it. And we feel fine

★ WORMSMITH Phil Wand

Having been pestered silly by impatient fans, Team 17 are to release *Worms Armageddon* early in the new year. Development director Martyn Brown said: "It's the last of a cult series, and we've decided it should go out with a bang. In fact, it will be totally over the top."

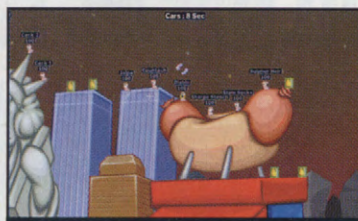
More than 15 new weapons will make an appearance, including a flame-thrower, longbow and projectile sheep. New features include double damage, double speed, laser sight and low gravity. There are also 11 soundtracks, countless new animations and 18 new voice sets (Brummie, Cockney, Irish and Rastafarian, among others), and 20 fresh scenarios.



Worms Armageddon: the cult series goes out with a bang, appropriately.



Armageddon features 20 new scenarios...



...And loads of new animations.



Links Extreme: a game in which you get to kill golfers. Result.

DEATHMATCH GOLF

Promising the kind of golfing antics that would get you thrown off every green in the land (with the exception of the municipal course at Hainault), *Links Extreme* is a lawless round of cheating, snapping clubs and killing opponents with rocket-powered 'fragballs'.

"It's been designed for mad golfers who want to bend the rules, tear up the fairway and have as much fun as possible," said Chris Jones, Executive VP at Access Software. "If people have half as much fun playing it as we've had creating it, *Extreme* should be the most widely accessible golf game yet."

Look out for *Links Extreme* early in the new year from Eidos Interactive.



It's all in the buttocks, apparently.

SHORTS

THQ LOOKING FOR HELP

Erstwhile console publishers THQ are appealing for beta testers for a range of new PC titles due for release in 1999. Having recently acquired US development outfit Game FX (*Excession*), THQ are looking to get their first excursion into the muddy waters of the PC games market right. To do that, they need your help. Interested parties should email their details to research@thq.com.

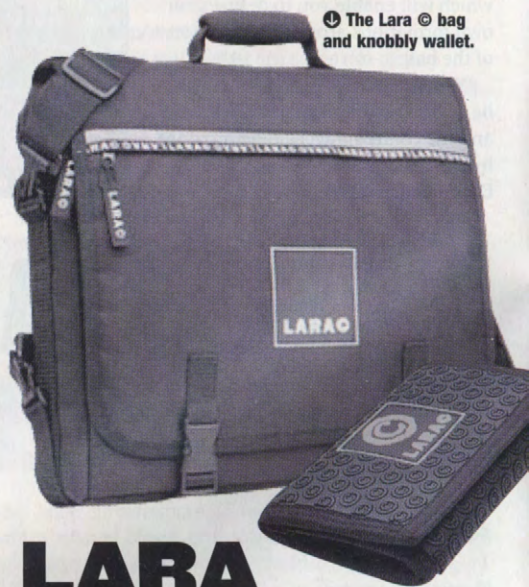
GREMLIN SIGN MILAN TRIO

A new international line-up has been announced for Gremlin Interactive's *Actua Sports* series, the company having recently procured the not inconsiderable talents of AC Milan's Oliver Bierhoff, Ibrahim Ba and George Weah to add further credibility to Gremlin's already formidable range of gaming titles.



ZYGOTIC MYNCI

Nothing to do with psychedelic Welsh rockers, *Gorky-17* is a mixture of role-playing, adventure and turn-based battles. Developed by Topware Interactive, it combines isometric backgrounds with animated 3D characters to supposedly give the effect of a living, fully interactive world. Released April '99.



↻ The Lara © bag and knobby wallet.

LARA CLOBBER

Tomb Raider fanatics can keep themselves wrapped up warm this Christmas with not just *one* range of officially licensed Lara Croft clothing, but *two*, courtesy of Marks & Spencer and skatewear manufacturer Animal.

M&S have launched a range featuring two Lara design socks, a mug and sock set, a mouse mat and tie set, and underwear in black and khaki.

Animal's attire, complete with matching accessories and dubbed the 'Lara ©' range, features everything from a rather slick Team Jacket (£69.99) to a very big bath towel (£24.99). For full details of Lara © merchandise call 01525 381808 or visit www.eidos.co.uk.

↻ Animal's Lara © Team Jacket: lovely and warm.



SHAKE IT ALL ABOUT COMPETITION

WIN!

Force Feedback wheels, sticks and pads

It seems Microsoft are currently proving something of a 'force' in the PC peripherals market, with an entire range of Force Feedback gear available to motion-mad gamers, not to mention some wobble-tastic games to test them out on.

In celebration of this, *PC ZONE* and Microsoft have teamed up to give away a bundle of new motion-sensitive peripherals, as well as a sprinkling of games to support them. We have three different First Prize bundles to give away – a Force Feedback flightstick, plus a copy of *Combat Flight Sim*; a Freestyle Pro, plus *Motocross Madness*; and a force feedback steering wheel, with copies of *Monster Truck Madness 2* and *Kart Precision Racing* – so you can pick which kind of game you'd like to wobble away to. Fifty runners-up will get a *Combat Flight Sim* T-shirt.

To enter, send your answer to the following question on a postcard, along with your choice of First Prize, plus all the other information requested, to the address shown below:

QUESTION: *Combat Flight Sim* is set during which World War?

Your choice of First Prize is:

- Stick + *Combat Flight Sim*
- Wheel + *Monster Truck Madness*
- Pad + *Motocross Madness*

✦ Name / Address / Postcode / Daytime phone number / Email / Job title / Company name / Age if under 18

✦ Please tell us if you do not wish to receive details of further special offers or new products from other companies

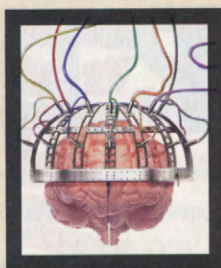
✦ Are you a current subscriber to *PC ZONE*?

Send your entries to 'Forced Entry', CPCZ991B, *PC ZONE*, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK. (Closing date: Monday 11 January.)

✦ Terms and conditions: Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.



Welcome to your
new job...



TECH HEAD

A major announcement from 3Dfx, plus all the latest techie news

★ WORDS Warren Christmas

NOW IT'S VOOODOO3!

3Dfx unveil the successor to their Voodoo2 and Banshee 3D accelerators

TECH SPECS

3Dfx Voodoo3 3000 – an overview

- Fully integrated 128-bit VGA/2D/3D/video accelerator • True multi-texturing (two textures per clock cycle) • 7 million triangles per second • 350MHz RAMDAC: 2048x1536 @ 65Hz
- 183MHz Core Graphics Clock • 2x AGP-compatible • DVD acceleration (30fps) • Digital video output for NTSC, PAL and SECAM TV-out support • 4-16Mb SGRAM 128-bit wide-frame buffer
- 3Dfx Voodoo compatibility • DirectX 6, OpenGL, Glide 2.x/3.x support • Optimised for Pentium II I/O architecture

The company 3Dfx Interactive have announced details of their next generation of graphic processors and, for now at least, have seemingly turned their back on the standalone 3D accelerator card market.

Just like their Banshee chip, the Voodoo3 is an integrated processor, offering both 3D and 2D graphics. Fully backwardly compatible with previous Voodoo technology through Glide and Direct3D drivers, the new chip improves on the Banshee through the integration of a second texture-processing unit (which enables two-pass multi-texturing and, therefore, more realistic lighting effects), plus a substantially boosted clock speed pushed well beyond that of most graphics

“Gamers will be able to experience the next generation of complex interactive entertainment”

GREG BALLARD, PRESIDENT OF 3DFX

chips currently available.

With dual 32-bit rendering pipelines, the top-end 3Dfx Voodoo3 can, according to the company, generate more than seven million triangles per second – that's more than twice the performance of two Voodoo2 boards used together in an SLI (Scan Line Interleave) configuration.

“3D is the fastest growing segment in computing, and Voodoo3's unprecedented 3D and 2D performance will enable our enthusiast gamers, as well as the mainstream consumers, to experience the next generation of highly complex 3D interactive entertainment,” said Greg Ballard, president of 3Dfx Interactive.

SEEING DOUBLE

There will initially be two pin-compatible versions of the chip available, both equipped with 16Mb of SDRAM. The Voodoo3 2000 (which operates at 125MHz) is expected to be incorporated into low- to mid-range PCs by system manufacturers, while the Voodoo3 3000 (183MHz) is set to feature in high-end machines and on 2D/3D cards available

to consumers on the high street.

3Dfx claim that the latter will be capable of running *Quake II* at a resolution of 1600x1200 at around 35-40fps (frames per second). Ultra-high desktop resolutions up to 2048x1536 are supported, as is 30fps MPEG2/DVD acceleration, with an option for output to high-definition television (HDTV).

At the time of going to press no announcements had been made regarding exactly which accelerator card manufacturers will be utilising the new chips – or indeed, just as importantly, how much the boards are likely to cost – although *PC ZONE* anticipates that the likes of Creative Labs, Diamond Multimedia and Guillemot (all of whom have produced successful Voodoo and Voodoo2-based boards) will be among the ones that do.

Expect the first Voodoo3-based boards to be on the shelves some time after Easter 1999. More info from <http://europe.3dfx.com/europe.html>.

★ For a full round-up of 3D accelerators currently available, check out our extensive tests next issue, on sale Friday 15 January.

FACTCANNON

★ Computers more popular than football or sex? Can this be right? Apparently so, according to a new study by Microsoft. Members of the British public are more inclined to talk about their home computer than the performance of their favourite football team or their own, er, performance in bed. The survey also found that one in four families in the UK have a home computer.

★ TEAC (01923 819630) have claimed a world first with the launch of a CD-ROM recorder capable of writing at six-speed (900Kb/sec). The SCSI-2 drive, which can read discs at 24-speed (3.6Mb/sec), is bundled with Adaptec's Easy CD Creator and Direct CD, and is available in internal and external versions priced at \$499 (£305) and \$599 (£365) respectively. The 6x24 kits should reach UK shores early in 1999.



★ How many mice? Time to get Rentokil in.

★ A world record for the number of peripherals attached and running from a personal computer was set by Intel at the recent Fall COMDEX '98 computer show in Las Vegas, when 111 USB (Universal Serial Bus) devices – ranging from mice, joysticks and keyboards, to digital speakers and video conferencing systems – were connected to a single PC.

★ Creative Labs (01245 265265) have released new drivers for their SoundBlaster Live! audio board (*PCZ* #71, 91%) which increase hardware acceleration support from eight to 32 DirectSound3D streams, and enable the real-time auditioning of effects (reverb, echo etc) while adjusting Environmental Audio settings. You'll find the new drivers at www.sblive.com.

★ Samsung (0181 391 8284) have become the first big-name audio manufacturer to unveil a portable personal stereo-style MP3 player. The credit card-sized Yepp, which includes a record feature, goes on sale in Korea in February with an American and then European release likely later in the year. The announcement follows the launch of the Diamond Rio which went on sale in November.

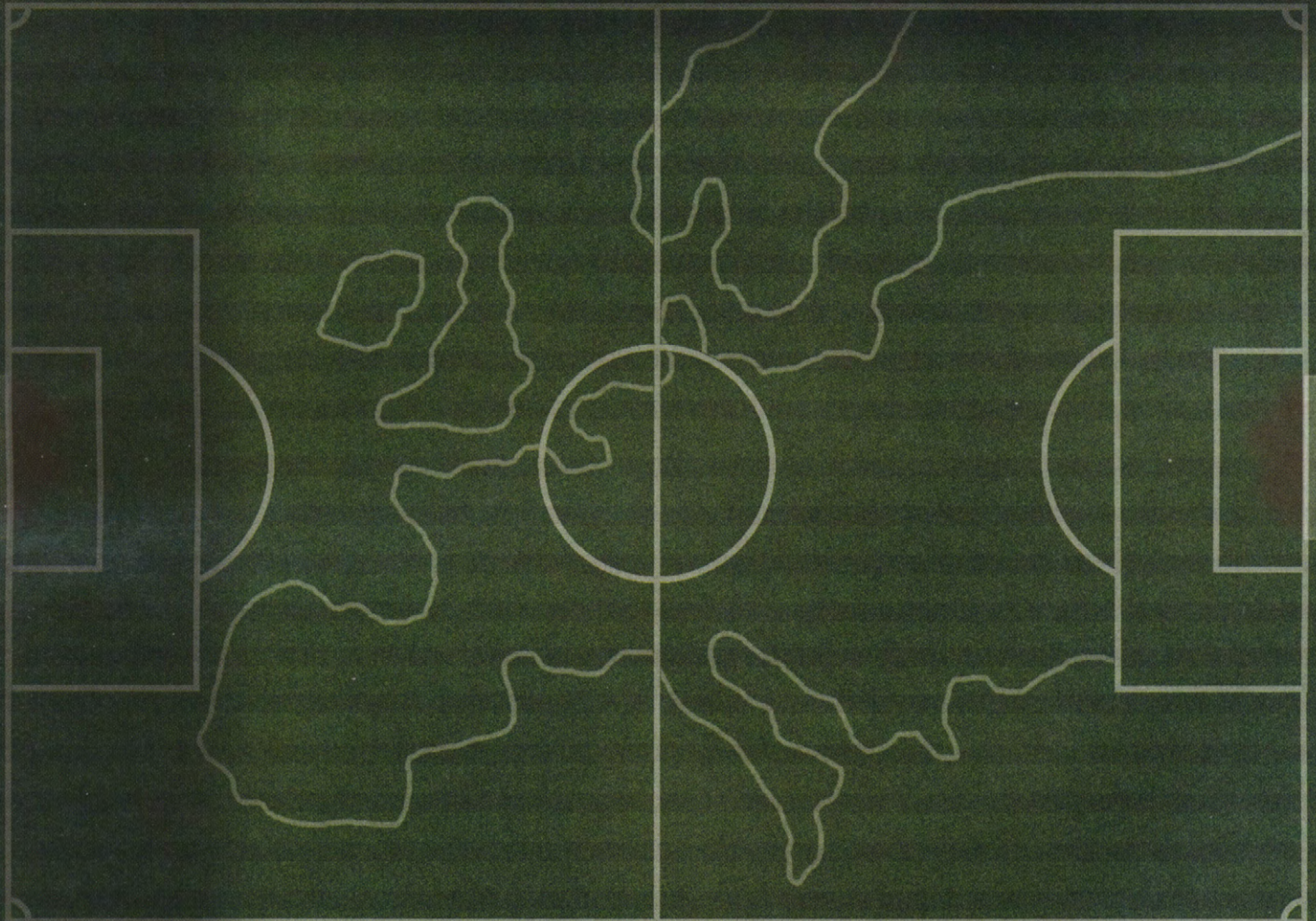
★ Are you an “advanced user”? Fancy road-testing a beta test version of *Internet Explorer 5*? Then head on over to www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/ie5/default.htm where it's available free for download. Apparently it will “save you time on the things you do most often”.

★ After the success of the curvy, transparent blue Apple iMac, several makers are working on PCs which are pleasing to the eye, rather than the typical box-like, off-white desktop affairs. Among those companies are Gateway, who are set to unveil a series of modular PCs – codenamed Chameleon – in the new year.



Good news for gamers from Greg Ballard of 3Dfx.

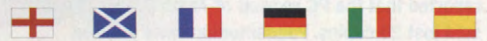
...it's time to mark out your area of responsibility.



UEFA MANAGER 1 9 9 9



★ 16 playable leagues:



- ★ Real teams, players & competitions: including all four major English and Scottish leagues.
- ★ Advanced Tactics Editor: define your own formations around the position of the ball.
- ★ Match engine: offering more statistics on the game and players than ever before.
- ★ Game scenarios: add unique challenges to hone your management skills.
- ★ Youth team management: never done to this depth before.
- ★ Commentary: by Alan Hansen (Ex Liverpool FC) & Alan Green (BBC Five Live Commentator).



The Man who KNOWS

A NICE LITTLE EARNER

Recent tabloid stories have centred on the fact that the voice behind the legend that is Lara is provided by one Judith Gibbins, an Army Corporal's daughter. When probed over the revelation, Core Design's spokesperson Susie Hamilton squealed: "We wanted somebody with an upper-class accent, a voice with character that sounded strong and sexy."

Meanwhile, the 'real' Lara Croft, Leeds lass Nell McAndrew, has been flashing her not inconsiderable chest all over the pages of recently launched lads' mag *frOnt*. Appearing without her Lara garb, she is clearly seen in a state of semi-undress. In the interview, Nell reveals that in her youth she had little trouble attracting members of the opposite sex (no shit), and that her ideal man is somewhere between Tony Adams and Michael Owen.

As for Paramount's much talked about *Tomb Raider* movie, it appears that long-standing favourite Liz Hurley has been pipped at the post, the role of Lara going to busty American Anna Nicole Smith, as suggested in this column about a year ago. Nell was never really in the running herself, and commented: "I'm happy to be Lara simply for publicity purposes. Acting the role in a movie is completely different. I'm travelling all over the world as her, which is more than enough for me. Besides, Lara has the most amazing bosom, which Anna probably measures up to more than I do!"

With all the attendant hype, it is often easy to forget that there is actually a game involved somewhere, and minor panic broke out when it was reported that the PC version of *Tomb Raider III* had sold just 26 copies. Pandemonium was averted when it was revealed that this was a mistake, and the actual number is nearer 30.

In more tenuously related Michael Owen tomfoolery, quality journal the *Daily Star* - aka The Voice Of Reason - recently carried the front-page headline '£10m Game Boy Owen', in reference to the fee received by the youngster for his work on *Michael Owen's WLS '99*. Apparently Owen received £300,000 for his endorsement and a day's work in the motion-capture studio. Which is true. But, claims *The Star*, with royalties he is set to earn up to ten million pounds. Which is of course a meaningless crock of horseshit.

And finally... At the recent GDUK event, Eidos chairman Ian Livingstone delivered a speech on the games industry. Wearing a skirt, he appeared to have been served quite well, and on taking the stage was heard to mutter "What do I know?"

Despair.

ACTION LARA

Her tits are plastic, but that's fantastic

★ SHORT STRAW Paul Mallinson

Ms Croft is back, but this time she's only nine inches high. No, she hasn't been shrunk by alien invaders, or Amazonian witchdoctors - that would be silly - she's simply been replicated by toy giants Playmates as a collectable plastic figurine, with weapons, a background and outfits. Two new figures have been announced. The first, out in December, features Lara in her (tight-fitting) scuba outfit. The second, out in March '99, sees the tough little lass donning her regular attire of (tight-fitting) green top and (tight-fitting) khaki hot pants. Both outfits will be individually numbered, and cost somewhere in the region of £16.99.

★ For information on stockists call 0116 282 3500.



Caption to go here, Caption to go here, Caption to go here, Caption to go

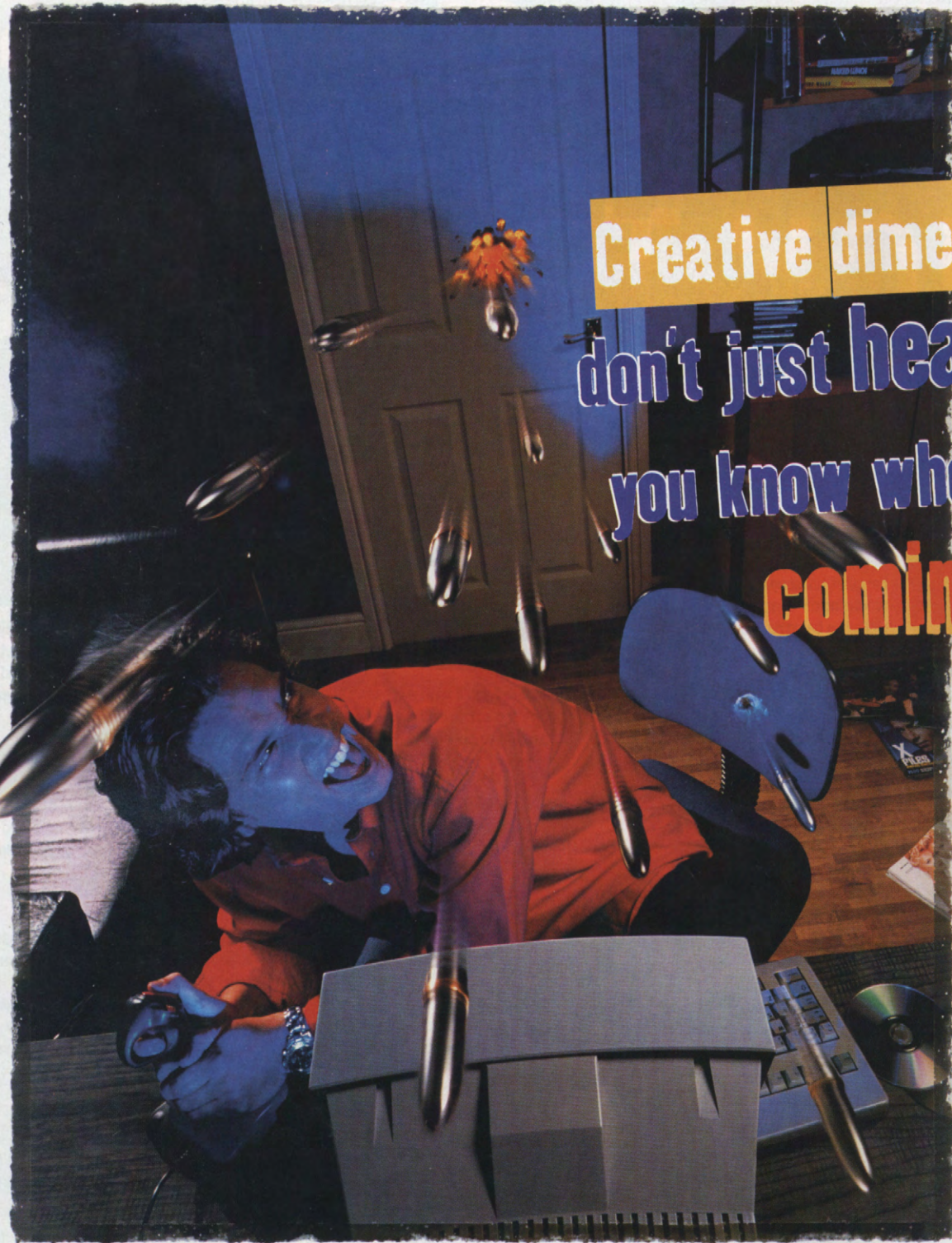
SPEC OPS BACK WITH GREEN HATS

With more complex terrain, better-rendered scenery and characters, more multiplayer options and first-person perspective action, Zombie's forthcoming *Spec Ops II: The Green Berets* is a ground-up rebuild of the top-rated *Spec Ops: Rangers Assault* (PCZ #65, 88%). The new game features an improved 'Viper' 3D engine, gouraud shading, improved AI routines, and limb-specific damage, meaning a single shot to the head will kill you, although a ricochet off your arse won't be so lethal.

TICKERTAPE

STARTS++ Accolade's *Star Control* (originally due for release through EA in March) has been canned, despite requests to prolong the development period. The game had previously undergone a period of redevelopment before being terminated **++STOP++** Surprise, surprise: *Lands Of Lore III* has slipped. Westwood are now saying the game will be out next spring **++STOP++** SirTech, the US games publisher known for the *Wizardry* series of adventures, has bowed out of the software industry, citing financial difficulties as the reason **++STOP++** Another company forced to close due to a chronic lack of cash is Crack Dot Com, the people who brought us *Abuse* **++STOP++** PC ZONE spies have uncovered a few scraps of info on MicroProse's forthcoming *Civ III* - apparently not due out until winter next year. With graphics and game design doffing its cap in the direction of *Age Of Empires*, *Civ III* will feature both real-time and turn-based play over a number of historically accurate missions, some of which take place in Central Europe. More news as we get it **++ ENDS**

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 don't just hear sound,
 you know where it's
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Speakers

PC-DVD

Video

HOTLINE

Even more exciting than opening the doors on your *Care Bears* advent calendar – here are all the things you want for Christmas

WORDS Andy Martin

DECEMBER WED 2ND

Games released today include:
Baldur's Gate (Interplay) – We've said it before and we'll say it again: a rank outsider it may be, but expect this to simmer healthily in the cauldron of AD&D lovers.

THU 4TH

Among the games coming out today are:



Star Wars: Rogue Squadron (LucasArts) – With varied missions and a plethora of Alliance/Empire vehicles to command, this is a sure-fire hit. What would Christmas be like without the chance to get your teeth into a plump, juicy (X-)wing?

Heretic II (Activision) – Combining the Raven team, the much-vaunted fantasy artist Brom and the



Quake II engine, *Heretic II* will make that someone special very happy throughout the end-of-year pagan festivities.



Asteroids (Activision) – Even without the inclusion of a 'paddle' controller, this game is truly

nostalgic and even has the arcade original hidden in it somewhere. But will *Asteroids* still be as compulsive as it was all those years ago? Only time will tell.

Monkey Island Adventure Pack (LucasArts) – Never played a *Monkey Island* adventure in your life? Then have a 'deck' at this compiled trilogy, re-packaged and re-released on this rather eventful day.



Moto Racer 2 (EA) – Sequel to Delphine's muddy off-road bike racing game.
NBA Live 99 (EA Sports) – The latest version in the seminal basketball series.
Interstate '82 (Activision) – The '80s revival rolls on into the late '90s with bottles of Evian (gameplay), bags of Jan Hammer (music) and oodles of linen suits (graphics).
Wild Metal Country (Gremlin) – DMA Design are everything a dark horse should be: quiet, unassuming and capable of producing off-beat quality every time. This looks like being no exception.

TUE 8TH

Add-ons on the shelves today include:
Quake II: Net Pack Extremities (iD Software) – Something to keep you going before next year's journey into the 'Arena'.
Star Wars Archives (Activision/LucasArts) – See the *Monkey Island Adventure Pack* comments. Then remember to thank Gran for the gift tokens.

Games released today include:
Heavy Gear II (Activision) – Another reason to cancel all Yuletide engagements, especially if you got a 3D card in your stocking. Shockingly good-looking, with some frighteningly difficult gameplay to match. Oh joy!

FRI 11TH

Among the add-ons out being released today are:



Unreal Mega Pack, Unreal Level Pack, Unreal Level Editor (GT Interactive) – Lots of new levels, add-ons and gubbins, plus the much-anticipated UnrealEd in its fully-realised state.

TUE 15TH

National spitting day.

THU 24TH

CHRISTMAS EVE

Admit it – you'll sneak downstairs and install your new 3D card at about 3am, won't you?

FRI 25TH

CHRISTMAS DAY

...And this morning you'll pretend to unwrap it and install it while maintaining an expression of surprise and thanks.



Football World Manager (Ubi Soft) – Probably not a wise choice of release date, coinciding with *CM3*, but it could surprise one or two people with its comprehensive statistics, supplied by none other than Big Ron Atkinson. Dog in basket not included.

SAT 26TH

BOXING DAY

...And today you'll wish you hadn't got one when your great new '3D game' kicks the living daylight out of you.

THU 31ST

People pissing openly in Trafalgar Square? It must be New Year's Eve!

JANUARY

FRI 1ST

It's New Year's Day. Time to find a hangover cure and prepare for going back to work.

SAT 2ND

The sales have started.

FRI 8TH

Games out today include:

Sierra Sports Football 99 (Sierra) – Hold on; this isn't football as we know it. Helmets, pigskin and great big sacks? Sounds like a John Holmes movie.
USM 98/99 Season update (Sierra) – Helping armchair football managers keep up to date with current league changes.

FRI 15TH

Hitting the shops today are:

Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire (Sierra) – A step forward for the adventure gaming genre. And in full 3D. See review last issue.
ESPN Xgames Pro Boarder (EA) – Take control of a cleverly-modified surfboard and compete against eight of the world's top snowboarders for a gold medal as full 3D loveliness seeps from its every crevice.

Speed Busters (Ubi Soft) – More journeys back in time to drive old cars. This time, it's back to the fun-filled '50s to race around and maybe re-enact the demise of James Dean (see review on page 89).

Brian Lara Cricket (Codemasters) – If one man knows how to roll his wrists and keep the balls low, it's Brian Lara. And if one company knows how to tie quality celebs to quality games, it's Codemasters.

Death Karz (Infogrames) – Visually impressive, futuristic race game with lots of cars in it. And that.

Monkey Hero (Take 2 Interactive) – *Zelda*-esque comedy adventure, although how funny it'll turn out to be is anyone's guess.

FRI 22ND

Games released today include:

Premier Manager 99 (Gremlin) – Kevin Keegan's gish on the box will do this new, updated football management sim absolutely no harm at all.
Recoil (EA) – 3D tank-on-tank action as you travel through time to a future world, only to find it needs saving. Blummin' typical.
Hype: The Time Quest (EA) – A strange name for an even stranger game, starring Playmobil figures, of all things. Sadly, there is no feature that lets you pull the arms off your enemies and drop them down a drain.

FRI 29TH

Among the stuff out today, you'll find:
Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri (EA) – Big and good-looking, this strategy game is a must for people who video the Sci-fi Channel.
Starcraft Brood Wars expansion pack (Sierra) – Update and expand your favourite space strategy game.

DISCLAIMER: all release dates are subject to change.

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HOTSHOTS

In which *PC ZONE* takes a look at hot new games that will be coming your way soon. This month we've got brand new screenshots from *Rally Championship 99*, *Third World* and *Civilization: Call To Power*



RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP 99

★ Europress • Out March '99

As reported last issue, Europress' forthcoming *Rally Championship 99* looks like being the most realistic example of its kind, both in terms of visuals and gameplay. Magnetic Fields, the game's developers, have enlisted the services of John Horton (the Mobil 1 British Rally Championship Manager) and Martin Rowe (winner of the 1998 British Rally Championship) to ensure complete authenticity, from track representations to car interiors and handling. Mr 'high-end 3D accelerator card' is also being relied upon to come up with the eye candy and, by goodness, he seems to be doing his job rather well in this instance.



THIRD WORLD

★ Activision • Out mid-'99

When we first took a look at this new RPG/RTS hybrid way back in issue 68, we couldn't help but notice an unnerving 'welling' feeling deep within our testicles. Having seen more of *Third World*, we are embarrassed to admit that we now have a fully grown erection. What makes this particular title 'tickle our fancy' is the way in which the story unfolds and the action ensues. Conversations helpfully an array of dubious, trigger-happy mercenaries found littering the game's many different environments, all of whom come under your complete control in return for cold, hard cash.



CIVILIZATION: CALL TO POWER

★ Activision • Out April '99

Civilization: Call To Power has undergone a lot of changes since we first previewed the game way back in issue 68. Space and undersea regions now play an important part in the game, and you can colonise them and use them to your advantage. Activision claim that this adds an additional 'adrenalin rush' towards the end of the game. Now, you can build cities in space (plus fighters and bombers that fly in the upper atmosphere) and patrol the deep seas with submarines in order to lay waste to your opponents.

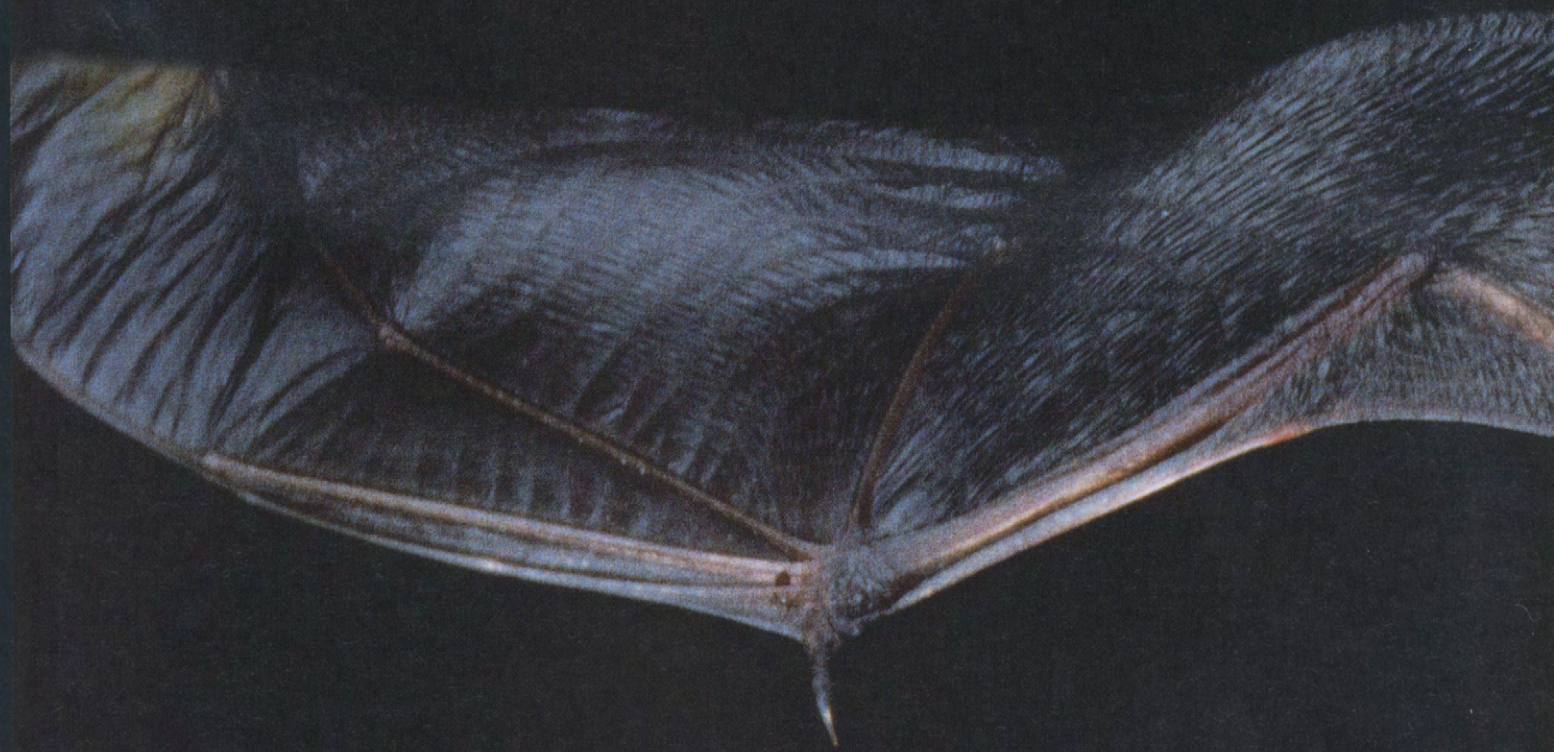


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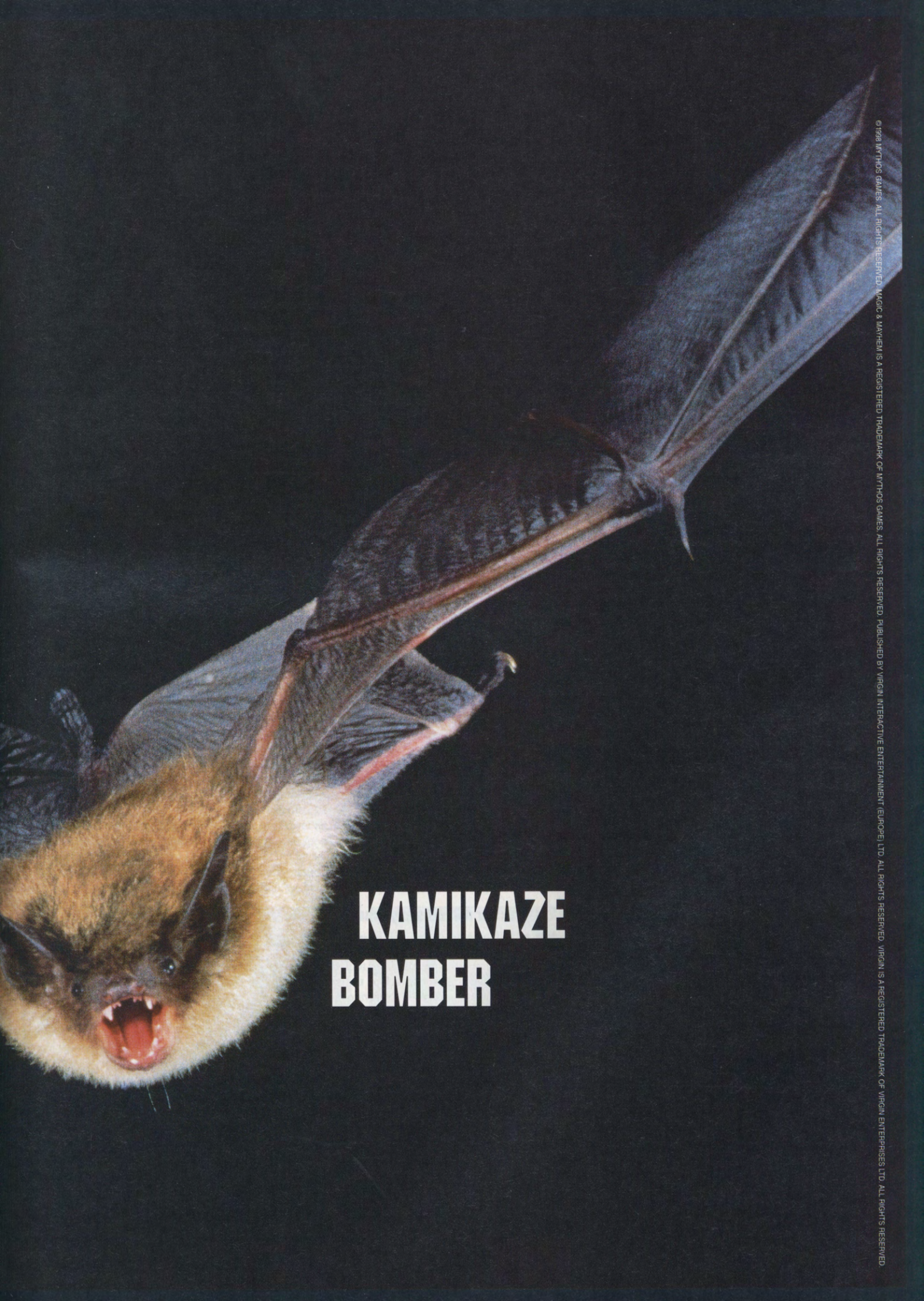
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A speedy new optimised game engine enables hi-res, 16-bit colour graphics.



The developers have worked hard on the AI to make it appear less predictable.



A simplified mouse-driven user interface should make the game easier to navigate and play.



New-style animation sequences combine CGI-created characters with real-life digital footage.



Street Wars, you'll be glad to know, will support both Internet and LAN play.

CONSTRUCTOR 98: STREET WARS

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER System 3 Arcade Software Ltd
PUBLISHER Ocean/Infogrames
WEBSITE www.infogrames.co.uk
OUT TBC

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ It's the sequel to the critically acclaimed *Constructor*
- ★ It sports a new 'easy to use' interface and a speedy new 'enhanced' game engine that enables you to play in 800x600 in 16-bit colour
- ★ This time it's war! Loads of new characters to play with and a compelling new gangster/mob rule premise

Although the original *Constructor* (PCZ #55, 92%) scored extremely highly across the board when it was released towards the end of last year, it wasn't exactly what you'd call a bestseller. Like so many games released around Christmas, it struggled to compete with the over-hyped likes of *Tomb Raider II* (PCZ #57, 94%), *Carmageddon* (PCZ #65, 95%) and *Jedi Knight* (PCZ #55, 94%)

The original *Constructor* mixed sexy, chucklesome visuals with compelling gameplay and proved a bit of a hoot to boot. **Jeremy Wells** cocks an eye at the 'all new' sequel

for shelf space and just got lost among oversized silicon bosoms, mutilated pedestrians and lightsabers in shop windows.

Undeterred, and encouraged by the feedback they received, developers System 3 set about finding a new publisher and started work on a sequel that would, hopefully, put them on the map. Unlike most developers, however, who are usually more than content to rehash the original and embellish it with some new levels and the odd graphical tweak, System 3 have pretty much reinvented the concept behind *Constructor*. Whereas the first game focused on building and acquiring property by various

means fair or foul, the sequel focuses very much on the rogue activity that proved to elevate the original game above the likes of *SimCity* (PCZ #20, 90%) in the fun stakes.

No longer a property developer, you are a mob boss who is responsible for expanding and defending your family's turf. Starting with just a single building, you must take control of the city and then move on to the next, building your own empire of crime. According to the developers, apart from constructing buildings for your people to live and work in, there's plenty of scope for strategy through tackling rival gangs, taking over their buildings and business

interests, as well as the more run-of-the-mill mob activities, such as robbery, bribery and extortion.

A new band of 'undesirables' – specialists in various rogue activities, such as ghosts, safe-crackers, hookers and 'nutters', each with their own special animations – should ensure that in terms of visuals and gameplay, *Street Wars* is as endearing as the original *Constructor*. Additionally, a new, optimised game engine capable of hi-res, 16-bit graphics, a simplified mouse-driven interface and improved AI should make for a more rewarding and enjoyable gaming experience. And that's what sequels should be all about, isn't it? **PCZ**

RESIDENT EVIL 2



FIRST ENCOUNTER

At last – the scariest adventure game ever makes it to the PC. Paul Mallinson gets ready to wade knee-deep in gore

to the local police department, or Claire Redfield, brother of Chris Redfield (the lead character from the first game). Both characters have their own agenda, weapons and path through the story (you can start as either character, then change over and play through the game again, albeit in a completely different way), all of which is set up in the awesomely impressive introductory sequence.

Resident Evil 2 plays pretty much the same as *Resident Evil 1*, with 3D characters 'skating' over pre-rendered backdrops, but the dialogue and storyline have been hugely improved. PC owners who bought and played the first game may have been put off by the atrocious voice-overs and hammy acting, but this time they will find themselves gripped in the tangled web of mystery and intrigue that is this game's unfolding plot.

Graphically, *Resident Evil 2* is light years ahead of its predecessor – especially the disgustingly animated zombies, which seem to proliferate in every darkened corner of the game. And, as if your blood pressure wasn't high enough, a sprinkling of deliriously scary set-pieces have been dropped into strategically positioned portions of the game. Of course, Capcom are planning to support virtually every 3D accelerator known to man (and not just PowerVR, as with the prequel), so speed and smoothness should not be an issue. A software version is also in the pipeline, we believe.

One thing that is likely to generate some complaint from the PC gameplaying fraternity is the save system – one thing that has been retained from the original game. Again, you are forced to rely on infrequently-placed typewriters and inventory-filling ink ribbons to retain your hard-earned position in the game, although – to be honest – it shouldn't turn out to be too annoying and it does add to the tension.

The only downside to this would be if you've already

played the game all the way through on the PlayStation. If you have, there really wouldn't be much point in buying it to play on PC because *Resident Evil 2* is essentially a direct port of the console version.

If you *haven't* seen anything of the game at this point, though, you can be sure of one hell of a scare come February when *Resident Evil 2* bleeds onto our hard drives. **PCZ**

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Capcom
PUBLISHER Virgin
WEBSITE www.capcom.com
OUT February '99

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

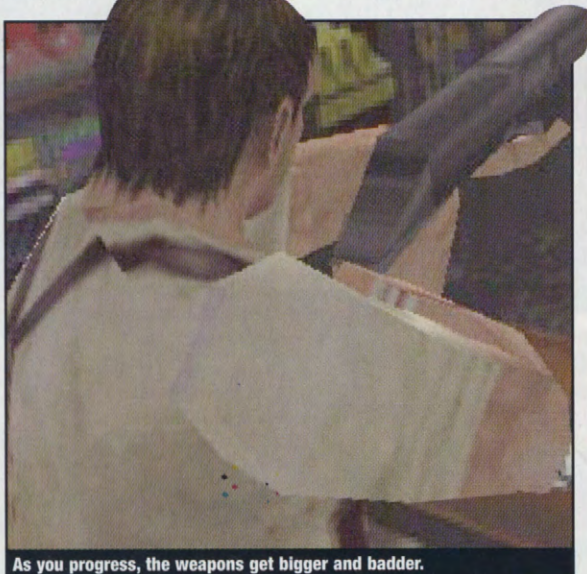
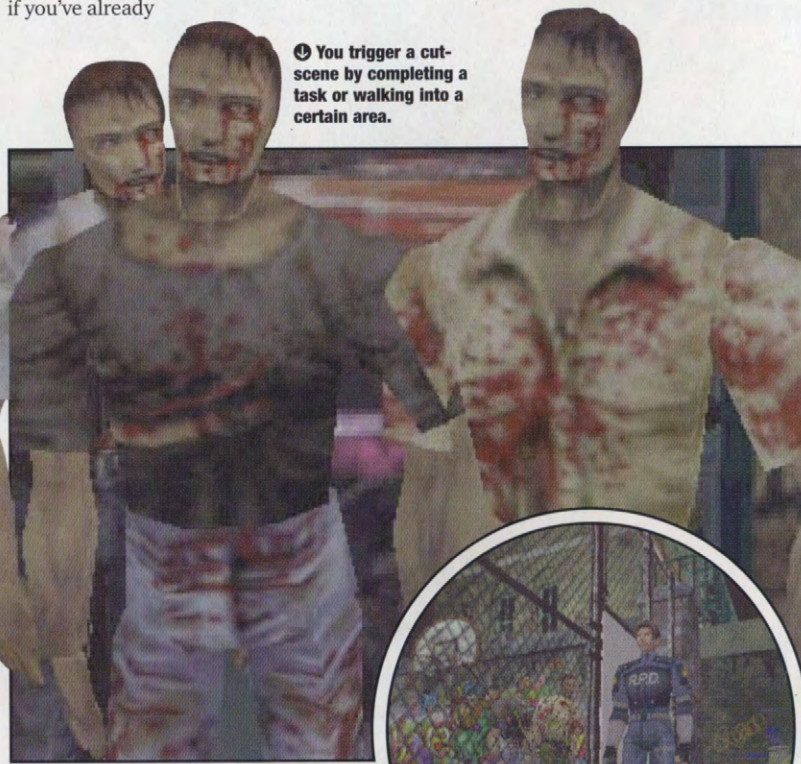
- ★ It was a stupendously large hit on the PlayStation
- ★ Excellent and involving storyline that can be played from two perspectives
- ★ It's dripping with atmosphere
- ★ It has plenty to please your average gorehound

Without a doubt, *Resident Evil 2* is one of the greatest games ever made. It's an action/adventure game that originally came out earlier this year for Sony's ubiquitous PlayStation, and is now finally slated for release on PC.

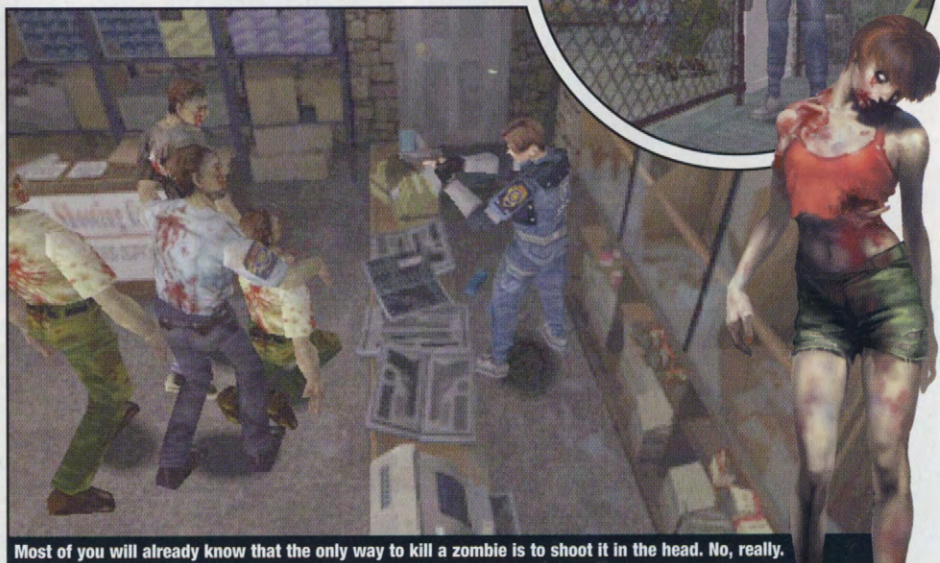
It caused quite a stir, not only because of its violent visuals, but also because of the awesome numbers in which it sold (over three million worldwide, last count). Developers Capcom created the computer gaming equivalent of George Romero's horror movie classic, *Day Of The Dead* – a concoction of dead-end scares and flesh-chewing shocks.

Set in the mysteriously deserted Raccoon City (like the first *Resident Evil*), you play the role of either Leon, a rookie cop assigned

Ⓜ You trigger a cut-scene by completing a task or walking into a certain area.



As you progress, the weapons get bigger and badder.



Most of you will already know that the only way to kill a zombie is to shoot it in the head. No, really.

THE DRAGON SLAYER ASGHAN

".... shaping up to be the game that Deathtrap Dungeon and Die By The Sword originally promised to be."

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• Solve complex puzzles, escape deadly traps and discover hidden secrets in an immersive adventure full of evil and witchcraft

• Explore a variety of astounding locations including forests, underwater ruins and terrifying dungeons

WINDOWS 95



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Curiously, the US Navy forbids pre-mission games of *Carmageddon II*.



You can plan strikes with up to 32 aircraft at once.



The advanced graphics engine makes for some spectacular cloud and weather effects.



F/A-18E Super Hornet gives you full control of your forces in the war.



The carrier is fully operational. The effort to resist an 'interactive seamen' joke is immense.

F/A-18E SUPER HORNET

Digital Integration are giving you another chance to pretend you're more important than you really are with their latest hi-tech sim. **Paul Presley** dreams of having wings

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Digital Integration
PUBLISHER Digital Integration
WEBSITE www.digint.co.uk
OUT End of 1998

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ A dynamic mission generator for an unlimited number of sorties
- ★ Interactive flight deck for realistic carrier operations
- ★ Comprehensive campaign engine with full player control
- ★ Interactive training area with full flight tutorials

Ever since the undisputed classic that was *Tornado* (PCZ #6, 93), Digital Integration have produced excellent flight sims that have enhanced their reputation further.

Their subsequent simulations – *Apache Longbow* (PCZ #31, 96%), *Hind* (PCZ #40, 90%) and *F-16* (PCZ #52, 91%) – have all been rated highly in the pages of this very magazine.

Seeming to realise that the market for obsessive loners is still pretty big, *F/A-18E*

Super Hornet is doing its best to keep them away from the kitchen knives and off the streets by reintroducing the full-on campaign engine – spurred, no doubt, by the furore surrounding DID's *F-22: Total Air War* (PCZ #68, 95%).

Super Hornet simulates the latest military executive toy to enter service in the US. (The *F-22*, in case you're wondering, is still in the test stages and not due to be operational until around 2005. Just in time for the coming apocalypse in fact.)

Featuring ever more complicated radar systems (DI are simulating more than 15 types), more weapons than a John Woo retrospective and the usual boasts of state-of-the-art graphics and flight modelling, the real pull lies with the 'Command' campaign engine.

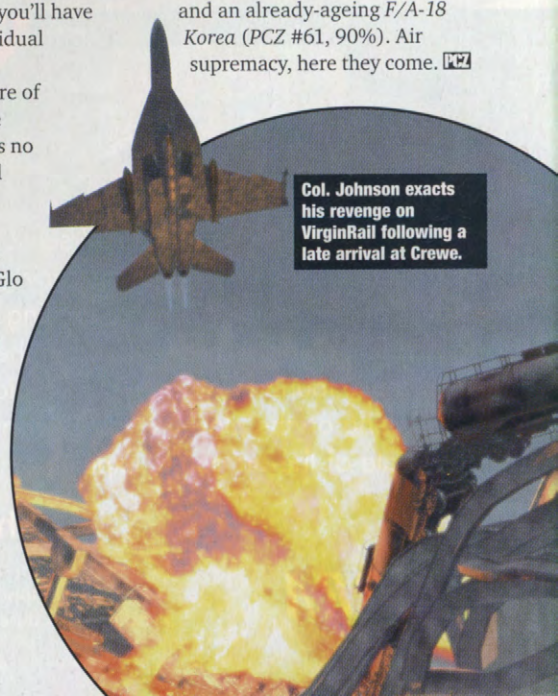
Unlike *Total Air War*, you actually get

full control over the war, commanding four squadrons of aircraft, planning strikes, selecting targets and deciding on tactics – in short, everything you need to force your opponent to surrender. It doesn't sound as complete a war as DID's baby, but it does seem that you'll have more control over the individual components taking part.

Another intriguing feature of *F/A-18E Super Hornet* is the Interactive Carrier Deck. It's no less than a fully operational flight deck, with planes constantly taking off and landing, working elevators, those blokes with the Day-Glo wands performing conceptual dance routines, and you, slap-bang in the middle.

Add to that all the usual flight sim requirements – radio communications, wingmen controls, active cockpits, training modes (with full tutorials),

network and Internet options (with rumours that DI's forthcoming Harrier simulation will be cross-compatible) and you can't help but get excited, especially when you consider that the only rival is a far inferior Interactive Magic effort and an already-ageing *F/A-18 Korea* (PCZ #61, 90%). Air supremacy, here they come. **PCZ**



Col. Johnson exacts his revenge on VirginRail following a late arrival at Crewe.

The 1967 F1 Season on PC CD-ROM...

...you can almost smell the rubber

Grand Prix Legends



Based on the legendary 1967 season, Grand Prix Legends is the first ever historical racing simulation. The game's setting allows players to experience realistic racing action that is markedly different from that in modern-day sims. In particular, the race tracks of 1967 were far more exciting and dangerous than those in use today. Famous drivers, teams and the greatest racing circuits of all time are featured in the game. Grand Prix Legends is the first game to incorporate a 3-D "virtual" cockpit similar to those found in recent flight simulators, allowing the player's viewpoint to be "disconnected" from the cockpit graphics. G-forces acting on the player's "head" convey bumps, elevation changes, cornering forces and even collisions!

With this state-of-the-art game, expect nothing less than the most compelling and immersive racing experience ever!

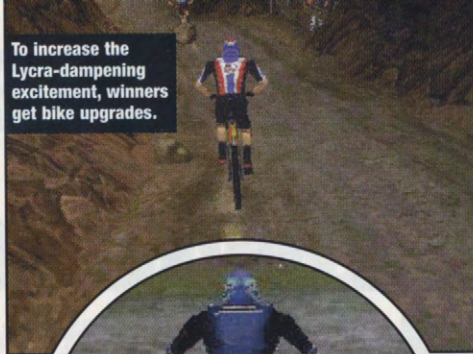
<http://www.sierra-online.co.uk>

SIERRA

Minimum system requirements: Windows 95, Pentium 166, 16MB RAM, SVGA card, 4x CD ROM Drive, Windows compatible soundcard. (Supports 3DFX) For further information contact: Cendant Software UK Ltd, Unit 2 Beacontree Plaza, Gillette Way, Reading, Berkshire RG2 0BS Tel: 0118 920 9111



The first-person perspective promises thrills and spills.



To increase the Lycra-dampening excitement, winners get bike upgrades.



No Fear DMB offers a full range of competition modes.



Your bike can be adapted to suit the terrain.



Stabilisers are not an option.



FIRST ENCOUNTER

Suddenly, Wayne and Danny weren't riding on the pavement in Brixton any more...

NO FEAR DOWNHILL MOUNTAIN BIKING

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER UDS
PUBLISHER Codemasters
WEBSITE www.codemasters.com
OUT Spring '99

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ First authentic mountain bike game
- ★ Extremely trendy No Fear endorsement
- ★ You can do wheelies and everything
- ★ Falling off doesn't hurt

Mountain bikes. The preserve of amateur drug dealers, rank buffoons and grown men who are too embarrassed to ride a BMX. Not so, cry the Pepsi Max brigade. Mountain biking is a serious sport; in fact, it's an Extreme Sport, an adrenaline-fuelled challenge practised by ultra-fit athletes in Day-Glo lycra pants. It's an exhilarating test of nerve, skill and balance, pushing man and machine to their respective limits, with danger

A game about mountain bikes going downhill? No fear, here's Steve Hill

and pain never more than a skid mark away. Apparently, it's great.

Whatever, someone's making a game about it. That someone is Swedish developer UDS, whose previous outing was a top-down racing game of little repute – the graphically unremarkable but supremely networkable *Ignition* (PCZ #55, 82%).

“Riders race against 15 opponents over treacherous tracks, with grazed knees a distinct possibility as twisted metal scrapes against warm flesh”

Swapping four wheels for two, UDS are currently locked in a shed poring over the instructions to *No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking*. When they've finished building it, Codemasters will let them out and you will be able to buy the game in a shop using your money. Why should

you want to do this? Because it might be all right. Here's how.

No Fear Downhill Mountain Biking will feature tracks in ten international locations, ranging from the dusty deserts of Morocco to the volcanoes of Japan. The cycles can be adapted to suit the terrain, with upgrades awarded as you achieve winning times. The suspension and brakes can

be altered, maximising durability and enabling you to negotiate corners at previously unattainable speeds.

More tomfoolery will become evident as riders race against 15 opponents over treacherous narrow tracks, with grazed knees proving a distinct possibility as twisted metal

scrapes against warm flesh. Fortunately, it's only a game, the TCP can stay in the bathroom cabinet and you can launch yourself down as many mountains as your mind can cope with.

The game offers a full range of competition modes, including single-player championship, single races, time trials and multiplayer split-screen tournaments. There's also the opportunity to pull off loads of tricks, so get ready to practise your wheelies, bunny hops and endos.

And for the ultimate in pretend mountain bike excitement, the first-person perspective offers thrills galore, accompanied by some pumping audio tracks and the obligatory whooping and hollering.

PC ZONE will be following the game's progress closely, and we may even throw in a playable demo. In the meantime, look at the pictures. **WZ**

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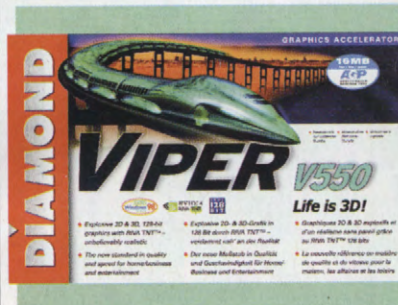
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PCWORLD

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KINGPIN

If violence be the food of enjoyment, *Charlie Brooker* doesn't need to eat again for weeks

UPDATE



Lots of burly men hanging around the docks. A golden opportunity for Mallo to make some spare change.



"Say hello to my leetle friend... I'll take you all to hell!"

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER Xatrix Entertainment
PUBLISHER Interplay
WEBSITE www.xatrix.com
OUT Spring 1999

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- ★ Sophisticated AI
- ★ A strong narrative
- ★ The violence and swearing

Drew Markham's a big man. He is, in his own words, "about six foot six and an imposing chap, you might say". Like we say, a big man. He's also lead programmer on *Kingpin*, the gangster-flavoured *Quake* 'em up which got us all hot and bothered when it premiered at ECTS back in September.

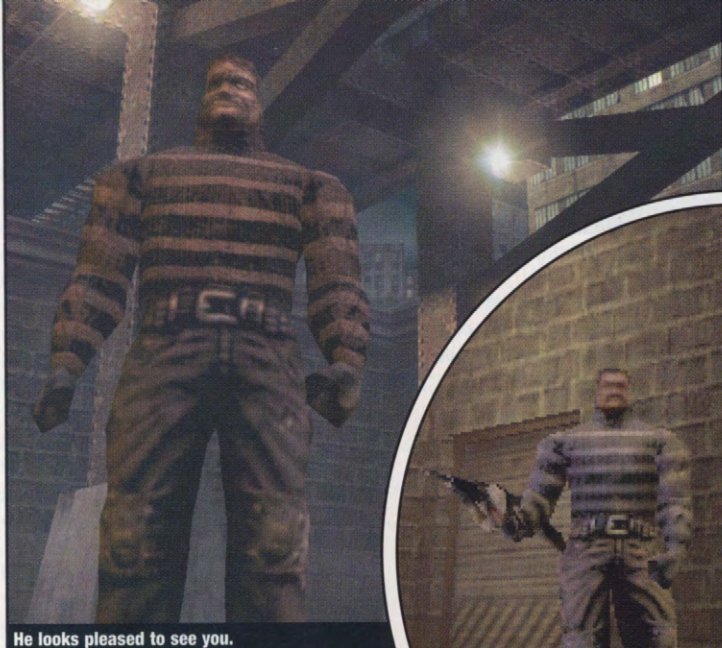
Drew is part of Xatrix Entertainment, who are no strangers to the 3D action genre. They were the maniacs responsible for the single funniest *Quake*-u-like of all time: the undeniably twisted *Redneck Rampage* (PCZ #52, 84%), a kind of *Hickpocalypse Now* in which the players gunned down trailer trash and

alien invaders while chugging back the brewskis and munching on pork rinds. But while *Redneck* was total toontime, *Kingpin*'s sewn from altogether darker fabric.

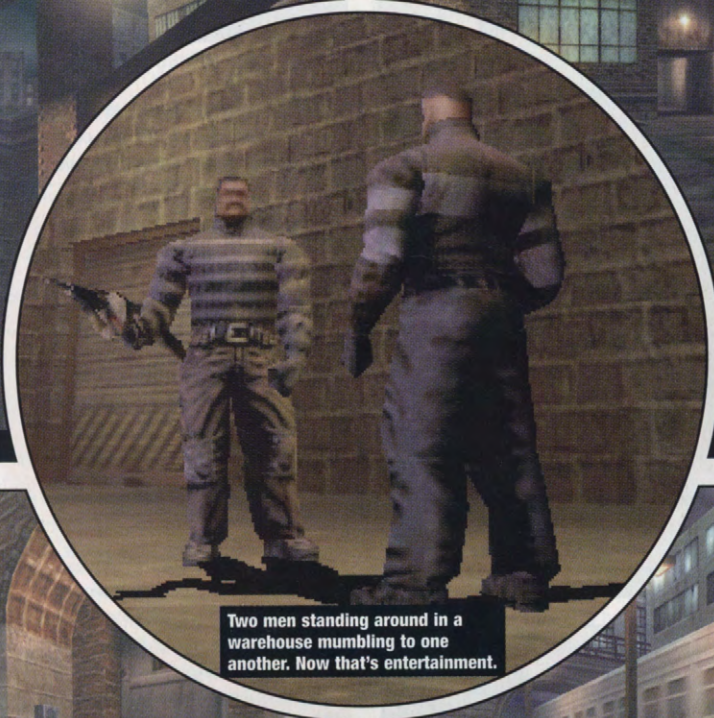
Get this: it's a 3D actioneer in which you can *wound* people. Not just obliterate them. If you want to put the shits up an enemy character, pop them in the thigh. Or the elbow. And if they don't talk or won't give in, relent and go for the head shot - then watch as they slump to the ground in an eerily convincing manner, leaking claret from a disc-shaped hole in the forehead. *Kingpin* takes place in a world of grimy backstreets and night city steam, of piss and garbage and people saying "motherf**ker". There are guns. There is fighting. There are foolhardy mobsters choking on a stinking gut-full of pain. This is not a 'feel good' game, it's a piece of cold-steel violence.

SING LIKE A CANARY

So, Drew Markham's a big man. But he seems pretty gentle. He didn't put us in a headlock or crack our toes or stab us or anything. Instead he sat down smiling and patiently answered



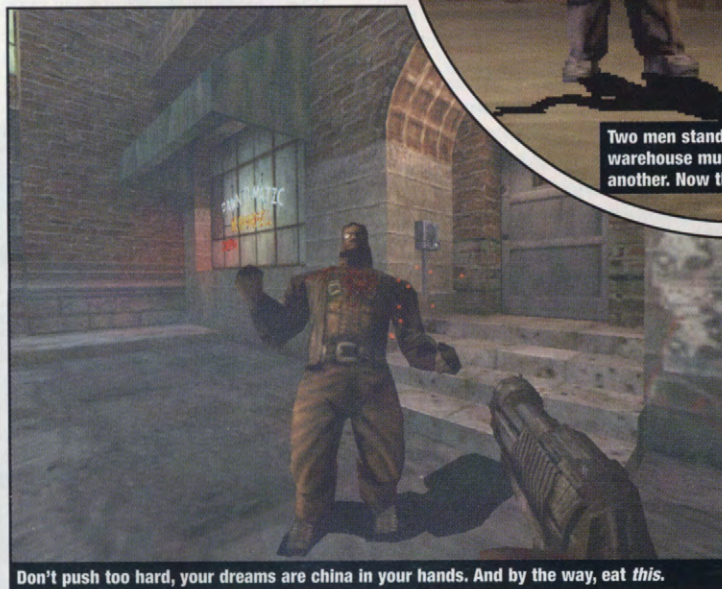
He looks pleased to see you.



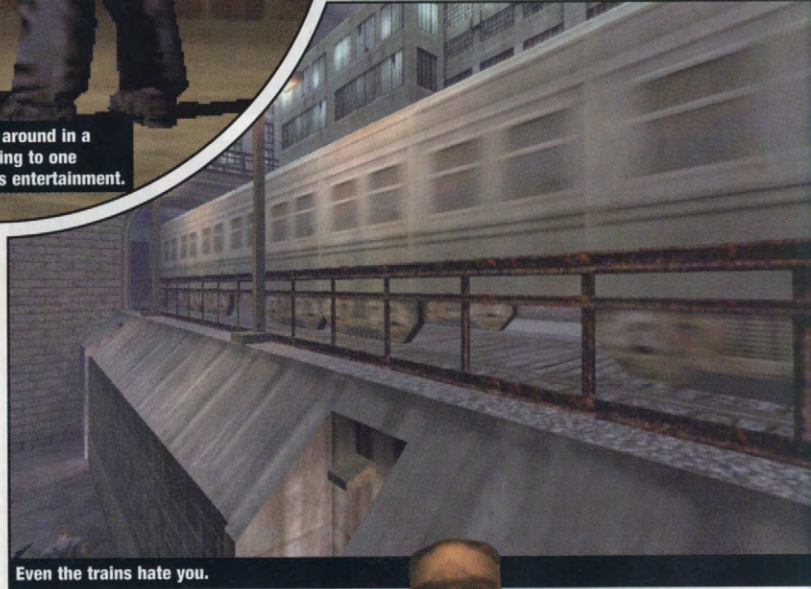
Two men standing around in a warehouse mumbling to one another. Now that's entertainment.



Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang.



Don't push too hard, your dreams are china in your hands. And by the way, eat *this*.



Even the trains hate you.

our *Kingpin* questions with a certain swaggering charm and a broad US accent. We asked him to describe *Kingpin* – and this is what he said.

"*Kingpin* is a game inspired by Martin Scorsese movies. I think I probably watched *Goodfellas* one too many times and had it in my dreams,

“The language is so realistic and so over the top that it would be really hard for me to give you a taste of it without having it heavily censored”

DREW MARKHAM, LEAD PROGRAMMER

and the game's kind of come out of that. It's very violent, it's very gritty, it's very realistic. We tried to take a lot of the cues that Scorsese uses in his films – the atmosphere, the ambience, the violence, the character involvement...”

And the fruity, earthy language...

“There is rather a lot of fruity, earthy language, yeah. But the game

will be available with a parental lock so if parents want to turn that off they can... but we didn't want to short-change adults who are old enough to make that decision for themselves.”

What's the rudest phrase in the game?

“Well, the language is so realistic and so over the top that it would be really hard for me to give you a taste of it without having it heavily censored.”

But presumably with the lock switched on, the characters say things like “you blooming cad... I'll hit you”?

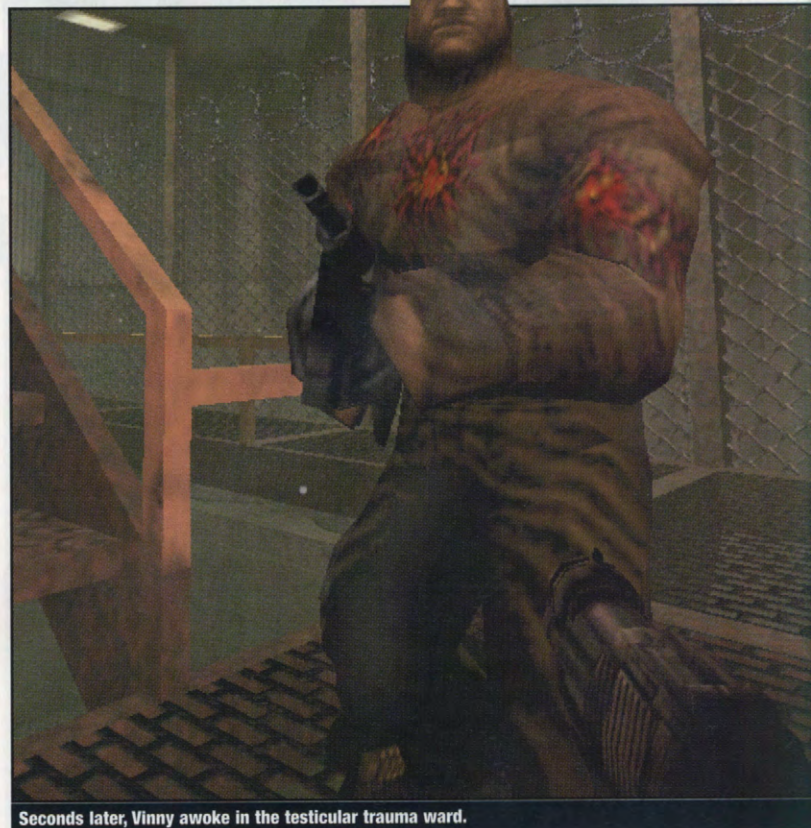
“Yeahhh... things just like that. Or we might keep the language in, but bleep it. Also, we may put in a lock-out for the blood. It's a very violent game. When you shoot someone it's very realistic.”

You didn't go out and actually shoot people in the name of research, did you?

“Nah. There's plenty of that research available on film now. We just had to get a few movies together and we were fine.”

Kingpin is quite distinctive visually, isn't it?

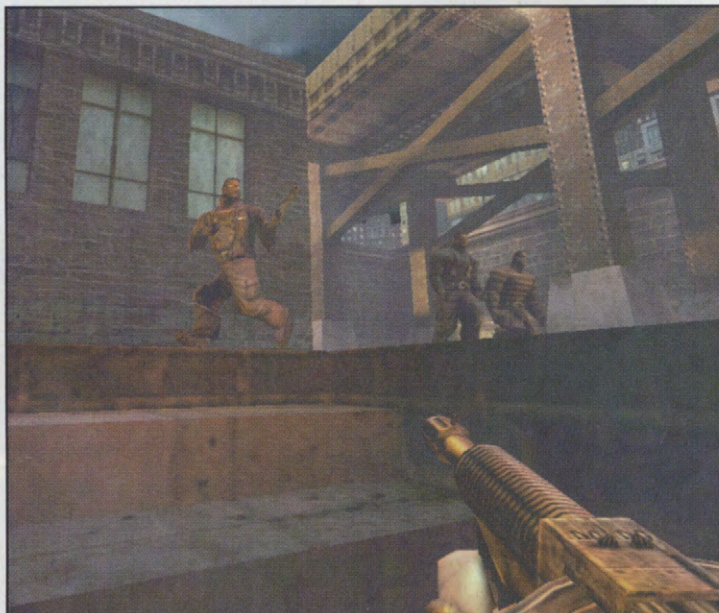
“The game has a lot of



Seconds later, Vinny awoke in the testicular trauma ward.



Some crime about to occur yesterday.



He's a bit fey for a gangster.



"Hey buddy - surely 50p ain't too much to ask. Hey... c'mon... Just 50 goddam pence!"




XATRIX ENTERTAINMENT

It's pronounced "zay-tricks", in case you've just strangled yourself with your own tongue in an attempt to say it out loud

1994 *Cyberia* (PCZ #23, 80%). FMV-heavy arcade-adventure thingamypop with a Thomas Dolby soundtrack. This was the sort of thing you could get away with back in '94. And it ran on a 386SX.

1997 *Redneck Rampage* (PCZ #52, 84%). "All the killin', twice the humour... half the intelligence." So went the ad spiel for *Redneck Rampage*, still the funniest *Doom*-a-like in computer gaming history.

1998 *Redneck Rampage Rides Again*. More or less the same as before... but looking ever-so-ever-so dated by now.

1998 *Quake II: The Reckoning Mission Pack* (PCZ #59, 97%). Excellent level design (which bodes well for *Kingpin*) but this officially-sanctioned bolt-on pack for *Quake II* was a tad too easy for some.

1999 *Kingpin*. The eye-popping Pesci 'em up we're concerned with today.

GIMME DA FOGGIN FACTS, YA COGSUGGA

Here's a cut-out-and-keep *Kingpin* fact sheet for those of you who just can't get enough information popcorn

- ★ *Kingpin* consists of 24 levels, spread across seven episodes.
- ★ There are eight different weapons, from knuckle dusters to Uzi machine guns.
- ★ You can attack in gangs and order your fellow hoodlums to obey whatever psychotic orders you may wish to bark.
- ★ There are vehicles: from cars, to trains, to jetpacks. Yes, gangsters on jetpacks. Now *there's* an urban nightmare.
- ★ Up to 64 wannabe godfathers can slug it out in the multiplayer mode.
- ★ The targeted spec machine is a P200 with 32Mb of RAM and a 3D accelerator.
- ★ It will ship in cases measuring 21x17x4-inches and weighing 20lbs. There will be 24 copies of *Kingpin* in each case.
- ★ 'Pink gin' is an anagram of *Kingpin*.
- ★ 'Mr Dream Hawk' is an anagram of Drew Markham.

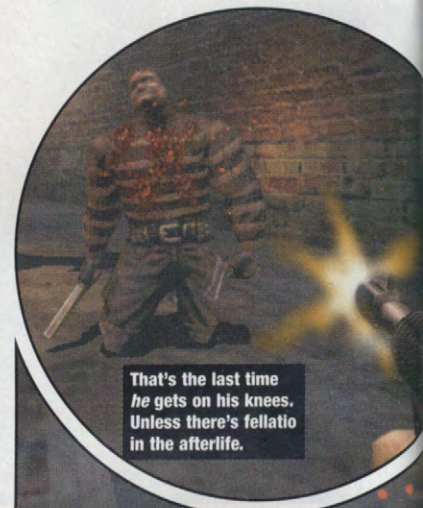
← different looks. When you start out basically you're a street punk in an alternate world. I kind of stole a line from Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*: when *Brazil* starts it says it's set 'somewhere in the 20th century', and that's kind of where *Kingpin*'s set. It's a retro-tech past here - where time sort of stopped around 1939 and went off on a different track. There's some very contemporary elements and also some elements you might recognise from the '30s and '40s. It's kind of 'gangster' meets 'gangsta'."

What engine are you using for the game?

"We used the *Quake II* engine - well, a very heavily modified version."

Why choose *Quake II*?

"We used it because we worked on the mission pack for iD (*The*



That's the last time he gets on his knees. Unless there's fellatio in the afterlife.



Cameron contemplated the chunks of his lung as they hung in the air before him. "Hmmm," he mused. "Globby."

Reckoning), so we knew the engine very well and it was a natural thing to continue on with it. A lot of people asked us why we didn't switch to *Unreal* or something like that, but we've managed to put a lot of effects into this engine. I think you'll see that it has everything that you'd expect to be in a game and a lot more."

Being a Scorsese-style gangster game, does all the action take place from a Joe Pesci perspective – you know, ankle-height to everybody else?

"Well, you might be *considered* to be shorter than everyone else. You start out as this street punk. You've got absolutely nothing around you, not even a gun at the beginning. You gotta get your brass knuckles, you gotta work your way up. You want to be the crime boss, you want to be the Kingpin. So you've got to gather a gang of guys around you and take everybody out on your way up to the top of the ladder."

Will you get to stab people repeatedly with fountain pens like Joe Pesci did in *Casino*?

"There will be some things like that. Torture will figure in the game. There will be characters who have

information that you might want and it would be an... *acceptable* thing to at some point maybe shoot them in the kneecap or something to get them to talk."

Will you get to stick their head in a vice and tighten it until their eyes pop out, also like Joe Pesci in *Casino*?

"Well, that was one of my favourite scenes in *Casino*, but I think we're probably a few years away from

"I'm not a violent person in real life. I don't go out and get in my car and run people over just because I played *Carmageddon II*. I think that having a healthy fantasy life is fine – it's a good way to release aggression"

DREW MARKHAM

depicting something like that. So we're gonna start off with the lower end of the 'violence and torture' spectrum. But y'know, maybe in a few years we might work our way up to something like that."

People are bound to complain that the violence that is there is far too explicit. Would you have anything to say to people like that – or would you just track them down and have them killed?

"No (*laughs*), I wouldn't have

them killed. I don't subscribe to the theory that watching violent material necessarily makes you a violent person. I'm not a violent person in real life. I don't go out and get in my car and run people over just because I played *Carmageddon II*. I don't watch *Goodfellas* and go out and shoot people. I think that having a healthy fantasy life is fine – it's a good way to release aggression. We've been doing

that for a long time and there's nothing wrong with that."

There's a distinctive soundtrack, isn't there?

"Yeah. The music's by Cypress Hill. They're the best hip-hop band in the world as far as I'm concerned. Incredible music, and we feel very lucky to get it. We got three songs from the new album and two old songs."

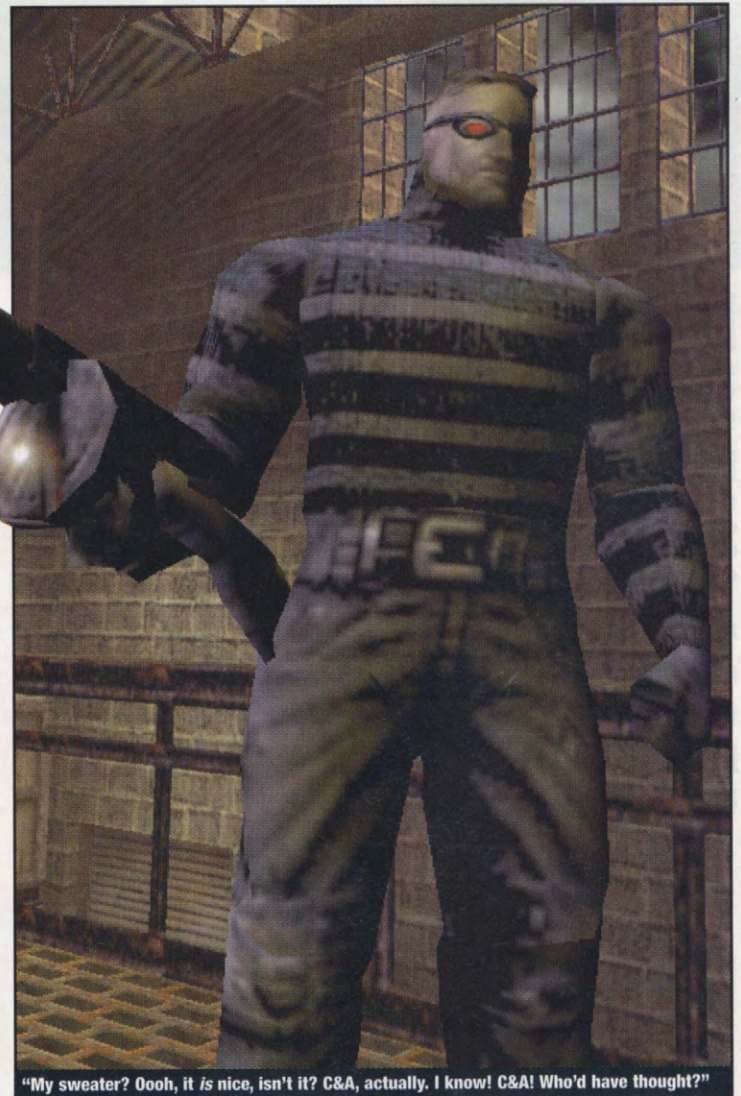
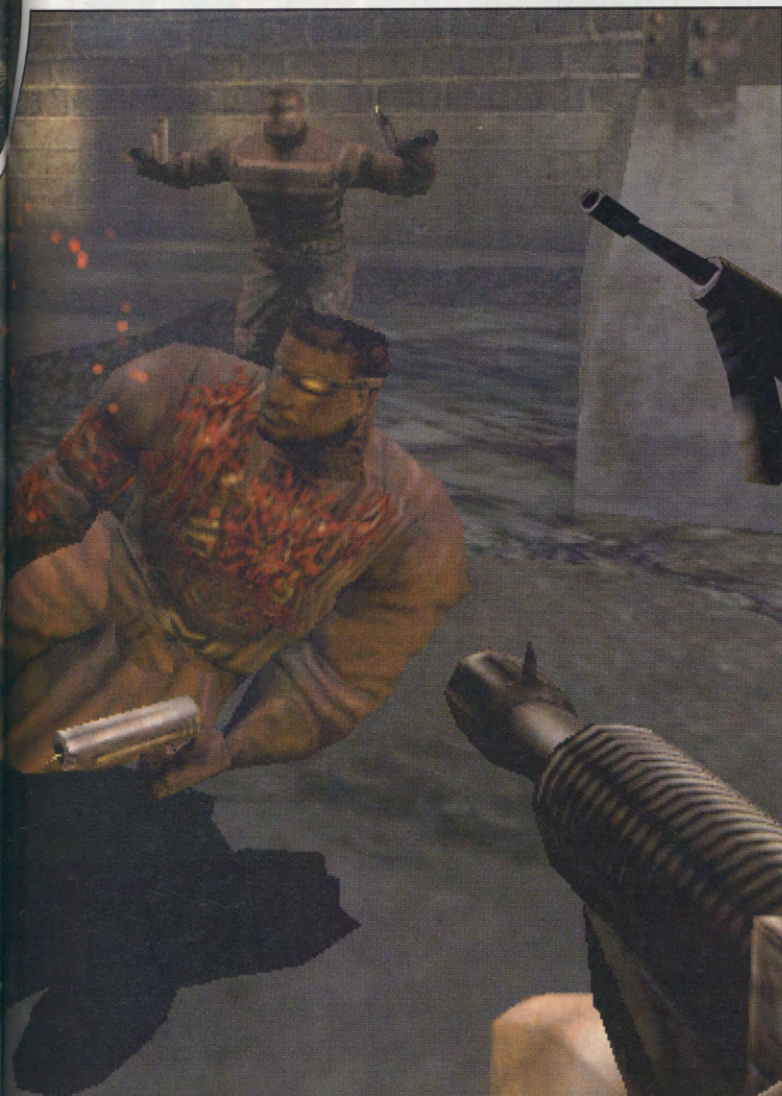
Have the 'Hill seen the game?

"They haven't seen the game per

se, but they have seen a video of it. What we did was we took one of their songs – *Ain't Goin' Out Like That* – and we had some nice violent gameplay which we cut to that song. I think they said they watched the tape a coupla hundred times and told us we were trippin' on doing some violence. They liked what was in there, said it was very cool, and wanted to be a part of it. In fact they liked it so much they're going to do voices in the game. So the three main guys from Cypress Hill will actually be *in* the game."

THE ADVENTURE GAME

So: lotsa violence, lotsa hip-hop. Fine. But it's also an *adventure* game. Xatrix are promising a strong, unfolding narrative that will link the episodes together, as you get to know and like (or hate and loathe) the characters you encounter. There's also a smattering of resource management... Well, you can burgle warehouses for extra funds, at any rate. We'll be covering these gentler aspects of *Kingpin* in further detail in a future issue. For now you'll just have to gawp at the pictures like a slack-jawed chimp. **[E]**



"My sweater? Oooh, it is nice, isn't it? C&A, actually. I know! C&A! Who'd have thought?"

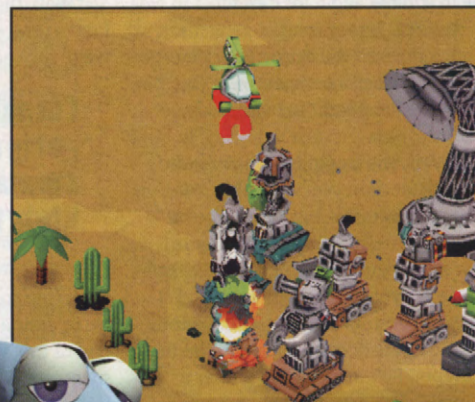


TANK (ENEMY)
00:01:44 1500

Each era features its own stylised interface.



Cue comedy sheep. Here's Flossy about to get hers.



This is the Modern World, as Paul Weller once barked (when he was good).

The one and only puntastic...

TANKTICS

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER DMA Design
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive
WEBSITE www.gremlin.co.uk
OUT March '99

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- Large fights with huge weapons and loads of tanks
- Four distinctive eras
- Two million combinations of tanks per era
- Burning sheep

A real-time strategy-cum-puzzle game with tanks and jokes. Steve Hill is confused



We first had a look at this way back in May '97, and came away with scarcely any more idea of what it's about than when we started. It clearly involves tanks, but apparently not in the traditionally dull way, as the game is peppered with all manner of comedy antics. Essentially, the idea is to wage war against the so-called Evil Black Tanks and annihilate them for ever. To do this you are sent back in time to an age before the Evil Black Tanks had established their grip on the world, your overall mission being to fight your way through time, destroying their influence in every era of history.

How are you supposed to do this? By using a magic crane, of course. The cranes hover above the

landscape, which features grassy plains, rocky mountains, lakes, lava, quicksand, forests, snow, ice and, hilariously, sheep. The crane is controlled with the mouse and swoops across the landscape at speed. Each crane has a magnet that enables you to manipulate, pick up, assemble and control your forces. By constructing armies of tanks, you can protect your home base as well as have a pop at the wicked machinations of the Evil Black Tanks.

FACE THE MACHINE

Every tank in the game is modular, with tracks, engine blocks, weapons and radar control dishes that can be fitted together in different configurations. You begin the game with a few assorted tank parts and a magical machine called the Part-O-Matic. In order to create the tank parts, your Part-O-Matic needs a supply of resources, and can use pretty much anything on the landscape, without the need to mine for ore and all that bollocks. A set of tracks is a good starting point when building a tank, followed by an

engine block or two. The more engines you fit to your tank, the more weapons it can wield, and the game features more than 50 unique types.

The way you construct your tanks affects how you play the game. For instance, a dozen huge, ferocious tanks are able to chew their way through almost any obstacle, but a small, zippy tank could be more useful for dodging past an enemy rocket launcher and blagging some much-needed resources.

Tanktics features four distinctive eras for you to battle through, and consequently the tanks created in each are very different. Stone Age features huge tanks carved out of



Tanks can be piled up to ten blocks high.



An ominous-looking army assembles.



Some Stone Age tanks doing their Stone Age thing.



DMA DESIGN

Dundee-based DMA are a little bit odd. Here's a brief tour through the wonderful and frightening world of their PC games

- 1989 They kick off with *Menace*, a blatant rip off of *R-Types*.
- 1991 The classic *Lemmings* gives them their first big hit.
- 1993 *Lemmings 2* (PCZ #1, 88%) proves to be a significant improvement.
- 1995 *Lemmings 3D* (PCZ #31, 71%) is good, if a little confusing.
- 1998 *Grand Theft Auto* (PCZ #58, 92%) is sick, wrong and great.



More tank-based mayhem, this time in a medieval style.



In the future, all tanks will be made like this. According to DMA, anyway.

massive chunks of granite. They're slow movers, but more than capable of mass destruction. Medieval tanks are constructed like castles, made out of stone and wood, with all the heraldry and frilly bits. Modern tanks are mean, no-nonsense, cold-war mobile death machines. Future tanks have options such as hover bases and long-range weapons. Each era contains enough tank parts to offer millions of possible combinations, and no era has a particular advantage over another. For instance, the Future tanks still have a hard time beating the Stone Age tanks.

PIGEONS IN FLIGHT

As for pigeonholing, *Tanktics* is a slippery little twat to pin down, so rather than scratch our heads for a convenient soundbite we simply asked the people who made it what it's all about. Producer Brian Lawson is as good a place to start as any. So, Brian, what are the primary influences behind *Tanktics*?

"The game has so many different aspects, it's hard to say. The one that sticks in my mind most is the old

Zombie games you used to get on ZX81s and other old home computers - you remember those? Try to stay ahead of the zombies and lead them into waiting traps while they relentlessly follow you. That was the way we wanted the player to feel as

"Tanktics has humour, panic, stress, triumph, strategy, action, silly noises and, of course, sheep. Something for everyone, really"

BRIAN LAWSON, TANKTICS PRODUCER

streams of enemy tanks kept rolling towards their base - facing an enemy that is mindless, merciless, relentless."

Programmer Craig Stewart cites a more recent inspiration: "Being the first of the RTS games to make it big, obviously *C&C* did catch our interest. But there are so many clones of that genre out there, we didn't go down that road. *Tanktics* is fresh, it's like no

RTS ever played before. We think people are bored with the *C&C* clones, and we've done something just that little bit different and, dare I say it, original. There is nothing out there like it. And unless someone clones DMA there never will be, because only DMA could have produced this game. I think they put mind-expanding drugs in our coffee."

Brian Baglow, head of Propaganda & Indoctrination, appears to ratify this, claiming that the game is inspired by "Vic & Bob's Novelty Island, a wet Wednesday evening in Lewis, and a plate spinner in Trafalgar Square".

Tanktics certainly sounds twisted, but what kind of person will enjoy playing it?

Brian Lawson: "Anyone who wants to have fun. It has humour, panic, stress, triumph, strategy, action, silly noises and, of course, sheep. Something for everyone, really."

Brian Baglow: "We love *Tanktics*. You love *Tanktics*. All God's children love *Tanktics*."

Particularly, it would seem, if they're called Brian. **PCZ**

Q&A

BRIAN LAWSON

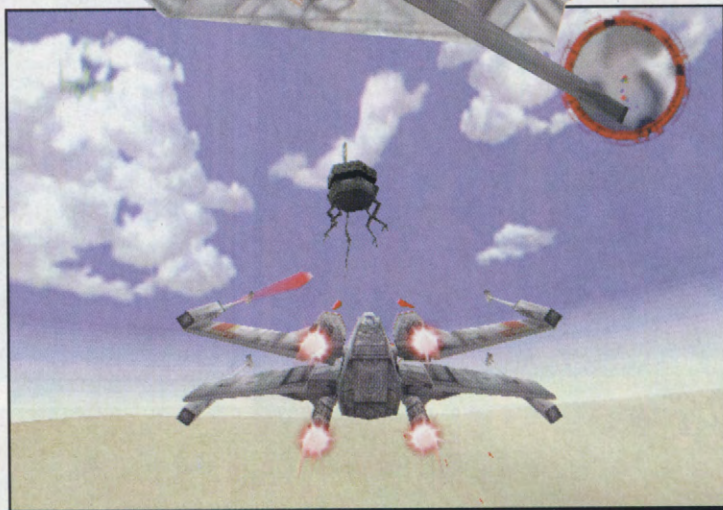
We question the producer of the game they're all calling Tanktics

- PCZ** What was the first game you ever played?
BRIAN *Combat* on the Atari VCS.
- PCZ** What are you playing at the moment?
BRIAN *StarCraft* and *Shogo*, mainly. I still play *Quake II* from time to time. I recently finished *Fallout* and *Conflict: Freespace*, which were both excellent.
- PCZ** What's the best game you've ever played?
BRIAN Difficult. The longest-surviving game on my hard drive is *CM2*. But for all-round, keeps-you-coming-back-again-and-again survivability, it probably has to be *Quake II*. I'm a big fan of *Total Annihilation* as well, which is probably my favourite strategy game.
- PCZ** Have you ever had a fight, and if so what happened?
BRIAN Yes. We only got a couple of punches in before a teacher came along and caught us. Spoilsport.

Have a Luke at this, it's...

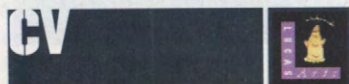


Rogue Squadron gives you the chance to steam into some genuine Imperial Walkers.



Climb into an X-Wing and shoot seven bells out of the Evil Empire. If you want.

STAR WARS: ROGUE SQUADRON



LUCASARTS

George Lucas' interactive entertainment wing have been knocking out *Star Wars*-related games for some time. Here are the major releases

- 1993 *X-Wing* (PCZ #2, 88%)
- 1993 *Rebel Assault* (PCZ #11, 93%)
- 1994 *TIE Fighter* (PCZ #18, 94%)
- 1995 *Rebel Assault II* (PCZ #34, 90%)
- 1997 *Dark Forces II: Jedi Knight* (PCZ #55, 94%)
- 1997 *Shadows Of The Empire* (PCZ #56, 88%)
- 1997 *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* (PCZ #52, 89%)
- 1997 *Yoda Stories* (PCZ #51, 79%)
- 1998 *Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith* (PCZ #62, 95%) add-on for *Dark Forces II*
- 1998 *Star Wars Supremacy* (PCZ #64, 68%)

Every generation has a legend. Here's *Steve Hill* with another *Star Wars* game

THE DETAILS

DEVELOPER LucasArts
PUBLISHER LucasArts
WEBSITE www.lucasarts.com
OUT Now

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- It's *Star Wars*
- It's *Star Wars*
- It's *Star Wars*

With the new film already in the can, *Star Wars* mania is set to reach unprecedented heights in the coming months.

Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace debuts Stateside in spring 1999, and tales are already abounding of British devotees flying over simply to catch an early look at the trailer. Idiots. Of course, LucasArts have never been shy in capitalising on the success of the series, and *Rogue Squadron* is the latest in a long line of *Star Wars*

games. So what does this one do? This and that. Look, we've written it down for you.

Set during the period between *Star Wars: A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Rogue Squadron* centres on a critical juncture in the conflict between the pyjama-wearing Rebel Alliance and the evil Galactic Empire.

air-to-air battle scenarios in the *Star Wars* universe.

MARK AND LUKE

If you've always fancied being Luke Skywalker, then this is your chance (although it didn't do Mark Hamill much good). *Rogue Squadron* enables you to quite literally climb into the X-

“A host of elaborate graphical effects are thrown in, such as real-time lighting, smoke, engine glow and tracer fire. The game also features an assortment of camera perspectives”

A 3D accelerated air combat affair, the game focuses on the dynamic collection of pilots formed by Luke Skywalker and his mate Wedge Antilles. Made up of the 12 best pilots the Rebel Alliance can muster, this hard-core outfit is typically assigned the most challenging and dangerous of missions. A bit like a latter-day *Dirty Dozen*, if you will, except involving intense ground-to-air and

Wing cockpit of the all-American hero, who has just led the Rebels to victory in the pivotal Battle of Yavin. Luke and his fellow Starfighter pilots have a singular purpose: defending the Rebel Alliance against a powerful and battle-hardened Imperial foe in a last ditch effort for control of the galaxy. Again.

Featuring a variety of mission types, including dogfights, search-



Use the Force, you tit.



That'll be one of them there Y-Wings.



Rogue Squadron looks like being a fast-paced, action-intensive arcade shooter.



That'll learn them.



Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bratt!

and-destroy, reconnaissance, escort duty and rescue, the action will be interspersed with dramatic cut-scenes and voice-overs to outline the specific objectives. For instance, in one mission scenario, you receive a brief to liberate Rebel Alliance troops from the planet Kessel, the site of a brutal Imperial prison and spice mining operation. You must first locate the prison facilities, then free the captives and escort Rebel shuttles away from the planet, all the while defending against imposing Imperial forces, including AT-ATs, AT-STs and TIE Fighters. That sort of thing.

DOGS OF WAR

The aerial conflict takes place in a variety of planetary settings that range from familiar *Star Wars* locales such as Tatooine, to some never before seen, including Kessel and Mon Calamari. Dogfight skills will be tested over spectacular environments comprising water, canyons, deserts, treetops and volcanic regions, and your craft will be equipped with

lasers, seeker missiles, ion cannons, and so forth. The fabled Rebel Starfighters will be up for grabs, so expect a plethora of X-Wings, Y-Wings, and A-Wings, as well as V-Wing airspeeders and snowspeeders. Wingmates also play an important role in battle, as losing them puts you at much greater risk. It follows that if you scratch their back, they'll scratch yours (not literally, of course).

Being 3D accelerator-only, a host of elaborate graphical details are thrown in, such as real-time lighting, smoke, engine glow and tracer fire. *Rogue Squadron* also features an assortment of camera perspectives that range from in-cockpit to several exterior points of view.

Essentially an arcade affair, the game will clearly appeal to *Star Wars* fans, but in particular those who enjoyed the action-packed flight levels of *Shadows Of The Empire*. It sounds like a right old laugh, so what we'll probably do is review it and let you know if it's any good. We're nice like that. [EW]

FLY BOYS

The titular Rogue Squadron comprises a host of hard-nosed pilots, all with ridiculous names that suggest alternate careers. Here are a few of them

LUKE SKYWALKER



Sounds like: a *Star Wars* character.

Unless you were brought up in a plastic bubble, you've probably

heard of the boy Skywalker, but for the record he grew up on Tatooine, where he lived with his Uncle Owen and Aunt May. One day he returned home to find their bodies charred beyond recognition, victims of the evil Empire. Oh, and he's snogged his sister and Darth Vader's his Dad.

DACK RALTER



Sounds like: a porn star.

One of the newer, younger pilots, he replaced Biggs after the

Battle of Yavin, and is showing promise as an X-Wing pilot. He's still new, though, but what he lacks in experience, he makes up for in enthusiasm. He reminds Luke of himself, back when all he wanted was a decent haircut and a chance to take on the Empire.

WEDGE ANTILLES



Sounds like: a Tex-Mex hor d'oeuvres.

Born on Corellia, his parents were freighter pilots, killed trying to

save a space station. He displays great leadership skills and could one day become Rogue Leader, although he'd much rather be flying missions than attending parades. An excellent pilot, he saved Luke's life at the Death Star, something he was no doubt very grateful for.

WES JANSON



Sounds like: a Dutch footballer.

Only truly happy when manning the guns of a Y-Wing or snowspeeder.

Wedge swears by his accuracy and knack for hitting small moving targets, like TIE Fighters. Janson has a short temper though, and many is the time he's had to be extricated from a cantina fight before he glasses someone.

ZEV SENESCA



Sounds like: a Christian rocker.

A little older than the rest, he's probably got a few stories to tell, but

is nevertheless taciturn and sullen. He joined up some time ago, after the Empire killed his parents for secretly supplying the Rebellion. He once held off three TIE Fighters while an Alliance transporter fled into hyperspace.

DEREK 'HOBBIE' KLIVAN



Sounds like: a trainspotter.

The sceptic of the Rogue Squadron, he doesn't warm

quickly to new ideas, but never challenges the authority of his superiors. He originally trained at the Imperial Academy. Since jumping ship he's been working in the Sullust System, running guns. Until now, that is.

For the uninitiated, the craft on the left is a TIE Fighter, driven by the Evil Empire.



PC GAMER

91%

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PC ZONE

92%

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PCZONE CLASSIC



IT'S NOT THE **SIZE** OF YOUR WEAPON THAT COUNTS...



- Choose to pilot one of four transformable Mobile Combat Armor units (MCAs)
- Two modes of play - on foot and in MCA
- True 3D environments with realistic lighting, indoor levels, vast outdoor terrains, and awesome effects



- Over 30 challenging enemies that use the environment to their advantage, activate alarms, or spring traps
- Dynamic storyline and goal-based mission structure evolves based on your actions

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PC CD ROM

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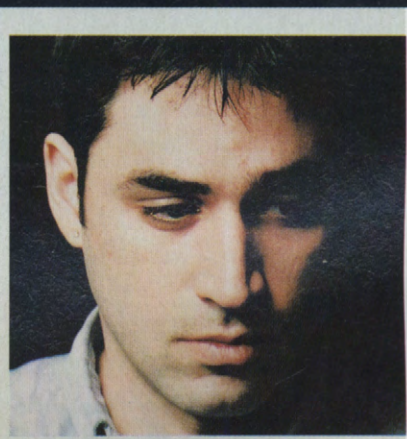
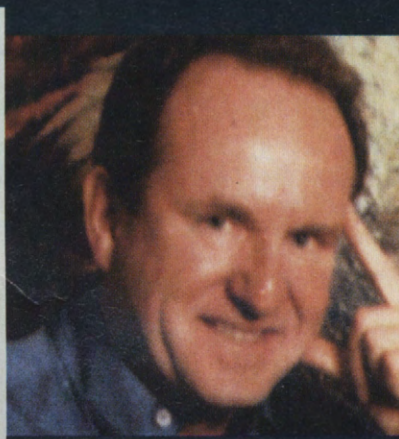
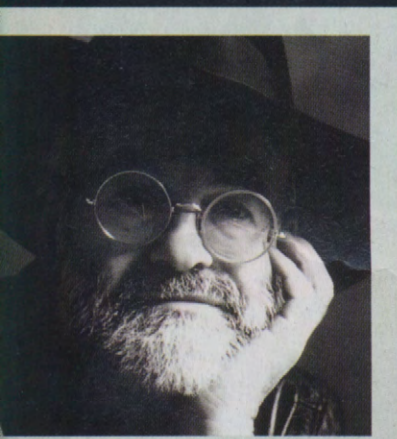
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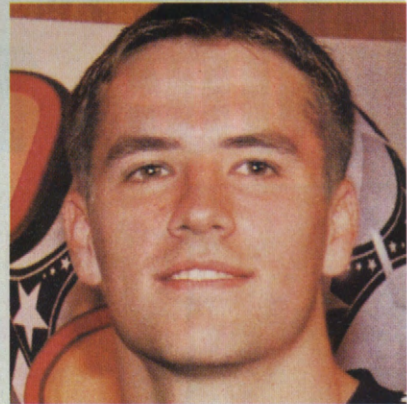
MEDIA
CONNECTION

CELEBRITY SQUARES



“I liked *Myst*, but it felt like a beautiful empty stage set waiting for some character interaction to happen”

DOUGLAS ADAMS



Internationally acclaimed authors indulging in *Quake*? Top soccer players fiddling with their joysticks? Blimey! Things have come on a long way since us ‘anoraks’ played *Manic Miner*. Adam Phillips talks to the glitterati...



... AND TITIV
... NEW & MOD. PTU WYNY
... AND TITIV

We are not alone. PC gamers aren't the first to be branded with derogatory labels just for enjoying a bit of escapism – cinema had a similar problem. Back when it reared its head at the turn of the century, film was regarded by the educated section of society, who were more interested in discussing politics and social and cultural issues, as downright plebeian – a 'not-to-be-taken-seriously' pastime devised to entertain the 'oiks'. A hundred years on, everyone's clamouring to get into the nearest multiplex to see the latest blockbuster starring Nick Cage or

queuing to witness low-budget marvels such as *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*. In the meantime, cinema's critics from those early days are buried six feet under, along with their archaic and absurd opinions.

When computer games appeared some 15 years ago, they met with a similar reaction. Out came the same 'cultivated' class again. This time, they were mocking computer games and labelling anyone who confessed to playing them 'geeks' – lonely, socially inadequate individuals: "Oh, how sad – they're playing all by themselves in front of that passing fad thingie, the computer. How boring."

The line between geek and games fan has often

been blurred for folk who haven't indulged in a little *Quake*, but fortunately times are a-changing. With the growing mainstream appeal of PCs and consoles, the emergence of multiplayer and the arrival of more 'immersive' games, we've seen the industry shake off its 'public perception'-imposed anorak and slip into something decidedly more 'Stussy'.

This transformation has been fuelled further by established names across all avenues of showbiz adding their own seals of approval – which is a vital ingredient for any medium's success these days.

PC Zone thought it was time to chase up a few of these celeb gamers and ask them just why they love computer games so damn much.

DOUGLAS ADAMS



Job: Author/game designer

Claim to fame: Wrote the seminal Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy series. Also responsible for the acclaimed *Starship Titanic* game.

PCZ What computer do you play your games on?

DA All my computers are Macs.

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

DA When I was living in LA in 1983, I used

to play an adventure game on The Source, an online service which got going about the same time as CompuServe – but which didn't stay the distance.

PCZ How did your penchant for gamesplaying develop over the years?

DA It didn't, really. I used to love the Infocom adventure games – *Zork*, *Suspended* etc. When the early graphics games came along, I just lost interest. I liked *Myst*, but it felt like a beautiful empty stage set waiting for some character interaction to happen. This thought led to *Starship Titanic*.

PCZ What's your favourite game?

DA I particularly enjoyed *Suspended*. It had imagination, strategy, intelligence and a bit

of wit. Oh, I also enjoy *Super Mario 64* on the N64, which I 'bought for my daughter'. It's a really terrific piece of work – great character animation.

PCZ What's your favourite genre?

DA Adventure.

PCZ What's the worst game you've ever played?

DA Hard to say. I've seen so many really lame ones.

PCZ What games are on your hard drive at the moment?

DA None, I'm afraid. Maybe just the *Solitaire* that comes preloaded on Macs.

PCZ Why do computer games appeal so much to you?



Starship Titanic: partly inspired by *Myst*?

DA I guess I'm more interested in what they could be, rather than what they've been so far. Imaginative immersion is the goal.

PCZ Why do you think games have become so popular?

DA They're better than what's on TV (other than *Frasier*).

PCZ Is there anything lacking from today's games? If so, what?

DA Again, I don't see much around that really catches my attention. But character interaction and natural language processing seem to be the areas most ripe for development. Hence *Starship Titanic*. Sorry to keep banging that drum.

PCZ What do you think about multiplayer? Is it 'the next level'?

DA Yes. In fact, when I worked with Infocom 12 years ago, I kept going on about networked multi-user games. In those days, of course, no one could see how such a thing could be realistically achieved.

PCZ How would you like to see games develop in the future?

DA Less violently.

PCZ It's been said that the adventure game is dead. What do you think?

DA If it is dead, then my interest in the medium dies with it!

MICHAEL OWEN



Job: Footballer

Claim to fame: For feck's sake! Liverpool striker and top dog in the England squad. A national bleedin' hero. Not bad for an 18 year old...

PCZ What computer do you play your games on?

MO I have a PlayStation and a PC at home, but I usually have to fight with my brothers and sisters to get on them.

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

MO *WipOut* on the PlayStation – I thought it was superb.

PCZ What's your favourite genre?

MO I've always been quite competitive so I've always liked the sports games, particularly the football ones – both the arcade and management styles.

PCZ What games are on your hard drive at the moment?

MO I'm still playing *WLS '98*, but the rest of my family like *Tomb Raider*. *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* and *F1GP2* are among the other favourites.

PCZ Why do computer games appeal so much to you?

MO Once I've watched a film, I wouldn't go back and watch it again. But with computer games, you want to go back and finish where you've left off, to get further in the game or perhaps try to score a winner in extra time against Argentina!

PCZ You play footie at the highest level, so what's the attraction of computer soccer?

MO It's more a laugh with your mates than anything else. When I'm playing for Liverpool and England, I'm totally concentrated and all I want is to do well for the team, score goals and win. But with computer games, it's more relaxed. You can play 2-3-5, go all-out attack, try to score a hat-full of goals and not worry

about the manager shouting at you if it all goes wrong. The training's a bit easier, too.

PCZ Is there anything lacking from today's games?

MO I do feel there's a lack of realism, particularly with football games. In some games, you know if you shoot from a certain spot you can always score. I think the defenders are a bit quicker than some of those in the Premiership as well.

PCZ Multiplaying with other people – have you ever had a go?

MO I haven't found the time yet. Mind you, I've been told that you'll be able to play the new *Championship Manager* game over a network. I'm looking forward to having a go at that when it comes out.

PCZ Have you ever had an idea for a game? If so, can you pitch it to us?

MO I've got a few ideas, but I'll have to speak to Eidos before I tell all to *PC ZONE* readers.



WLS '98: the only chance Mr Owen's mates get to share the pitch with him.

IAN LIVINGSTONE

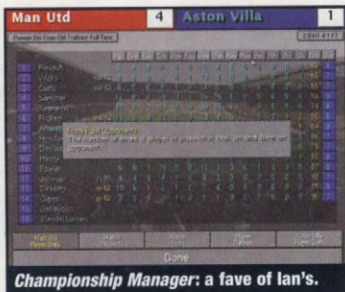


Job: Games designer/author and a top dog at Eidos
Claim to fame: Founded Games Workshop with Steve Jackson; edited and published *White Dwarf* magazine;

co-wrote *The Warlock Of Firetop Mountain*, the first in the *Fighting Fantasy* gamebook series, and wrote the concept design for *Deathtrap Dungeon*.

PCZ What computer do you play your games on?

IL A PC mainly, and sometimes a PlayStation.



Championship Manager: a fave of Ian's.

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

IL Donkey Kong on Intellivision.

PCZ What are your favourite games?

IL Championship Manager and Civilization.

For me, 'god' games give the most enjoyment because the nearer I can get to realism, the more I like a game. And playing Championship Manager is the only way a loyal Manchester City fan like me can ever achieve success...

PCZ What's your favourite genre?

IL Being in a state of advanced decrepitude, my ability to play shooters and action games has declined. Luckily, I can still think, so I prefer resource management and simulation games these days.

PCZ What's the worst game you've ever played?

IL What is good and what is bad is very subjective. Reviewers don't always bear this in mind. So listing the games I think are crap is irrelevant.

PCZ What games are on your hard drive at the moment?

IL Commandos, Championship Manager 3 (beta version), Deus Ex (beta version), Age Of Empires and Gangsters.

PCZ Why do computer games appeal so much to you?

IL It's the fantasy of being able to simulate just about every adventure, sport, battle or activity in the known universe in the comfort of your own home.

PCZ Why do you think they've become so popular?

IL The two main reasons are interactivity and technology. Watching TV or reading a book is passive; playing games is interactive, so they're much more involving. As technology advances to the state where the viewing image is of near video quality, the player no longer has to suspend disbelief, so games appeal to a much wider audience. Playing games has become a cool thing to do, rather than a geek activity.

PCZ Is there anything lacking from today's games?

IL The only danger I see is that they are becoming too complicated to learn. The best games should be very easy to learn but have great depth of play.

PCZ What do you make of all the complaints about too much violence in games like Carnageddon and Grand Theft Auto?

IL Too much is made about violence in games. Ignorant people assume everybody who plays computer games is ten years old or less; they don't realise the age range is far greater. There's an extraordinary amount of violence in films but they don't get the same criticism because of the age

TOM CLANCY



Job: Author/game designer

Claim to fame: One of the world's top thriller writers.

His books have been turned into Hollywood

blockbusters including The Hunt For Red October, Patriot Games and Clear And Present Danger. **He's now turned his hand to computer games with his latest release, Rainbow Six (based on his best-selling book).**

PCZ What computer do you play your games on?

TC I'm mostly a Mac man, but I will play on a PC – particularly Rainbow Six.

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?

TC A game called Harpoon, originally a board game designed by my friend Larry Bond. It was a naval command sim.

PCZ What's your favourite game of all time?

TC One of my personal favourites is The Colony, developed by David Smith – I like the strategic part. Now Rainbow Six is out, I'm having a lot of fun playing that as well. It may just become my new favourite! Then again, I am a little biased.

PCZ What's your favourite genre?

TC Strategy games and sims. It has to be something that really appeals to me from an intellectual standpoint, and it must be fun to play. I prefer games that make you think.

PCZ What's the worst game you've ever played?

TC You know I'm not going to answer that!

PCZ What games are on your hard drive at the moment?

TC Rainbow Six (Surely not? – Ed).

PCZ What is the appeal of computer games for you?

TC Getting involved in the conceptualisation. With movies, unless you write the screenplay, someone else is offering their vision of your work. With the games, you see a lot more of my personal creativity. The game player can directly interact with



Rainbow Six: where's Harrison, then?

the concepts, whether they bear my name or not, rather than just absorb them.

PCZ Is there anything lacking from today's games?

TC Realism. I think we're making great strides forward, but there's still a long way to go, particularly in AI behaviour. Rainbow Six has made great advances in this direction.

PCZ What do you think about multiplayer? Do you regard it as 'the next level' so to speak?

TC I don't know if I would call it the "next level", but it sure is a lot of fun. I find it encouraging to see a worldwide audience playing online. It brings people together in a way that nothing else has done before, and it's always better to pit your wits against other human beings – just like in real life.

PCZ How would you like to see games develop in future?

TC More realism, fewer copy-cats, and more thought-provoking games. That is what Red Storm Entertainment is all about. (Plug over! Please! – Ed.)

restrictions placed on them. As long as publishers classify their games responsibly, there shouldn't be any problem.

PCZ What do you think of multiplayer?

IL Beating a human opponent is obviously more satisfying than beating the computer. Being able to verbally abuse a human opponent gives me great satisfaction.

PCZ What do you feel have been the most impressive examples of multiplayer games so far, and why?

IL Quake and Ultima Online have been the best – ie the most successful to date – but neither have really done it for me. Maybe I'm getting too old!

PCZ Any fears for the future of gaming?

IL I hope developers don't lose sight of the fact that the games designer is the key component of any team. While state-of-the-art technology and graphics are absolutely necessary, they play a supporting role to the gameplay. Long live the designer!

STEVE JACKSON



Job: Author/game designer; director of start-up games development company Lionhead

Claim to fame: Wrote

some of the Fighting Fantasy series;

co-founder of Games Workshop; journalist, and consultant on the likes of Broken Sword.

PCZ What computer do you play your games on?

SJ There's a PlayStation and a Saturn in the house, but the games I like playing are all on the PC.

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

SJ In the '70s, a programmer called Rob Easterby showed us a game he'd written for the Commodore PET. It was a simulation of the scene in Star Wars where Luke Skywalker flies down the trench and blows up the Death Star. I played it for hours and Games Workshop even published it.

PCZ How did your penchant for gamesplaying develop over the years?



Dune 2: still close to Steve's heart.

SJ I realise gameplay is supposed to be everything, but in the early days it was those great technological leaps forward in sound and graphics that impressed me the most. I remember seeing the Amiga 1000 for the first time – it was running a demo of Defender Of The Crown. I was gobsmacked! Full colour animated graphics! Sounds! I bought an Amiga on the spot.

PCZ What are your favourite games?

SJ DungeonMaster (Amiga), Lemmings, Civilization, Dune 2, Ultima Underworld, The Incredible Machine and Doom. If I had to choose one, it would be Dune 2 because that was the game that impressed me most all-round at the time.

PCZ What's your favourite genre?

SJ Strategy games, both real-time and turn-based. Games like Civilization, Command & Conquer, Age Of Empires and Master Of Magic. Commandos was a pretty neat variation on the theme, too. The only thing I ask for is that there must be a resource element to the game. I'm not interested in pure wargames.

PCZ What are the worst games you've ever played?

SJ Adventure games which use FMV – it's just a sales gimmick. Like Phantasmagoria. And I hate it in adventure games when you can't get the blind man to give you the banana because you didn't use the spray

can to write 'kippers' on the museum wall... you know what I mean. Very frustrating. Actually, a bit like a *Fighting Fantasy* book, now I come to think of it...

PCZ What games are on your hard drive at the moment?

SJ *Warlords 3* (playing it by email with a friend), *Dune 2000* (disappointing), *Age Of Empires* (a favourite two-player serial link game), *PGA Tour Golf* (I like golf games), *StarCraft* and *Brainjam* (an all-time favourite shareware game – a bit like *Free Cell* on Win95 but much more clever).

PCZ Why do you think games have become so popular?

SJ Contemporary computer games are audio-visual treats – as absorbing to watch as TV, but you're in control and you can play them on your own. Sadly, people are becoming less sociable for various reasons and computer games are now of such a high standard that when it's a choice of "shall I go out and play footie with the lads or fire up *Quake*?", it's a tough decision.

PCZ What do you think about multiplayer? Is it 'the next level'?

SJ No question. But it's not the revolution that everyone is talking about. I play real-time games regularly on two serial-linked machines and there's no comparison. Games are all about competition and there's nothing like playing against a friend, rather than against a machine's AI – human contact is essential. I love taking on friends in *StarCraft*, but I have no desire whatsoever to play some complete stranger in Wonga Wonga over the Internet whom I'll never see and never know.

PCZ How would you like to see games develop in the future?

SJ Internet games that work fast and feature a message window that supports 25 frame-per-second video. And everyone would have a videophone camera on top of their monitor – then you could play a game with a friend, or even a network of friends, and see/hear them as if they were in the same room.

ALEX GARLAND



Job: Author
Claim to fame: Wrote the critically-acclaimed novel *The Beach*, which is being made into a film by the lads who brought us *Trainspotting*, *Shallow Grave* and *A Life Less Ordinary*. His second novel, *The Tesseract*, can be found in a book shop near you. Go buy.

PCZ What computer do you play your games on?

AG I have an N64, PlayStation, Saturn, Megadrive, Super Nintendo and a Gameboy. I also have a 400MHz PC. I wish I'd bought the Voodoo2 card but I got the Monster 3D instead.

PCZ What's the first game you ever played?

AG *Space Invaders* in the local fish and chip shop.

PCZ What's your favourite game?

AG It could be any number, but recently *Quake II* – it's better than *Quake*, which I thought was incredible. I thought *Doom* was brilliant as well.

PCZ What's your favourite genre?

AG It would have to be driving games or shoot 'em ups.

PCZ What's the worst game you've ever played?

AG There are so many! There have been a lot of games which I thought were completely shit. PC-wise, *Broken Sword 2* is one of the worst games I've ever played in my life.

PCZ What games are on your hard drive at the moment?

AG *Quake II* and *Grand Prix 2*, which are always on there. And *Dune 2000*.

PCZ Why do computer games appeal so much to you?

AG They're a really good way of forgetting about work. If I'm talking to someone, watching TV or a film, I tend to start thinking about work sooner or later.

PCZ Why do you think games have become so popular?

AG I think games are more than just escapism. There's something about them which is genuinely really interesting. I tend to think of them as cinema must have been at the turn of the century. They have evolved so quickly and I think there's going



Quake II: sitting tenant on the Garland PC.

to be some really interesting stuff happening in the next ten years. There'll be video games that'll be treated like Scorsese films. They're pretty close to it already – some of them are stunning, particularly the more immersive ones. The best example is *Resident Evil 2* – if you can do that on a computer now, in ten years' time, there will be things that will rival cinema in terms of intensity and artistic importance.

PCZ Is there anything lacking from today's games?

AG I think the big area for improvement is characterisation and narrative – if games writers could crack that, they would really be on to something. Some have got close but it's in an incredibly limited, two-dimensional way in comparison to stuff like film and television. Maybe the new *Zelda* game on the N64 could finally crack it.

PCZ What do you make of all the

complaints about too much violence in games like *Carmageddon* and *Grand Theft Auto*?

AG *GTA* is excellent – I loved it. Just as with any media, at some point, a degree of responsibility is necessary. I've noticed that there's an attitude within the videogames community that you're seen as being prudish or stuck-up if you react against violence. That's an attitude which won't survive if videogames start getting more immersive, powerful and artistic. People will just have to start thinking about it in the same way as they do when making a film. You just have to be intelligent about it.

PCZ Have you multiplayered online?

AG Me and my friends hook up via modem regularly and play *Doom*, *Grand Prix* or *X-Wing*. Is it the next level? I don't think so. If you're going to play a multiplayer game, it's more fun if you've got four people sitting round an N64 than if you're on your own and the other person is on the other side of London.

PCZ Have you ever had an idea for a game? If so, can you pitch it to us?

AG I had one ages ago which was based around *Bladerunner*, and the game version of *Bladerunner* was pretty much how I'd envisioned it. Ultimately, though, I thought it was a crap game, so I'd better stay away from game design! ☹

TERRY PRATCHETT



Job: Author
Claim to fame: Had his first book published at the tender age of 20, and is best known for his Discworld novels. His latest, *Carpe Jugulum*, is the 23rd in the Discworld series and can be found lurking in a good book shop near you.

Also expect Discworld 3 to surface in software emporiums soon.

PCZ What computer do you play your games on?

TP PCs. My machines are primarily for working on, so they're not particularly set up as games machines. I do have a 17-inch screen, but I don't worry about graphic accelerators and stuff like that – with MMX technology now, I find I don't really need to.

PCZ What was the first game you ever played?

TP It was on the ZX81 and it had a name like *Monster Island* – it had all these ASCII characters knocking round the screen.

PCZ How did your penchant for gamesplaying develop over the years?

TP I upgraded to an Amstrad 464. Any games that were available were usually out on the Amstrad as well – such as *Elite*.

PCZ What are your favourite games of all time?

TP I always liked the *Wing Commander* series and the *Privateer*-style games. *Elite* was a bit like that – you got to trade, repair, buy and sell things, and so on. I loved the exploration in *Privateer* but I wasn't convinced by the sequel. I'm also a *Tomb Raider* fan because there's not much shooting: it's about puzzle solving and looking at the scenery, thinking: "Wow, that's great – let's go round the corner and have a look." Also, just as you think you're getting ahead, you're suddenly 30 fathoms down with a limited air supply, sharks chasing you, and you have to find a way into a ship that's remarkably like the Titanic. That level is magnificent! I loved the look of the game – you know, snow-mobiling up the Himalayas. That was a game in its own right. And that T-Rex bit in the original was a marvellous brown trouser moment.

PCZ What's the worst game you've ever played?

TP *Iron Helix*. You could have done it in ASCII on the ZX81. It had been tarted up but had no real game. Set in a maze, you had this

monster moving towards you and you had to give yourself time to get away. After a while, you thought: "I don't give a damn!"

PCZ What games are on your hard drive at the moment?

TP *Final Doom* and *Unreal*. I'm waiting for *Tomb Raider III*.

PCZ Why do computer games appeal so much to you?

TP It's a fairly high pressure way of relaxing. I play in downtime – you can't sit there writing books all day! Even with the likes of *Wolfenstein*, the appeal has always been finding new places and seeing what the next level is like. With *Wolfenstein*, it was pretty much like the one being played, but a different shape, usually.

PCZ Why do you think games have become so popular?

TP Games are better looking now.

PCZ Is there anything you don't like about today's games?

TP I don't like having to die! You have to be crushed or impaled a few times before you can work out how to get past the traps.

PCZ What do you make of all the complaints about too much violence in games like *Carmageddon* and *Grand Theft Auto*?

TP In *Quake* or *Unreal*, for example, you can blow someone away and there are arms and legs everywhere, but I see it like this: I have a life; I have something to get up for when I walk away from the keyboard. I can distinguish between what's the game and what's not. I do remember a sequence, though, in one of the *Wing Commander IV* add-on disks where you blew up a ship and in the debris was a hand tumbling over and over. That was slightly chilling because it was no longer 'let's just go and have a shoot-up'. It actually led me to write my book, *Only You Can Save Mankind*.

PCZ How do you see games developing in the future?

TP They'll probably end up in complete cockpits with three screens, better sound, seats that jump up and down and real bullets that come out of the computer and maim you. A total experience. But it's all down to gameplay at the end of the day.

PCZ Have you multiplayered online?

TP Rarely. It can be fun because it brings a whole new level to the gameplay in which the only way to survive is to work as a team: "You cover that door and I'll

look round the corner." If there's four of you, though, you should go down to the pub or go on the pull – do something real!

Terry favours *Privateer*-style games.



OBSESSED
WITH

STRATEGY GAMES

Adolf Hitler? Julius Caesar? Genghis Khan? Mere part-timers. Enter Alex Woodland, armed with a digital army of tyrannical thousands, a copy of *Civ II*... and one very tolerant wife

WORDS Adam Phillips



PHOTOS Simon Clay

CASE HISTORY

#8 THE ARMCHAIR FASCIST

NAME Trappist, aka Alex Woodland

AGE 28

LOCATION Portishead, Bristol

OCCUPATION Team leader in mortgage applications

OBSESSION Fanatical lover of strategy games

CONDITION BEGAN Back in '82 when his sister was given a Dragon 32 and a copy of that 'classic' strategy game... erm... *Tyrant Of Athens*

HISTORY OF CONDITION Obsessed Alex played the game "for years". Moved briefly on to role-playing games but realised that the possibility of a 'crotch interface' with a member of the opposite sex was highly unlikely and subsequently turned his back on such childish pursuits. Condition went into remission and he snared himself a wife. Since discovering *Civilization II* he's suffered a relapse

OUTLOOK With *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri* and *Civilization: Call To Power* on the way, *PC ZONE* is confident that Alex will be a single man again by the end of the millennium

Alex Woodland's introductory email to *PC ZONE* towers made us all sit up and take notice: "I want to gain control of every nuance of time, space, history and society by reviewing endless statistics and juggling resource management," it proclaimed. "I've watched months disappear while I try to get Babylonians on Alpha Centauri or string together a decent Cup run for Bristol Rovers. I'm a control freak, an armchair megalomaniac... pity me."

If there were help groups for people suffering from gaming disorders, Alex would be an emergency case: here's a man who embraces, nurtures, pampers and spoils his obsession for all things strategy. He knows it's bad for him, but what the hell, he loves it all the same. If Alex were a woman living in Midwest America with an obsession for food equal to his infatuation for strategy games, she'd be the 60-stone lard-ass wiping away her tears of anguish with one Michelin-sized paw, while stuffing a burger into her mouth with the other.

Unlike such sad cases of excess though, you won't find Alex blubbing into his keyboard, struggling to understand how it could all have got so out of hand. "I grew up deep in the sticks of the rural West Country," he psychoanalyses. "I used to boss other kids around in an attempt to recreate war games based on whatever I'd seen on TV - things like *The Alamo*, *Robin Hood*. They were all highly elaborate reconstructions, and I remember the frustration I felt when my fellow pupils would get bored and start beating each other up, with no thought given to finesse. So I suppose I've been an armchair fascist since infancy, really."

Perhaps this level of frustration and boredom could explain Alex's obsessive affair at the tender age of 11 with the Dragon 32, the home computer that was intended to flame-grill the Sinclair ZX Spectrum and Commodore 64, but ended up self-combusting itself out of existence.

"In 1982, my sister got hold a new game for her Dragon 32 called *Tyrant Of Athens*," Alex recalls fondly. "While staring at those rudimentary graphics, I was transformed into a hero, a ruler with near god-like powers."

This transformation into an all-powerful deity unfortunately led to the brutal butchery of his social life - after all, they always say it's lonely at the top. For the first three months, he spent every day tyrannising Athens, and



"Come, my subjects, we are about to rule the world!"

then two to three evenings a week over the ensuing years.

"That's the mind-set of a PC gaming control freak," explains the Freudian-sounding Alex. "Any normal gamer would have tired of the damn thing, but each time I played it, a new experience was offered. I would try to be a perfect leader, or a murderous bastard, or deliberately try to be as inept as possible to see how much provocation the populace would take before they rebelled. While adolescence was raging, I was ignoring my external problems by taking on my mantle of power once again."

Only after three years did his interest begin to wane. Unable to afford the luxuries of a better computer to continue his digital rampages, Alex turned to dungeon-mastering for role-playing games. But like his childhood

Alex in his bunker, from where he issues orders that will be obeyed!





“It’s an experience that real life just doesn’t offer – the combination of god-like powers with freedom of expression”

ALEX WOODLAND, AKA TRAPPIST, ON THE APPEAL OF A GOOD STRATEGY GAME

← wargames, frustration lay at every dice throw and player decision: "I wanted to shape the player's destiny in epochal encounters of legendary proportions, and used to throw tantrums when the short-sighted players *did the wrong thing every bloody time!*"

And this is where it all could have ended, where Alex could have turned his back on the delusions of world domination and returned to a normal life. He nearly made it - he stopped creating dungeons and met a member of the opposite sex, Jenny, who is now his wife (see Saint Jenny panel on page 69). And then it happened: like a nearly reformed alcoholic left in a room with a bottle of vodka, when Alex saw a review of *Civilization II* in



Alex in fine finger-pointing form as he shows his 'minions' exactly who's boss.

a friend's PC magazine the outcome was inevitable. "Before I'd finished the review," he recalls, "I'd broken out into a cold sweat. I had to have it."

Within a week, he'd blown every penny he had on a PC and a copy of *Civ II*. "From then on I've been a lost soul," he mourns.

So what precisely is the appeal of a strategy game like *Civ II*? "A good strategy title offers much more scope for variety than other genres," Alex theorises. "Just think of the limitless possibilities that *Civ II* offers: you can rage across continents, blazing a trail like Genghis Khan, or build a network of tame power bases in a highly developed infrastructure of command, like Julius Caesar. It's an experience that real life just doesn't

offer - the combination of god-like powers with freedom of expression."

He's decidedly nonplussed about the *Quakes* and *Half-Lives* of this world too: "Shoot 'em ups or sport games have always struck me as being

all this? You know, bringing up the kids, paying the mortgage, spending quality time with the wife - the usual humdrum stuff of existence that requires regular attention. Well, fortunately he and his wife don't have

"When Alex saw a review of *Civ II*, the outcome was inevitable. 'Before I'd finished reading the review, I'd broken out into a cold sweat. I had to have it'"

ALEX'S OBSESSION BEGINS TO REALLY TAKE HOLD

really limited," he explains. "You're always being forced to comply with the will of the coder. With the likes of *Civ II*, if I want to recreate the First Crusade in the shape of a bison chasing an Austin Allegro, then I can."

But where does real life figure in

children yet, and because of his job he's clued up when it comes to anything financial.

As for his other half, well, there have been problems: "It irritates her - particularly the sound effects and my tendency to cackle maniacally while



"You are under my complete control..."

FEEDING THE ADDICTION

With such a finely-tuned obsessive eye, we thought it only right to ask Alex to profile some of the past glories of strategy gaming and point out some potential future classics

PAST PERFECT



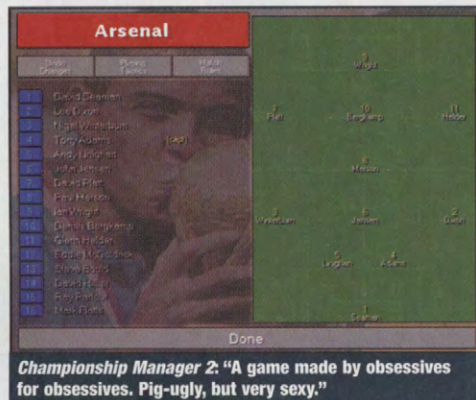
Civilization II: "The King".



① *Dungeon Keeper*: "The atmosphere is amazing! It's so wonderfully evil. I can't resist going 'Mwar, har, har!' while I'm playing it. Any game that actively encourages strategies of inventive evil should be viewed as a national treasure."



① *X-COM: Apocalypse*: "Comes close to *Civ II*. It's a deeply involving long-term challenge that rewards the effort a gamer puts into it. The attention to detail in the day-to-day operation of the city is wonderful, and the tactical scenarios give the game a whole new sexy dimension. The only criticism I can level at it is that it doesn't offer such limitless possibilities as *Civilization II*."



Championship Manager 2: "A game made by obsessives for obsessives. Pig-ugly, but very sexy."



Populous: "Old but gold. This was the blueprint."

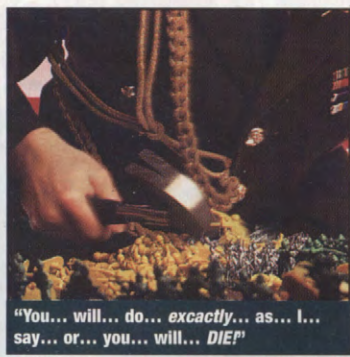


① *Total Annihilation* and real-time strategy games: "TA is one of the best games released in the last couple of years, and I've given it some real punishment. However, I realise I'm flying in the face of fashion in respect of my preference for turn-based games. These rely far more heavily on raw brain power rather than hand-eye co-ordination. Playing TA, trying to keep on top of the frantic multi-tasking, often gives me the eerie sensation that I'm back at work, which really kills the mood. Yes, I like them, but I view them in a very different light to *Civ II* - they're a visceral thrill rather than a rich and fulfilling experience."

playing," he confesses. "I try to hide it from her by playing at odd hours - it's my little guilty secret. There have been some arguments, and she has been known to try to attract my attention by parading naked around me, though on a couple of occasions even that failed."

And perhaps this is the one piece of convincing evidence that Alex, had he been born some 2000 years ago, would have made a great warmongering general. You can imagine him stooped over his war plans in Rome, drooling at the idea of world domination, while his legion of concubines waited patiently for him to join the orgy.

Unfortunately for Alex, this is Britain 1998 and he's a mortgage specialist living in Portishead. [X2]



"You... will... do... exactly... as... I... say... or... you... will... DIE!"

"WOULD YOU LIKE TO PLAY A GAME?"

"Worldwide domination is easy on ze Veb, mien Führer." And The Third Reich wouldn't be wrong - wargamers and strategists are spoilt for choice. Here are a few selected highlights



GROGNARD <http://grognard.com>

An extensive, if rather dry and crusty site which focuses mainly on board wargames. Card-based and computer wargames also get a shout. Newbies can indulge in *Battle For Moscow*, a board game that can be downloaded, printed out and played. Or stuff the dice-throwing and buy *Total Annihilation* instead.



APOLYTON <http://civilization.gamestats.com>

Massive and impressive, fans of the classic strategy series *Civilization* should look no further. With stories, maps, mod packs and profiles on all the games in the series, people like Alex should be in seventh heaven here.



WARGAMER www.wargamer.com

Computer wargames' answer to Grognard, with details, reviews, strategy guides and more on hard-core strategy titles such as *People's General*. Specialist stuff.

THE CHURCH OF THE CORPORATE WHORE

www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~woody03/

A direct view into Alex's mind. This home-made site lets the obsessed one vent his views and opinions on anything from *Watchdog's* Anne Robinson to James Ferman at the BBFC. Be warned:



The Church Of The Corporate Whore: obviously not just about strategy games.

bizarre imagery may offend some visitors. We hope.

NEWSGROUPS

- alt.games.civ2
- comp.sys.ibm.pc.games.strategic
- rec.games.board



New units can be downloaded from the many *Civ* websites to inject a new lease of life - in this case, cartoon characters. You can also download new maps - from Bosnia and Scotland, to the State of Maryland, USA.

CONQUESTS ON THE HORIZON



① *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*: "I can't decide whether Sid Meier is God or the seed of the devil, but whichever he is I want to drink deeply of his juices. I get sweaty palms thinking about this one."



Populous III: "Just how sexy can they get this looking?"



Civilization: Call To Power: "Come to Daddy!"



① *Black And White*: "If Sid Meier is God, Peter Molyneux is an archangel in fetish gear. I need this one very badly."

SAINT JENNY

How does Alex's other half live with an obsessive control freak?

They say that behind every great man there's an even greater woman. Behind Bill Clinton? Hillary Clinton, of course (we'll resist the temptation to make a Monica joke). Behind William Hague? That Fi Fi bird with the bad teeth (*That's enough crap examples - Ed*).

Needless to say our Alex is no different. Enter one Jenny Woodland, the world's most patient partner. Did she know what she was getting into when she said "I do"?

"I didn't know about the strategy games, but I did know he was imaginative to the point of losing his grip on reality from time to time. He used to scare me until we started going out. He's a control freak in his head, really. It's all a fantasy."

With his obsession for digital scheming, does she ever feel left out, perhaps just a tad unloved? "I can feel neglected when he's playing for eight hours at a time, but all it takes is a pointed comment or two to stop him. He thinks he's a dictator but he's under the thumb really."

And what advice would Jenny offer someone else whose partner is spending hours a day at the keyboard impersonating Adolf Hitler? "If your partner starts acting like this, start mentioning words like 'cellbacy' or 'divorce'. If that doesn't work, burn the computer."

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COME ON DOWN... THE PRIZE IS DWIGHT!



A day out football training with Manchester United's Dwight Yorke

Championship MANAGER 3

Championship Manager 3 will undoubtedly be the biggest football management sim ever when it is released through Eidos Interactive in February next year. It is certain to spawn an army of unfit, unwell armchair experts – sunlight-shy and pasty faced – due to its uncompromisingly addictive qualities.

In a charitable bid to combat the unfit state of a large proportion of the PC gaming community, PC ZONE, Eidos and high-brow sports label Mizuno have lined-up this exclusive competition to win a full day out training with one of the Premiership's brightest young stars: Manchester United's fleet-footed, free-scoring, big-smiling Dwight Yorke.



CM3: the biggest footie management sim ever.

Three lucky first-prize winners will be taken to Reading FC's wonderful Madejski stadium where they will spend the rest of the day knocking a ball about with Dwight and his expert team of football trainers. You don't have to be a Man Utd or Reading fanatic to enter this competition – if you're a genuine football fiend, and fancy doing something energetic, then this is surely a competition worth winning.



Reading FC's Madejski stadium: you could be on the pitch with Dwight!

QUESTION: Which national team does Dwight Yorke play for?

TIE-BREAKER: Complete the following in no more than 30 words: When I eventually get my hands on Champ Manager 3 I will...



To enter the prize draw, send your answers to the question and tie-breaker, and send them on a postcard, along with with all the other information requested, to the address below.

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

Send your entries to 'Dwight Yorke Compo', PC ZONE CPCZ991A, Customer Interface, Bradley Pavilions, Bradley Stoke North, Bristol BS12 0BQ, UK. (Closing date: Monday 11 January.)

✪ Terms and conditions: Only entries with all the questions completed and received before the closing date will be entered into the prize draw. Winners will be notified by post. No cash alternative. Prizes not necessarily as shown. No correspondence will be entered into. The Editor's decision is final. All the other usual competition rules, conditions and restrictions apply.

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PCZONE REVIEWS

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

WHERE TO CALL

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

- Activision 01895 456 7000
- Blue Byte 01604 232200
- BMG Interactive 0171 973 0011
- Core Design 01332 297797
- Cryo 01926 315559
- Crystal Dynamics/Ubi Soft 0181 944 9000
- Eidos Interactive 0181 636 3000
- Electronic Arts 01753 549442
- Empire Interactive 0181 343 7337
- Funsoft 01322 292513
- Gremlin Interactive 0114 273 8601
- GT Interactive 0171 258 3791
- Infogrames 0161 827 8000
- Interactive Magic 01344 409399
- LiveMedia 01865 247714
- MicroProse 01454 893893
- Microsoft 0345 002000
- Mindscape 01444 246333
- Novalogic 0171 405 1777
- Ocean 0161 832 6633
- Sierra 0118 920 9100
- Sold Out 0171 721 8767
- Take 2 Interactive 01753 854444
- Telstar 01932 22232
- Virgin 0171 368 2255
- ZABLAC 01626 332233

THE HALL OF SHAME

★ This is where we tell you which games we still haven't been sent for review. This means that either they're completely crap and the publishers are scared we'll pan them, or their PR machine isn't quite up to full speed. Anyway the games we've singled out for public humiliation this month are as follows:

- STREETS OF SIMCITY Maxis/EA
- BUST-A-MOVE 2 Acclaim
- UBIK Cryo
- REAH Black Friar
- LULA VIRTUAL BABE Take 2

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

We at ZONE pride ourselves on telling you exactly what we think. Our writers are the most experienced and talented reviewers in the business. They're all experts in their chosen genre and they won't pull any punches – if a game's not worth buying, we'll tell you why. But we don't leave it there. We also want to know what you think of the games that come out, which is why we've got our Feedback section on page 141. This is where you get the opportunity to get your point of view into PC ZONE. If you've got a comment to make, then we want to hear it.



DON'T BELIEVE THE JARGON

The standard spec machine these days is a P166 with 32Mb of memory – but before buying any game you need to make sure it will work on your system. Because the technical specs on packaging can sometimes be a little optimistic to say the least, make sure you check out the 'We say' bit in our tech specs box at the start of reviews. This is where we report on what we think the minimum tech specs should be. If a game runs like a tortoise on the machine listed by the publishers, then we'll tell you. All the games reviewed are tested on the minimum-spec PC as quoted on the packaging.

WHAT DO OUR SCORES MEAN?

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

PCZONE RECOMMENDED 80-89% If a game scores 80-89% it's awarded a PC ZONE Recommended award. Games that fall into this category are excellent examples of their type, and if you're a fan of the genre they're well worth buying.

70-79% Games that score in this region don't win any awards, but they're above average and well worth a look. If you're not a fan of the genre though, they will probably offer limited long-term appeal.

20-69% These games are below average and you should really only consider parting with your cash if you're a big fan of the series or genre or you see it at a reduced price.

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

REVIEWS A-Z

This month's reviews in order

NEW GAMES

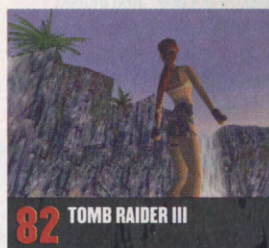
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BLOOD II

★ £34.99 • GT Interactive • Out now

If you want blood, you got it. *Richie Shoemaker* paints the town red

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3D acceleration through Direct 3D **WE SAY** With a 3D card those minimum specs are just about fine, although you'll be playing on the lowest detail setting

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

About a week before a certain game recently hit the shelves, a package arrived at PC ZONE addressed to Chris. He shook it knowingly, and by the tone of the rattling contents it was obvious to everyone that he had himself a game. Now this in itself is no unusual occurrence, considering new ZONE Editor Chris was then our Deputy Editor. So with the

ALSO CONSIDER

BLOOD (GT Interactive £39.99)

Using the Build engine first seen in *Duke Nukem*, the original *Blood* is a triumph of gameplay over graphics. Expect to see this on budget soon.

PCZ #53, 84%

JEDI KNIGHT (LucasArts £34.99)

In multiplayer games, *Jedi* is the closest relative to *Blood II* – except, that is, for the arcs of claret flying about, and limbs left twitching on the ground.

PCZ #55, 94%

HALF-LIFE (Sierra £29.99)

It's the game everyone now has to beat. Unparalleled single-player game, with some of the most incredible AI ever seen. Buy this before anything else.

PCZ #71, 95%

SHOGO: MAD (Microïds, £39.99)

Same engine as *Blood II*, and similar AI problems, *Shogo* combines traditional first-person combat with fast-paced *MechWarrior* levels. Stylish and fun, with exhilarating pace.

PCZ #71, 92%

enthusiasm he generally holds out for his credit card bills, Chris prized apart the sealed flaps and peered inside. "Ooh," he said, "*Half-Life*" (PCZ #71, 95%).

Suddenly all hell broke loose: "Where's mine?" demanded Steve. "Why didn't I get one? I reviewed the bloody thing. Look, Mallo's got one." And indeed Mallo had, the fluorescent box held aloft in cup-winning fashion. "Bastard."

I searched through the shreds of paper on my desk, hoping I might have missed a bloody great padded envelope in my morning post. Nothing.

"What are you crying about, you've both completed it," argued Chris.

"Well we haven't got a boxed copy," moaned Steve, "or a manual."

"It's a nice manual," chipped in Mallo as he flicked nonchalantly through the

accompanying booklet.

And indeed it was a nice manual. It was also Mallo's. And we wanted it. Everyone wanted it. In fact, not since *Quake II* (PCZ #59, 97%) had everyone been so looking forward to getting a copy of a game. We'd all played *Half-Life*, most of us had even finished it. The point is that up until then none of us owned a copy.

"Cheer up," said Chris, "here's *Blood II*." He handed me a CD in a grubby cardboard sleeve, followed by a photocopied manual. Just to rub salt into the wounds I had to take *Half-Life* off my PC to fit *Blood II* on. It was either that or *Quake II*. Not an easy choice, I can tell you.

Anyway, it's a choice I'm glad I made. First things first though: *Blood II* is not as good as *Half-Life* – in my opinion nothing is – although it does have a few subtle differences that set it apart, not only from *Half-Life* but also from every other first-person shooter out there. The simple rule I'm trying to state is: if you want the best, get *Half-Life*; if you simply want a great game, read on.

BUSY BODIES

Developers Monolith have been busy this past year and a half. Not only have they been hard at work

on the sequel to *Blood* (PCZ #53, 84%), they've also been developing *Shogo: Mobile Armor Division* (PCZ #71, 92%) at the same time, as well as their own LithTech 3D engine that powers both games. Such a crushing work schedule makes other developers seem positively catatonic. Epic's *Unreal* (PCZ #65, 93%) took nearly five years to complete, while Ion Storm have delayed *Daikatana* so many times that when it eventually does arrive it's in danger of looking passé next to Valve's seminal effort, itself a year overdue. Conversely, Monolith have more or less stuck to their schedule. But such strict adherence to the calendar has not been without cost. Instead of working on the game until it's finished, Monolith have opted for the 'let's patch it up later' option. Fine if you're American, but more than a pain in the arse if you have to pay BT for the privilege of downloading files that should've been there in the first place.

BRING OUT THE BRANSON

Give or take a few decades, *Blood II* picks up where the first game left off. Now in the future, the Cabal of old has developed into a worldwide organisation, Cabalco, whose purpose is to

Like the rest of the game, the creatures look and sound superb. Animation is smooth, surpassing even that of *Half-Life*

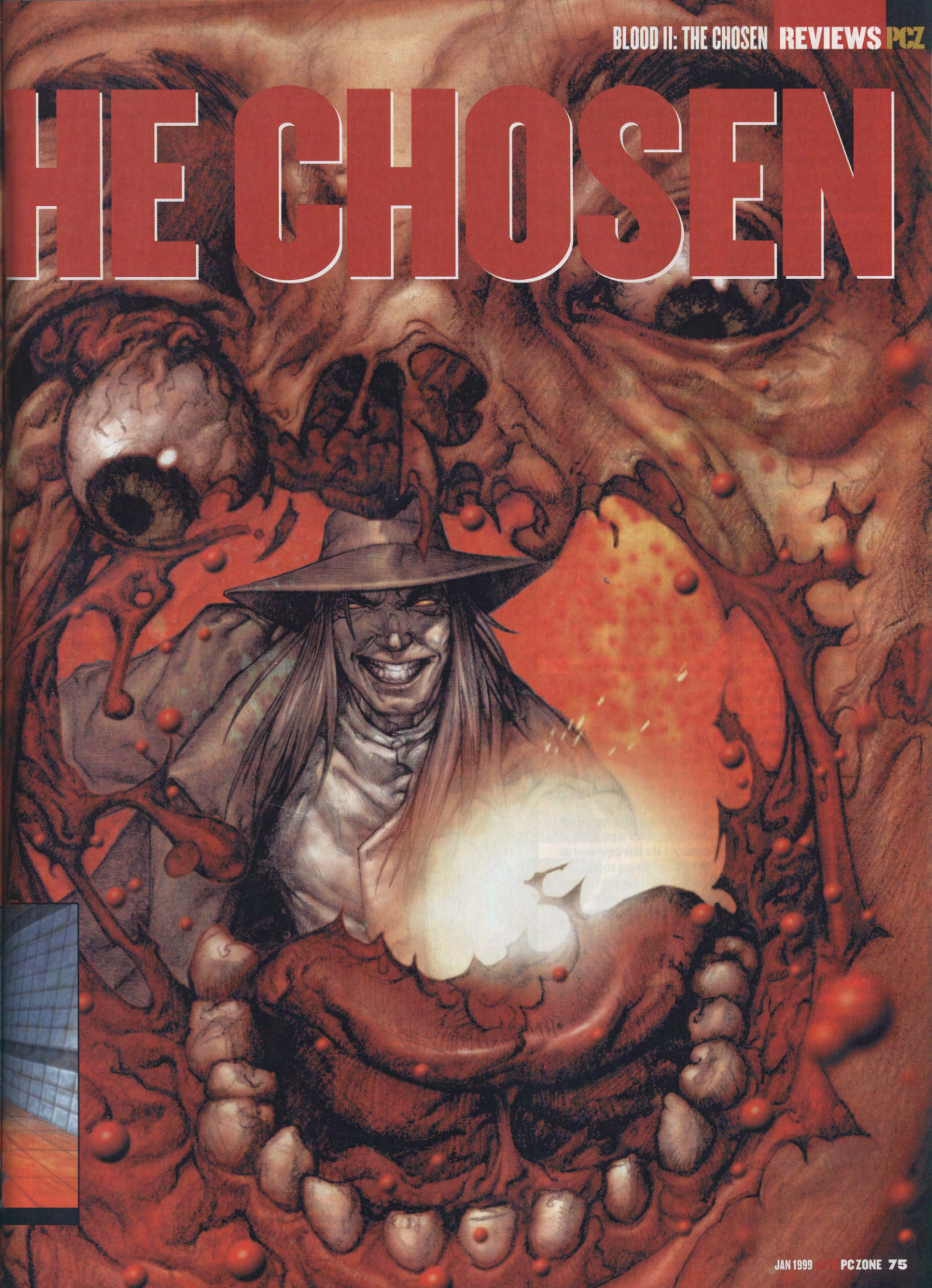


Watch out, some of the exhibits in the museum actually come to life.



Two Drudge Lords shoot their fiery load from afar.

THE CHOSEN



← serve the dark god Tchernobog, as well as make lots of money selling processed meat products to the masses. Caleb, the original anti-hero, makes a welcome return, and brings three new members to the cast list: Ophelia, Ishmael and Gabriella. Choosing one of the four Chosen, your aim is to run around the 30 or so

levels in search of Gideon (the Richard Branson of Cabalco) and eventually destroy him.

Choosing Caleb is definitely the better option for one simple reason: the entire storyline revolves around him finding and recruiting the other three members against Cabalco. Choose Caleb, and the game contains a wealth of cut-scenes that drive the story forward. Choose any of the other three, however, and the game progresses level by level without any narrative at all. Thankfully, each character is very different in both ability and in style, so unlike other games there's enough motivation to play through it more than just once.

Like the original *Blood*, a lot of thought has gone into the weapons. For one thing there are nearly 30 of them, many of which have dual modes. Favourites from the first game are back, along with an arsenal of new weapons. My particular favourite was always the sawn-off shotgun – a stalwart of every *Quake* clone perhaps, but Caleb's weapon of choice made more mess than most and always preceded a healthy dose of one-liners from the man himself. Other weapons are the flare pistol, which eventually turns the enemy into flailing torches; a voodoo doll; a sexy looking Tesla cannon; and a napalm launcher. It has to be said that the range of weapons and their effects are probably the best aspect of *Blood II*.

Ammunition for magical weapons is dealt with differently to conventional weapons. The voodoo doll, life leech and the orb use 'focus', which is gradually recharged at a rate dependant on which character you control. The current trend is towards location-sensitive shots, and *Blood II* includes them. Unfortunately though, there's no automatic weapon-switching, and the remote-switched bombs are way too ineffectual. For multiplayer games though, the range of objects and weapons – and the fact that you can alter the stats of



FIX IT

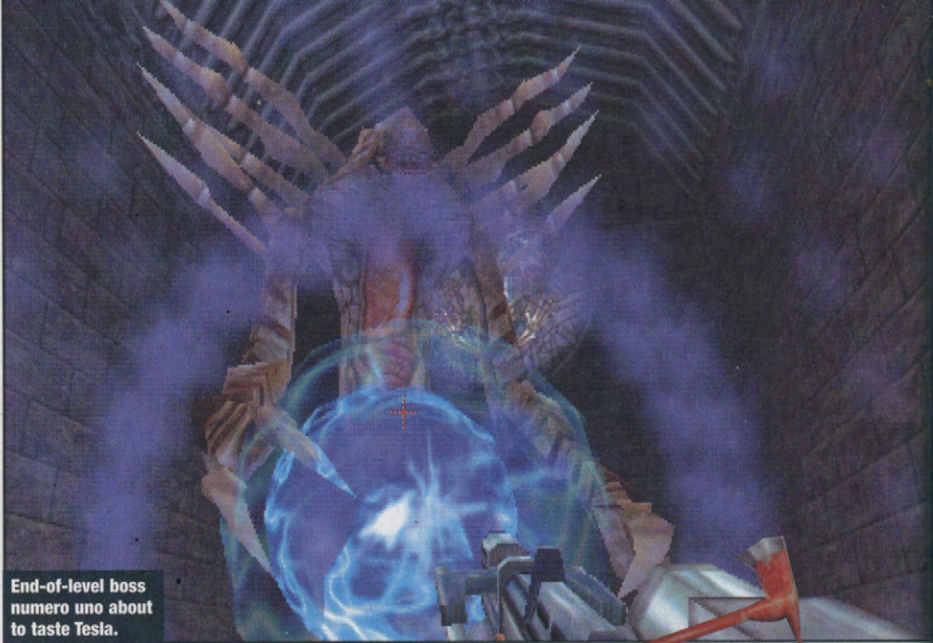
Currently unbalanced and lagging, the *Blood II* deathmatch requires serious patching up

The first patch, which should already be available, irons out a few clipping problems and adds muzzle flashes to enemy weapons. The most noticeable improvement is an increase in the number of gibbs flying about and added arterial spray.

The second patch, to be released in December, addresses multiplayer issues that have yet to be incorporated. Modem play has some serious lag, and the weapons certainly need balancing out.

Humiliation kills have also yet to be incorporated, as well as a Bloodfeud (CTF) game and a four-player co-op mode. Hopefully, when this patch is complete the deathmatch game will live up to initial expectations.

We'll try to squeeze in a report next issue (on sale Friday 15Jan), and also include the patches on our CD – if they're ready.



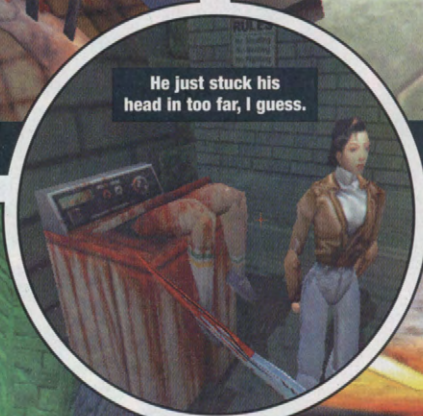
End-of-level boss numero uno about to taste Tesla.



Shikari: fast, deadly, and hunt in packs.



Now you don't really want to do that, do you?



He just stuck his head in too far, I guess.



A group of Shikari appear through a void.



Anyone in cubicle three? Not any more.

★ WALKTHROUGH

TUBEWAY ARMY

If you want to get anywhere in *Blood II*, you have totake the tube



1 First of all you have to get to the damn thing.



2 Find a seat then get attacked by some drunk with a crowbar...



3 ...which is where the flare pistol comes in handy. Hey, no smoking, buddy.



4 Suspect package? Someone's left their brain on the seat.

your character – makes for some fast-paced and highly amusing games. Maybe not quite as instantly satisfying as *Quake II*, but definitely just as diverse as *Jedi Knight's* deathmatch games, if not more so.

Like the rest of the game, the creatures look and sound superb. Animation is smooth, surpassing even that of *Half-Life*. And if

“It has to be said that the range of weapons and their effects are probably the best aspect of *Blood II*”

you've got a decent machine the real-time shadows add greatly to the effects. The AI is nowhere near *Half-Life's* standards though.

Like all games of this type, *Blood II* has the usual mix of monsters, from the slow-moving Bone Leeches to the fast-moving Shikari. Special mention has to go to the zealots, creatures whose demonic laughter and ability to phase in and out of existence makes them one of the few that can send a shiver down the spine. Shoot one and it disappears, only to fade in behind you.

Each of the four chapters that divide the missions have boss characters fitted as standard, but here they're something of an anticlimax as you strafe left and right in the usual manner, expending ammo like there's no tomorrow. They look good enough, but take away a sense of continuity from the normally well-paced story. A massive firefight with more of the standard creatures running about would have been preferable, for it's the more open areas that create the best battles.

CULT CLASSIC

Although for the most part the levels are well-designed, it isn't until about a third of the way through the game that the pace picks up. Until then there are too many corridors and small rooms, and not enough open spaces. The

distribution of weapons is also slightly awry, although the fact that you always have at least one or two weapons out of ammo makes the game more tactical. There are certainly times when you have to use your knife just to conserve ammo.

As a sequel to a criminally underrated game, *Blood II* is more than worthy. With the choice of characters and weapons on offer, there's certainly enough to keep both single players and deathmatchers (at least when the patch arrives) occupied for quite a while. Some of the graphical effects are breathtaking. And although the levels are for the most part involving and well-designed, there are two major faults that keeps this game from achieving a Classic status: the first is the lack of pace, and the second is the AI. You can thank Valve for moving the gaming goalposts. A few months ago things would have been different, and if *Unreal*, *Klingon* and *SiN* had all just arrived this month then they would also have problems scraping a Classic rating.

Simply put, *Blood II* is more of the same: more guns and more enemies. Although it's not quite as pant-browning as we would've hoped, it's a stunning achievement considering the time Monolith have had to put it together. If, like Valve, they had decided to take another year to overhaul the AI, we'd be looking at what could have been the best game of Christmas '98. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

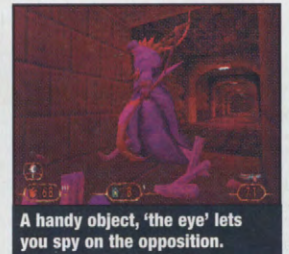
UPPERS Some stunning weapon effects • Vast array of weapons, most with two fire modes • Four characters to choose from

DOWNERS Pretty basic AI • Disappointing end-of-chapter bosses • Essentially it's not finished • *Half-Life* is better in almost every respect

88 An excellent sequel that more than lives up to its name



Save ammo by taking out Drudges with your blade.



A handy object, 'the eye' lets you spy on the opposition.



The airship level: shame you can't drop the bombs.

A TALE OF THREE SETTINGS

The software version is ugly and we wouldn't recommend playing the game without a 3D card. Here's how it looks in the various detail settings



LOW DETAIL
On a minimum system of a P133 with a 3D card, this is the best option. Anything less and it would be a tad chuggy. Files on a P200, though. Obviously won't look particularly sexy in this mode. Hey, maybe it's time to go for that upgrade



MEDIUM DETAIL
This detail setting runs perfectly on our office P233s with 64 Mb RAM, and a massive improvement on the low detail setting. We suspect this will be the setting most people will play the game on.



HIGH DETAIL
The only noticeable differences between this and the medium setting are the real-time shadows underneath each character. Because of them it can get a bit choppy in large open areas. Should run like a dream on a P300 or above.

END



5 Hello, it's a bit dark in the next carriage.



6 Night goggles show the lurking menace.



7 Another carriage, another guy in a skirt.



8 Hey, where's the bloody driver? Oh my god, we're all going to die!



9 Jumping to someone else's train – and missing.



Overall, the graphical lushness and attention to detail is quite astounding.

FALCON 4.0

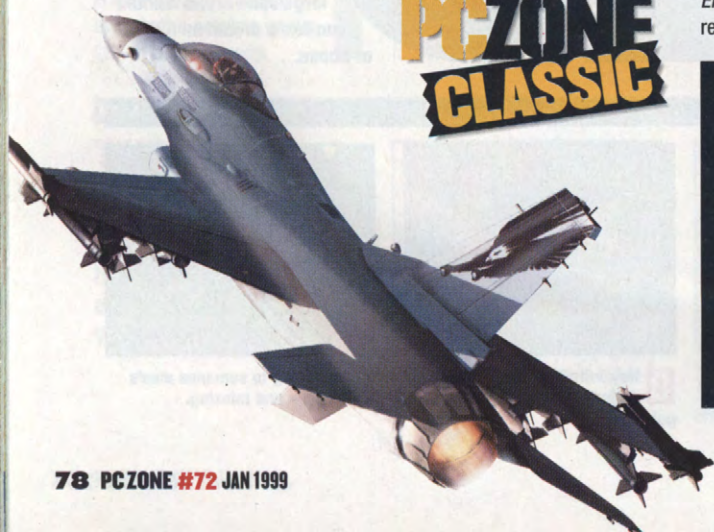
★ £39.99 • MicroProse • Out now

After what seems like years, *Falcon 4.0* is finally ready for release. Has it been worth the wait? Our man in the cockpit is **Jeremy Wells**

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx, Direct3D
WE SAY The faster your machine the better. You need a 3D card and a decent joystick for sure

**PCZONE
CLASSIC**



After three long years in the making, the latest instalment in the awesome *Falcon* series is finally here. For a long time *Falcon 3.0* (PCZ #68, 50%) was the flight sim to which all others were compared, and in many respects it was considered to be the benchmark modern-day flight sim. Since then we've had *EF2000* (PCZ #31, 97%) and, more recently, *F-22 ADF* (PCZ #60, 93%)

and *Jane's F-15* (PCZ #64, 92%), all of which have eclipsed *Falcon 3.0* in terms of graphics, design and features.

LOOKING GOOD AT 500 FEET

Previous *Falcon* sims have never been up against such impressive rivals, but that's not to say the developers have been resting on their laurels. The advent of 3D accelerator technology means there's no excuse for games

looking crap, and this applies doubly for flight sims. Unsurprisingly, *Falcon 4.0* doesn't disappoint in the graphics department – as long as you've got the kit, that is. The terrain is both varied and accurate depending on which part of Korea you're flying over, and it doesn't break up when you're skimming over the trees at 500 knots. In truth, some ground objects look a little at odds with the terrain at

THE DAY WE WENT TO WAR

Because the campaign mode in *Falcon 4.0* is dynamic, and reactive to what you and your buddies get up to in the air, it's vitally important to the war effort that you do as you're told and complete your mission come what may. Mess up, fly off course or get to the target area late and there'll be hell to pay!



I Hi there, big guy! Sorry I'm late. Got any missions for me?



Look closely and you can see the cockpit reflected in the canopy. In the heat of battle, it actually helps you orient yourself.



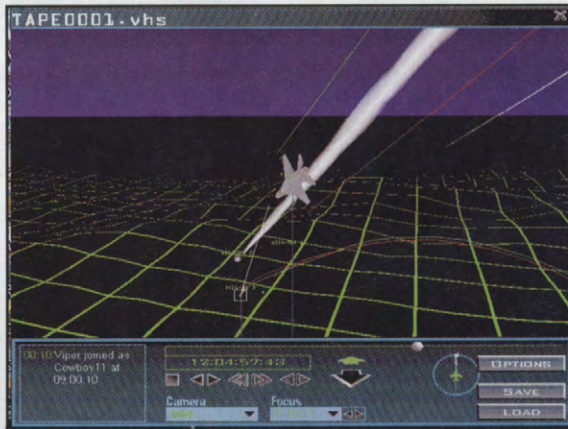
The instant action mode means you can be in the air in seconds.



The cockpit is fully functional, and you can activate every switch and knob with your mouse.



The F-16C is well-equipped to take on air-to-air and air-to-ground missions.



You can record each mission and play it back to see where you went wrong.

times, but we've yet to see a flight sim that doesn't suffer from similar problems.

As you'd expect, the cockpit is recreated in exact detail, and there's a clickable 2D mode that enables you to flick every switch and twiddle every knob using your mouse, as well as a 3D mode that lets you look around the canopy and stare at your legs. The first thing you notice when you select this mode is that everything in the cockpit is reflected in the canopy – just as it should be. It's far from annoying,

“It becomes one of the most absorbing and compelling pieces of programming you're ever likely to install on your machine”

and in fact as you become familiar with the layout it actually helps you orient yourself when you're in padlock mode or in the heat of a dogfight.

All the usual camera modes are in evidence, and the external views confirm that the developers have really gone to town with the aircraft detailing: you can actually see the afterburners open up for extra thrust, the air brakes and flaps move, and your pilot smiling in the cockpit. There's plenty of lens flare too when the sun is shining, and realistic fluffy clouds when it's not. There's also a rather cool 'action cam' that neatly jumps from one action point to another as your mission progresses, and is compulsive

viewing as you sit in the cockpit on your way to the target area.

Thankfully, all the detailing is scaleable, so if you haven't got a ninja-bastard machine you can at

least set about finding a compromise between graphical nicety and frame rate. On a P166 with 32Mb of RAM and no 3D card, it's just about playable; on a P2-266 with 64Mb of RAM and dedicated 3D hardware, it's really rather special.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are many ways to play *Falcon 4.0*, and thankfully you can toggle the level of realism to make it as easy or as difficult as you want by adjusting the numerous flying aids. There's Instant Action, which sticks you in the air with enemy who just keep on coming; Tactical Engagement, which includes 30 progressively difficult training scenarios, from simple take-off to more difficult flame-out landings and mid-air refuelling; Dogfight enables you to see how good you are against a specific enemy, as well as a pretty

comprehensive multi-player facility (see Multiplayer Ecstasy boxout on page 80). As well as flying specific missions, you can design your own using the scenario editor, and even create your own campaigns by stringing several scenarios together. These can then be saved and given to your mates, or stuck up on the dedicated *Falcon 4.0* website for all to play.

Thankfully, MicroProse have had the foresight to include a campaign mode in the initial release of *Falcon 4.0*, instead of cashing in on hapless punters by releasing it separately at a later date. Set in Korea, you can start at any of three progressively difficult stages (the first being the easiest). And as it's dynamic in structure, anything can and will happen after the first day, depending on how you and your chaps perform. You can choose to fly any mission on offer at

ALSO CONSIDER

F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR (Ocean/DID, £39.99) The full-price 'new' version of DID's masterpiece has been deemed a rip-off by many who already own *F-22 ADF*, but you can't ignore the fact that it's one of the best modern-day combat sims available. **PCZ #68, 95%**

JANE'S F-15 (Electronic Arts, £39.99) A heavyweight sim for propeller heads who like their flight sims big and meaty. It's not exactly what you'd call accessible, but persevere and you won't be disappointed. **PCZ #64, 92%**

US NAVY FIGHTERS GOLD (Electronic Arts, £39.99) May be looking a little dated now, but this pack represents excellent value for money and doesn't require the ninja hardware capability that more recent sims demand. **PCZ #22, 90%**



2 Can't see anyone around here. The boss said this was a really important mission, but no one's turned up. Typical!



3 I'm bored. I think I'll blow up that bridge.



4 Where is everybody? Anyone would think they don't trust me or something. I know, I'll skim some stones till somebody turns up.



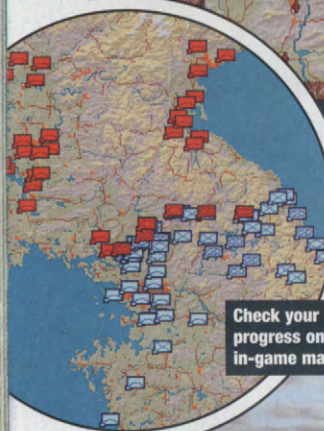
5 Right, if nobody's up for a bit of action I'll try to land.



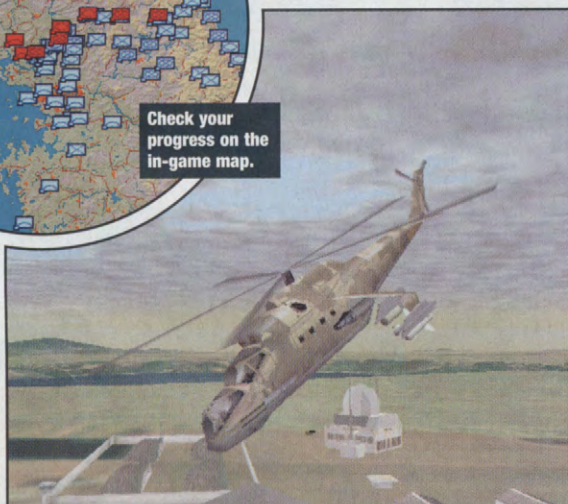
6 Sod this landing lark, it's just too difficult. I'll blow up the runway instead, then they'll have to come and play with me!



The scenario builder enables you to build your own missions and select exactly which aircraft are involved.



Check your progress on the in-game map.



There's a tactical reference guide that outlines all the weapons and vehicles involved in the conflict.

MULTIPLAYER ECSTASY

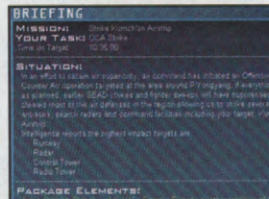
Shooting CPU-controlled targets is all well and good, but you just can't beat the thrill of sending a chum falling to earth in a ball of flames. *Falcon 4.0* is designed to cater for as many players as your LAN can manage, as well as for Internet play. You can either indulge in a little fur-ball fun, or try team play to see how you and your buddies compete with the best of 'em. As with the rest of the game, just about everything is customisable, and you can select your own aircraft skins and even make it a guns-only affair. You can also try out your skills online by dialling into www.falcon4.com. Unfortunately, the site wasn't up and running at the time of writing, but the developers reckon it's going to be pretty cool and full of new missions that like-minded *Falcon 4.0* addicts have designed and which you can download.



You can change the skins of your aircraft so you know who's who.



Missions are flown simultaneously, so it's not uncommon to see other friendly aircraft going about their business.



Constant radio chatter helps to convey the impression that there's a war going on once you've taken off.

A WEIGHTY TOMB INDEED

Flight sims usually come with weighty manuals, but the paperwork that comes with *Falcon 4.0* is quite overwhelming

With the *Falcon 4.0* package, not only do you get a map of the conflict area (North and South Korea) and a quick-start guide that gets you into the air with the minimum of fuss, there's also a rather weighty user manual that explains in precise detail how the F-16C's weaponry, radar and systems work.

Co-written by F-16 pilots, it's an amazing and quite absorbing read that covers just about everything you'd ever want to know about the game/sim: how to fly the aircraft, its history and capability, and the North/South Korean conflict.

It's almost 600 pages (yep, you did read that correctly) and weighs approximately the same as a small child. Is it really necessary? Well, it depends on how you look at it. If you're a total prop head, then you'll probably get a lot out of it. If you're not, then you can refer to the cadet manual to get going, and use the main manual as a doorstop. If you want to play it as a full-on sim, however, you just can't do without the manual. The F-16 is a complicated piece of kit, and you need the flight manual to understand how it works and what it's capable of.

that time, and as the timing is often crucial it's imperative that you don't mess up. For example, one mission might involve three packages: one team goes up to clear the flight path, the second goes in and bombs the target, and then the third brings up the rear to photograph the damage to the target area. Arrive late and you risk messing up the whole mission and potentially causing irreparable damage to the war effort. You can dive into a mission at any time, even during flight, and also let the computer AI take over at any stage. In practice, the tactical side is best left to the CPU AI, but you can take control yourself if you wish. In fact, you can even choose not to fly at all, and just concentrate on deploying your forces at the right time and in the right places and play it like a RTS game.

JUST LIKE THE REAL THING

What impresses most here is the overwhelming feeling that you're really inside the conflict and playing a part in the war. Fail to complete your mission successfully and take out that bridge, and the enemy ground forces advance. Ignore those enemy fighters while you're on your way to bomb a nuclear power station, and you could get back to your base to find it levelled to the ground. Dawdle too long on the runway, where there

are always aircraft waiting to take off and land, and you'll incite a rude comment from the tower. When you're flying a mission, it's not uncommon to see plenty of action going on around you, on the radar and on the horizon. You really get a sense that there's a war going on and that you're a part of it, but at the same time you never feel as though all the action is centred on you. If you do well, then you can actually help change the course of the war. Unlike with many other flight sims, you actually feel as though you can make a difference.

LET'S FLY

It's important to point out that in many ways *Falcon 4.0* is not a game, but rather a full-on, hard-core simulation, and you really do have to learn how to fly the F-16C and use its various weapon systems in order to get the most out of it. Once you do, it becomes one of the most absorbing and compelling pieces of programming you're ever likely to install on your machine.

Thankfully, because it's so scaleable it's pretty accessible to even the novice, but even on the lowest realism setting it still takes time to get to grips with. Once you've grasped the basic principles and controls, it's possible to progress through a campaign, reducing the number of flying aids as you become more

proficient. Once you're confident you know what you're doing you can start again. And because the campaign is dynamic, chances are it'll be quite a different experience, which means there's massive potential for replay value.


On the down side, the training mode could be a little more helpful, but if you don't mind referring to the rather weighty manual then there's little at issue here. It would also be nice to be able to save your progress mid-mission, though this is understandably difficult due to the dynamic nature of the game.

Flight sims always seem to score highly, because in many ways they represent the cutting edge of PC technology. And *Falcon 4.0* is no exception. It is quite simply a breathtaking game (if you can call it that), and one that flight sim fans will ignore at their peril. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS** Superbly detailed • Instantly accessible and scaleable • Excellent dynamic campaign mode
- DOWNERS** You can't save mid-mission • Pretty steep machine specs • Training mode could be better

95 What *Falcon* fans have always wanted



We're searching for the
purest love. Surely all
men and women can come
together as a family?
Yes, we can live
without the
violence and war. We can
learn to live in peace
with all our
brothers and sisters.

Suck on this!



WARCASM
ANYTHING ELSE IS JUST FAKING IT





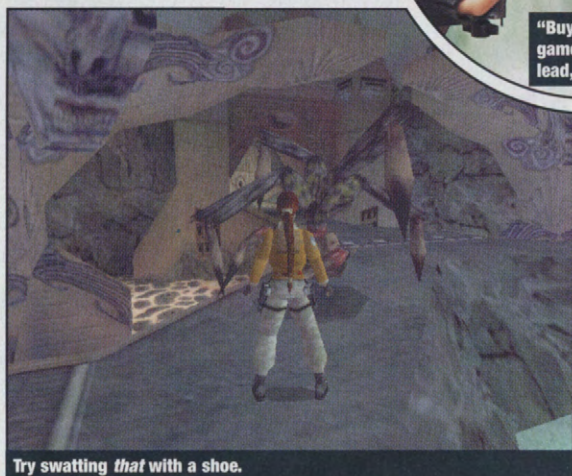
Nice hair.



"Buy my third game or eat lead, sucker!"



If the polygon count was higher you might be able to make out a few spider's legs or something.



Try swatting *that* with a shoe.



One big bird meets another big bird.

★ £34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

Lara's back again. But should you really give a flying one? Charlie Brooker hacks through the jungle of apathy and discovers that... this... game... is... good

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb **SUPPORTS** Most major 3D cards **ALSO REQUIRES** Quad-speed CD-ROM drive **WE SAY** 32Mb RAM, 3D accelerator recommended; with a 3D card you can get away with a P133

PCZONE CLASSIC

Christ, we'd forgotten how *annoying* the *Tomb Raider* games are. They're enough to drive you mad. Really. We haven't hurled abuse at the screen with such frequency and

ferocity since the last series of *Celebrity Ready Steady Cook*. Can anyone name a more frustrating series of games? It's a wonder Lara Croft commands the kind of stellar celebrity she does when you consider how much hard cheese you're force-fed at every stage of every level. It doesn't let you down gently, it punches you as hard as it can, smack on the nose. Miss a jump and you don't just have to run back and try it again, you have to sit back and

ALSO CONSIDER

TOMB RAIDER (Eidos Interactive, £14.99) The first game in the series is now available on budget and it's still a cracking play – especially if your PC can't handle many of today's high-falutin' releases.

PCZ #45, 95%

LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE II (EA Classics, £14.99) An absolute must-have, and it's out on budget. More of an adventure game than *Tomb Raider*, but the ultra-fiddly platform game elements are similarly compelling.

PCZ #21, 93%

DEATHTRAP DUNGEON (Eidos Interactive, £34.99) It doesn't have the narrative, the level design or... well, many of the other *Tomb Raider* strengths, but it's good fun for a while. Now *there's* some faint praise.

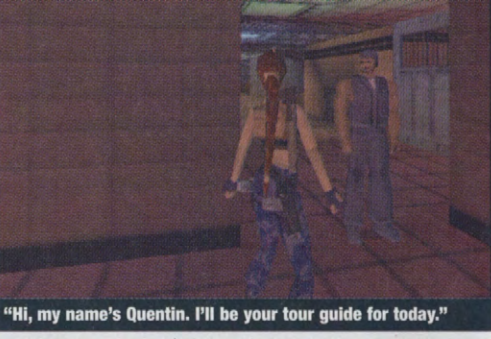
PCZ #65, 70%

TOMB R

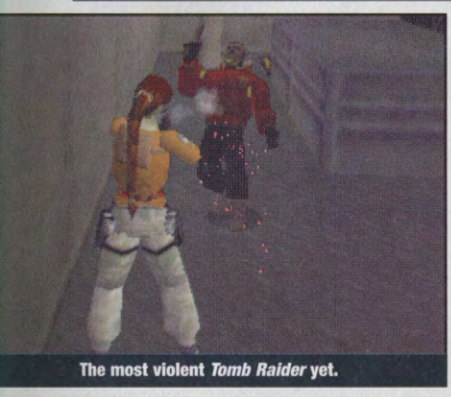


“At it’s core *Tomb Raider III* may be an old game, but by *piss* have they given the surface a polish”

RAIDER III

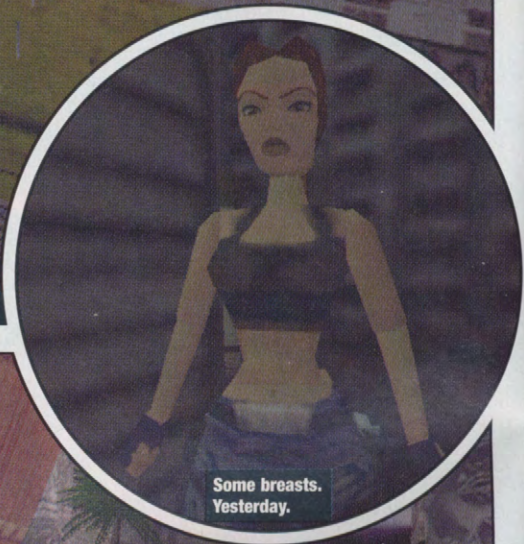


"Hi, my name's Quentin. I'll be your tour guide for today."

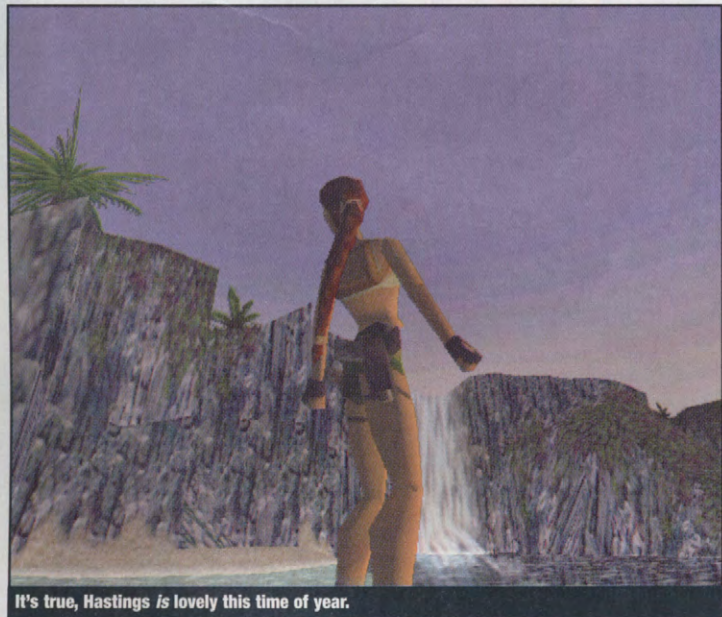


The most violent *Tomb Raider* yet.

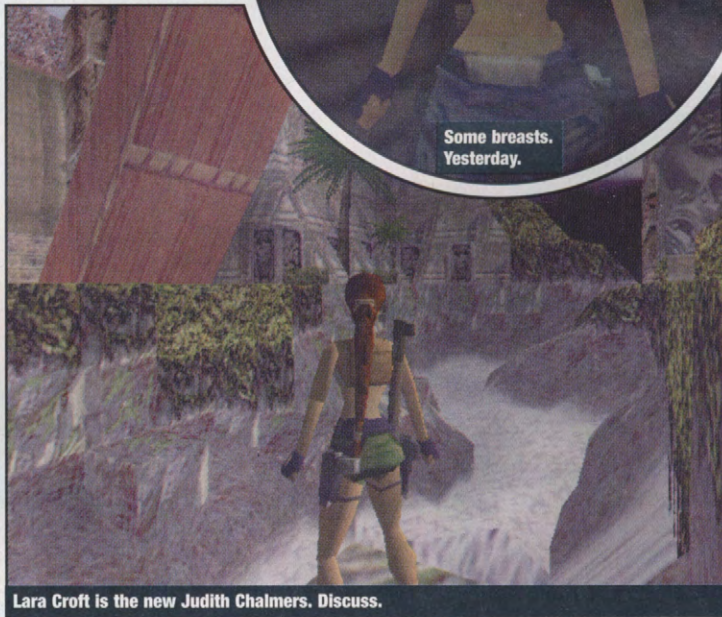
Lara hops across the rooftops of old Lahndahn Tahhn in one of the best stages.



Some breasts. Yesterday.



It's true, Hastings *is* lovely this time of year.



Lara Croft is the new Judith Chalmers. Discuss.

watch as Ms Croft breaks every bone in her body or gets skewered on a huge row of spikes. And then you reload and try again. And again and again. And again. And before long you're swearing out loud each time you mess things up. And grinding your teeth and clenching your fists. The game slowly reduces you to a shivering coil of concentrated rage. And this is *popular*? The reward's the thing, of

course. When you finally make it—that moment when Lara clears the gorge or dodges the boobey trap; makes it to her destination without falling victim to some sudden, hideous misfortune—you feel *good*. You have *achieved*. You are *the man*. Of course, the sad reality away from the screen—that you're fat, spotty, elbow-deep in mouldering pizza boxes, pitied by friends and shunned by neighbours—tends to puncture

the bubble of inflated self-esteem within seconds. So you go back for more. You keep playing and playing, like some sick junkie. In real terms, of course, you are achieving absolutely nothing; you're slumped in front of a monitor, pushing buttons like a lab monkey. But somehow you just can't give it up. The damn thing's stolen your concentration. And therein lies the power of the *Tomb Raider* trilogy.

THREE!

Yes, trilogy. Lara's notched up her third adventure. *Tomb Raider III* is here and it's... well, it's like *Tomb Raider* (PCZ #45, 95%) plus *Tomb Raider II* (PCZ #57, 94%), really. Which should please the mathematicians no end. It's several years since the first episode introduced Ms Croft to a slaving, slack-jawed gaming populace, and if truth be told not that much has changed since

then. *Tomb Raider* was clearly ahead of its time; *Tomb Raider III* is just as clearly behind its time. Not miles behind, but a fair distance from the likes of *Half-Life* (PCZ #71, 95%) or the upcoming *Galleon*. After all, *Tomb Raider III* has been developed for the PC and PlayStation simultaneously. A couple of years ago the PSX was where it was at: it had smooth and sophisticated 3D that put PCs of the day to

shame. Now it's switcheroo. With outstandingly fast systems on sale at absurdly low prices, the PC games of today *rock bells*; and they look better than N64 titles. PlayStation games seem increasingly samey, all melding into one technically antiquarian whole, just as Megadrive games did before them.

But if you want to make any money, writing games for the Sony platform is a must. Therefore, the programmers on *Tomb Raider III* had to ensure that every level, every enemy animation, every AI routine could squeeze inside the PlayStation's limited mind as well as the PC's superior one. Which is why this game isn't state-of-the-art.

So it's not going to blow your socks off. Well boo bleedin' hoo. It's still a good game. The other advantage, of course, is that you don't need a PC fresh off the shelf to run it – a P133 with a 3D card should handle things nicely. Which is music to the ears of thousands of low-spec gamers.

ATTENTION TO DETAIL

At its core *Tomb Raider III* may be an old game, but by *piss* have they given the surface a polish. Decent lighting effects, weather, a rounder backside for Lara... The whole shebang looks about 30 per cent better than the 3Dfx version of *Tomb Raider II*. Which is no mean feat.

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

Another important change from the other *Tomb Raider* games is that you now get to decide which section to tuck into next. Once you've cleared India, you're presented with a globe and a choice of tackling either the South Pacific, London or the Nevada Desert. Once your decision's been made, you're locked into it (you can't do half of London and then decide to go back and do Nevada. That would be silly), but it's nice to be given the choice. Another stage, Antarctica, appears once those other three have been completed. And once you've finished that? Aha... well... that's for you to find out, isn't it? (Does that mean you don't know? – Ed.)

There *are* cracks in the façade (for example, the opening Indian jungle section feels disappointingly boxy and contrived), but on the whole there's far more scope and *variety* of levels than before. The Nevada desert *looks* like the Nevada desert (actually it looks more like Utah or Arizona, but let's not fall out over State lines); Antarctica is a pile-up of blizzards and icebergs; and the London Underground section is surprisingly authentic (right down to the ever-present threat of violence). The stages are larger than before too, and are packed with more hidden areas, architectural red herrings and ugly surprises than ever before.

We'll admit this all comes as a bit of a surprise. When we heard *Tomb Raider III* was being fashioned by a different team to the people responsible for the first two games, we were... well, *doubtful* about what the merits of the final release might be. An early visit to Core Design's offices in Derby didn't shed much light on things either – Lara's world was still being 'built', and much of what we saw consisted of our heroine scampering around a world of textureless cubes and triangles. The most significant thing about *Tomb Raider III*, it seemed, were the new costumes and the way Lara's ponytail swayed in the wind.

But we wuz wrong. The new team have clearly worked their arses off despite a tightening deadline, and have bettered the first two games as a result – an almost superhuman achievement when you consider how cleverly designed *they* were. Lara's new team should clip this paragraph out, blow it up to 300 per cent on the office photocopier, pin it on the wall and use it as ammunition when negotiating a pay rise. Or some time off. Or some cake.

SAVE AND SOUND


Level design aside, there are other pleasant surprises: the savegame system, for instance. Yes, it's *deathly dull* on paper, but it makes a big difference to the way the game plays, so it's worth discussion. For a bit.

In *Tomb Raider* you had to save your position at special 'save points'. This was a pain in the arse because there weren't enough of them; you often found yourself having to go back and cover acres of infuriatingly tricky terrain each time you messed up. In *Tomb Raider II*, Core relented and let you save the game at



absolutely any time. This was also a pain in the arse, because the temptation to save your position after every single jump was too great, and detracted from both the game's difficulty level and your sense of involvement. For *Tomb Raider III* they've got it just right: you collect savegame 'crystals' which can be used at any time during the game, but since they're limited in number you need to ration them carefully. Result: the right balance between tension and playability.

OH, AND THERE'S THIS WOMAN IN IT

Finally, of course, there's Lara herself. She's got new costumes (a different one for each stage this time). She's got new moves (including a vaguely pornographic down-on-all-fours crawling motion). She makes more attractive groaning noises. She drives more vehicles (kayaks and quad bikes). She dies in more hideous ways. And her ponytail sways in the wind.

That makes her a more valid superstar than, say, Sandra Bullock. Lara deserves the box office. We still love her. We're sure we shouldn't, but we do. 

PCZ VERDICT

-  **UPPERS** The savegame system • Doesn't need top-of-the-range kit
-  **DOWNERS** Nothing outstandingly new • A bit behind its time

91 Nothing outstandingly new, but this is the best *Tomb Raider* yet

LOVE AND SILVER SERVICE

The latest in an occasional series of short novellas based on in-game screenshots



Lara's new range of moves heralds the dawn of a new age of borderline pornographic screenshots such as this.

"Your tea, ma'am," murmured Jeeves as he shuffled into the bedroom, his eyes fixed upon the silver tray he held before him. His bones were old and his hands were shaky, but as ever Jeeves focused his concentration and the tray remained steady – steady enough to prevent the china teacup from rattling in its saucer and the lid of the metallic teapot from clattering against the rim.

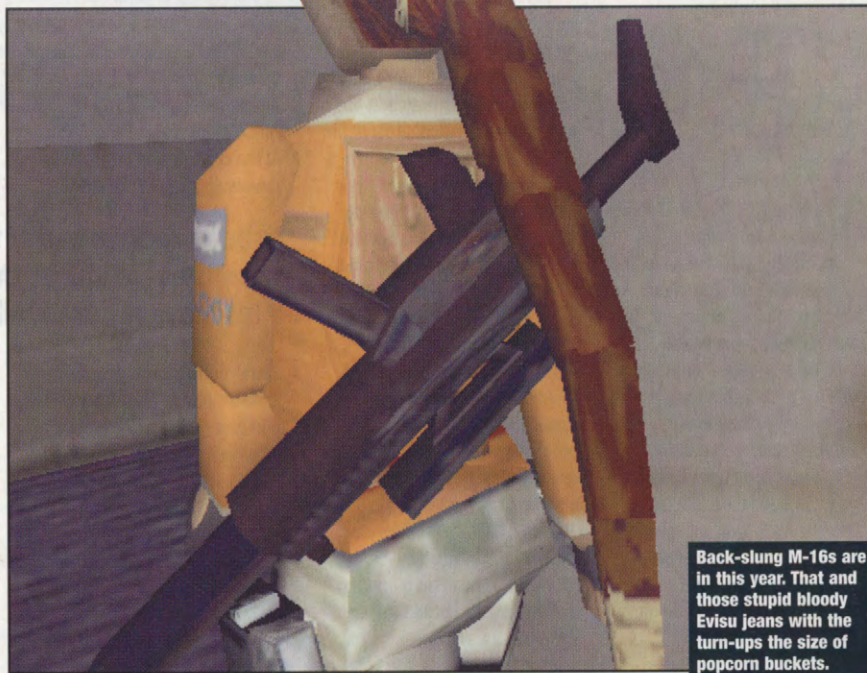
Jeeves had been in the service of the Croft family for more than 50 years. Always steady, always silent. Jeeves never smiled nor frowned. He simply performed his duties with solemn grace, reliably invisible and inaudible. The ideal butler, reasoned Jeeves, must glide from task to task like a ghost without ever drawing attention to himself. And this he did.

Today was Jeeves' seventy-fifth birthday. He hadn't mentioned it himself, of course, but Lara knew the date – December the fifteenth. At the turn of the year she had circled it in her travelogue-cum-diary and contemplated a suitable gift. After weeks of fruitless speculation, it came to her: Jeeves was a lonely old goat. His wife had died in 1948 and he had never remarried. Perhaps Lara could do something to cheer him up.

"Here, by the fireplace," commanded Lara.

Jeeves dutifully floated closer, his eyes fixed on the tray. He didn't notice as Lara slid to her knees.

The fire crackled. The room was warm. The lid of the silver teapot began to rattle like rain on a tin roof. "I've found it!" announced Lara happily, as she produced Jeeves' long-lost wedding ring. "Gee, thanks," said Jeeves.



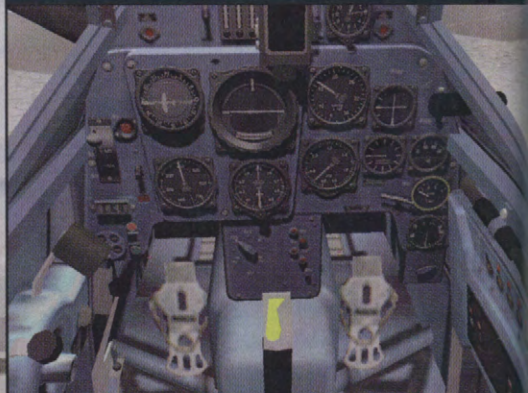
Back-slung M-16s are in this year. That and those stupid bloody Evisu jeans with the turn-ups the size of popcorn buckets.



The skies are usually pretty full. But too many aircraft on screen at one time means the frame rate suffers.



The Battle of the Bulge commences. "Fire!"



The cockpits have been recreated in exact detail.

ALSO CONSIDER

COMBAT FLIGHT SIM (Microsoft, £39.99) Instantly familiar to *Flight Simulator* fans, but ultimately it lacks atmosphere and fails to leave a lasting impression. **PCZ #71, 79%**

EUROPEAN AIR WAR (MicroProse, £39.99) Puts the emphasis firmly on accuracy and realism, but still remains accessible. Totally scaleable, with strong graphics and feature-laden missions, it's a game you'll come back to. **PCZ #71, 87%**

FLYING CORPS GOLD (Empire Interactive, £29.95) Now pretty dated, but worth picking up on budget, especially if your machine is not state-of-the-art and you prefer to do your dogfighting at around 80mph. **PCZ #59, 92%**

PCZONE CLASSIC

It's somewhat odd that after going so long without any commendable World War II combat flight simulators there's now a deluge of decent contenders available – or soon to be available – for the PC. Maybe it's got something to do with the introduction of 3D accelerator card technology – suddenly you don't have to be flying at 30,000 feet at 500mph for the terrain to look acceptable. Dedicated 3D hardware enables you to fly much lower and slower without the terrain breaking up. Presumably, as we see the hardware get even faster and

JANE'S WORLD

★ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

It's now EA's turn to enter the WWII combat sim field. *Jeremy Wells* is our man wearing the white silk scarf

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx Glide and Direct3D compatible **WE SAY** 3D card and more RAM required to keep the detail and frame rate acceptable. A decent joystick is highly recommended

cheaper, you won't be able to move for World War I flight sims. Guess we'll have to wait and see.

We've already had Microsoft's and MicroProse's entrants into the World War II combat flight sim arena (see Also Consider panel left), and it's fair to say that both games are aimed squarely at the serious sim market. Both have a lot to recommend them in their own right, though to be fair the campaign mode in *European Air War*, along with tidier graphics, gives it the edge over *Combat Flight Simulator*.

ALLIES OR NAZIS

So where does Jane's *WWII Fighters* fit in? Formerly known as *Jane's Fighter Legends*, it's been developed by the same people who gave us *Top Gun: Fire At Will* (PCZ #37, 92%), a modern-day combat jet sim which successfully blended gameplay that cocked it's hat to the less serious flight sim fan, with lush graphics and attention to detail.

In many ways, *WWII Fighters* follows the same premise, though this time around you get to fly seven different accurately modelled aircraft and take part in a branching campaign flying for either the Allies or Nazis. The emphasis, however, is firmly on dogfighting, and your skill in the cockpit – as opposed to developing a linear plot line

“Undoubtedly one of the best-looking flight sims available for the PC and certainly one of the most accessible”

and everything – is geared towards making this as realistic and enjoyable an experience as possible.

SOUND AND VISION

The graphics are quite simply state-of-the-art, and take full advantage of the latest 3D Glide technology. As you'd expect, the aircraft are modelled in exact detail, as are the 3D cockpits of

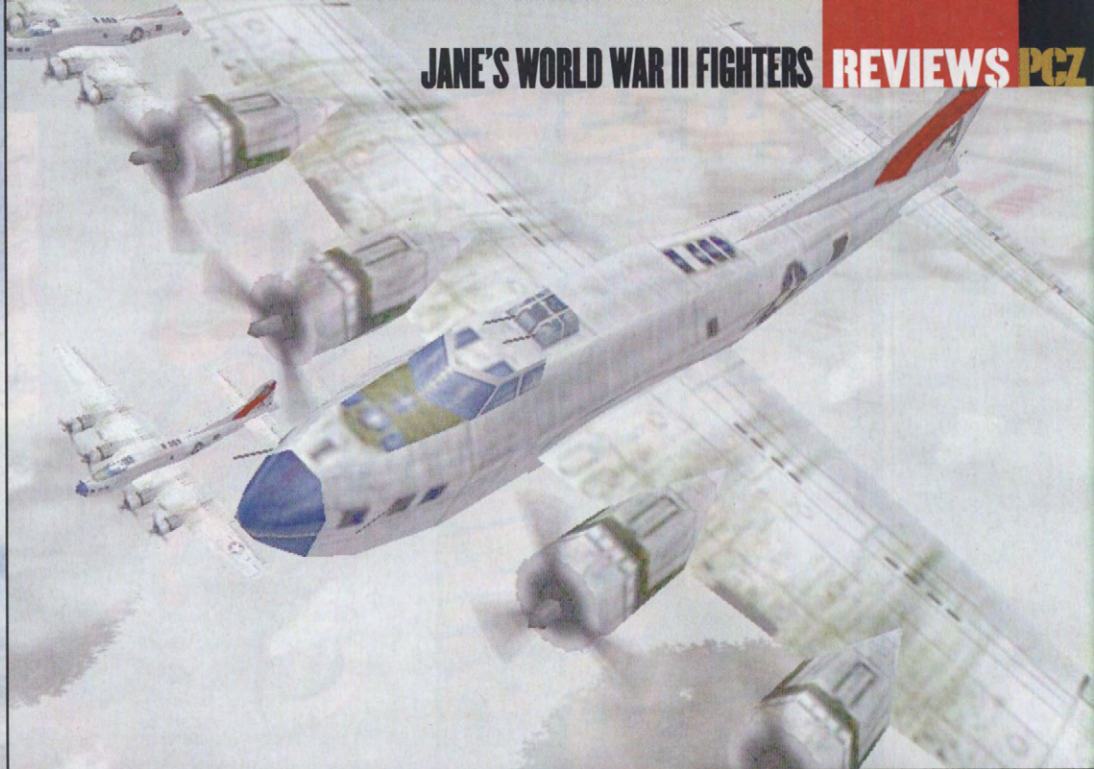
the seven aircraft that you can fly. All the usual camera modes are available, and although it's not recommended that you select an external camera in the heat of battle, it's worth checking it out during quieter moments to marvel at the level of detail: when a plane is hit you can actually see bits break and fly off, followed by debris and plumes of smoke; spent cartridges drop back to earth as the aircraft swoop and dive in flight; transparent clouds and cool lighting effects really help create an atmosphere – something that's so clearly lacking in Microsoft's *Combat Flight Sim*. The radio chatter, sound effects and music also go a long way to heightening the overall atmosphere.

On the down side, at low level the terrain does start to get a little sad, and because of the way it's drawn it sometimes looks a little at odds with the objects and buildings that are set within it, but this has more to do with the way 3D cards work than with poor programming. There's also a tendency for the frame rate to plummet when there are a lot of aircraft in the sky. But overall it's

got to be one of the best-looking flight sims we've ever seen. And because it's scaleable, it is possible to get an acceptable frame rate on an entry-level P166, although you're not really doing the game justice if you haven't got a 3D card.

As well as the branching Battle of the Bulge campaign mode, there's a training mode that takes you through the basics such as taking off and landing, through to more complicated manoeuvres and dogfight techniques. As well as an instant action Fly Now option and the opportunity to fly single missions, there's also the facility to customise existing missions and construct your own. In addition to deciding what you fly, you get to decide how many aircraft are involved, where the mission takes place and what the overall objectives are etc, and this gives the game a high replay value.

If you've got access to a network or the Internet, you can test your mettle against 'real' opponents or see how you perform when flying alongside human wingmen. However, the fact that the Janescombat.net server is US-based means you can expect to compete with some pretty serious lag as well as some shit-hot Yanks, depending on the speed of your connection. It's worth checking out nevertheless.



Die! Die! Die, you Yankee scum!

The aircraft models are extremely detailed, as this shot shows.

WAR II FIGHTERS



Got him. I'm veally, veally good at this dogfighting lark.

Unfortunately the terrain gets a little sad at low level. Nice sky though, eh?

Just check out those transparent clouds.

LOOKING GOOD

It may be up against some stiff competition, but *Jane's World War II Fighters* is undoubtedly a very playable and enjoyable flight sim. Scaleable flight models and detail levels make it accessible to both the novice pilot and the propeller head who isn't fortunate enough to own the latest ninja kit, and there's certainly enough in there to keep the serious flight sim buff happy. The virtual museum-style presentation makes for an attractive way to get information across and set the scene.

The lack of a true dynamic campaign plus the cosy recollections of World War II fighter pilots may not appeal to everyone, but *Jane's World War II Fighters* is undoubtedly one of the

best-looking flight sims available for the PC and certainly one of the most accessible, and therefore comes highly recommended. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Great graphics • Instantly accessible • Fly for either side • Excellent presentation and atmosphere

DOWNERS The campaign mode could be better • More aircraft would be nice • Tendency for jerk-o-vision when the skies get busy

90 Pretty, involving and fun



What a wonderful sight.



THE ULTIMATE MOTORBIKE RACING SIMULATION

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POWERSLIDE

★ £39.99 GT • Interactive • Out now

Combining *Craig Vaughan's* dubious driving with indestructible cars was never going to produce poetry in motion

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor Pentium Processor Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx and most 3D cards; multiplayer over Internet and LAN **WE SAY** Try a P166 with a 3D card and 32Mb RAM

Set somewhat predictably in the future, *Powerslide* offers virtual racers the chance to compete off-road in low-slung buggy-type vehicles, chasing both the clock and computer opponents. Nine varied tracks provide scope for travelling through cityscapes, deserts, canyons and other environments.

All the cars on offer have varying attributes that influence their speed, traction and handling across diverse racing surfaces. Three race modes are available, which means that long after the one-off races have been mastered there's still fun to be had from the Championship mode and by competing for the best track times.

WHEEL POWER

The game engine is outstanding – wonderfully smooth and impressively fast. And as the dividing line between the quality of arcade games and their PC equivalents blurs further, it's impressive to note the complete lack of glitching or pop-up. Even with a full field of eight racers, the frame rate is always maintained and the visuals impress throughout.

Utilising the in-car view

provides a vomit-inducing sensation of speed, and there are many hours of fun to be had simply from trying to perfect your power-sliding technique. For the uninitiated, power-sliding involves the precise application of steering and speed while cornering. Done correctly, the result is as spectacular as it is time-saving. Push too hard on the accelerator, however, and you spin out uncontrollably and lose valuable time. Theoretically it's a simple manoeuvre; in practice it proves fiendishly difficult but superbly rewarding.

In most racing games, crashing or damaging the car would seriously reduce your chances of victory, but here it's just part of the fun because the cars are indestructible. If you manage to flip yourself over, you simply keep going, which provides ample scope for acrobatic antics, including death-defying leaps of faith, barrel-rolling and even driving along tunnel walls.

SHORT-LIVED FUN

Powerslide delivers a sound enough racing experience, but the game is let down by several glaring omissions: options to sustain damage – and perhaps even to have it affect

ALSO CONSIDER

MOTORHEAD (Gremlin Interactive, £39.99) Visually astonishing arcade racer with challenge aplenty.

PCZ #63, 90%

SCREAMER RALLY (Virgin Interactive, £39.95) Excellent handling and tough computer opposition. Ultimately let down by too few courses.

PCZ #57, 91%

performance – would have added to the drama; adjustable race lengths would have enhanced the longevity, especially if a 'last man standing' scenario was added to a Destruction Derby-type melee; and if ever there was a game screaming out for weapons, booby traps and sabotage, then this is it. As the game stands, coming first is ultimately unrewarding, because amassing points is the only incentive. Providing victors with a choice of customisable extras would have added a much needed degree of strategy to the proceedings.

If it sounds like we're moaning (*It does – Ed*), that's because the lack of imagination grates. With slightly more thought, *Powerslide* could have found itself vying for pole position in the PC racing game stakes. As it stands, it's fiendishly addictive, tough and, most importantly, fun. But it's also a 'by-numbers' clone of every other PC racer. It's a shallow and soul-less experience. Which is a shame, because the accurate physics ensure superb handling of the cars, and the 3D engine deserves a better showcase for its overtly superior talent. **PCZ**



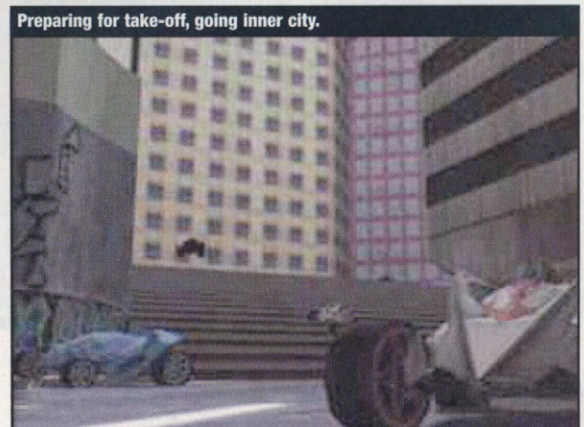
Graffiti rules, okay?



Being last drives you up the wall.



Cruising into a dark, foreboding cavern.



Preparing for take-off, going inner city.



The Antarctic conditions make racing treacherous – and more fun.

PCZ VERDICT

- ⊕ **UPPERS** Excellent 3D engine, even without 3D acceleration • It gives a marvellous sensation of speed • The cars can drive almost anywhere • Power-sliding is fun and challenging
- ⊖ **DOWNERS** Full of unoriginal and uninspired options • More tweakable extras would have provided longevity • Unrewarding racing action

78 Superb engine looking for a game

SETTLERS III

★ £34.99 • Blue Byte • Out now

It's happening again. **Steve Hill** trades day for night

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 32Mb **WE SAY** Better PCs will support higher resolutions more comfortably



Three years in the making, the third instalment of the game referred to universally as *Settlers* is finally here. So what have Blue Byte been doing since it last reared its head? Considering that the first two games sold in excess of a million copies, there's a high probability that they've been pissing money up the wall in a non-stop orgy of hedonistic delight. Then again, they are German. Whatever, they've somehow managed to create

another game capable of sucking your existence away.

But is it any good? Here's a clue: these words are being written at 6.44am in the basement of an office in the West End of London. A cleaner has just offered a nod of acknowledgement, continuing to scoop up coffee cups while the keyboard clatters incessantly to the sound of Primal Scream. Two cleaners are now circling the immediate area, truffling for debris and emptying bins in an automated, wordless ritual. One of the cleaners is replacing a bin liner, smiling awkwardly at the shoeless, fevered man punching words into his keyboard. The only other sound is an indeterminate chirrup from an adjacent PC, occasional hammering, and what sounds like trees being felled. And still the settlers continue to chop.

And build and plant and fish and conquer and worship and sail and trade and fight. And live, basically. Yes, it's that time again. Time to lose your mind overseeing the lives of small pretend people that mean nothing to no one, but for whom you are prepared to give up unhealthy large chunks of your time. Why? Because you've got problems, clearly.

MAKE A BUILD

What's the crack, then? Essentially, it's more of the same, the basic mechanics of *Settlers III* remaining largely unaltered from the previous two efforts. Starting with a small group of followers, the idea is to build a small colony and expand your horizons until you stumble upon another race, at which point you proceed to kick the living shit out of them with whatever comes to hand, specifically weapons that you have built for that very purpose. Alternatively you can try to sell them some goods. It's a bit like living in Liverpool. Except far

more scenic, the graphics having been given the videogame equivalent of a makeover. And were one of the titular settlers to look at themselves in John Leslie's revolving *Style Challenge* mirror, they'd be pleasantly surprised at being successfully transformed from a slightly frumpy wallflower into a foxy young thing. (The Hoover is out now, by the way, the low drone masking the subtleties of the *Settlers* sound effects.) Back to the graphics, though: they are indeed a thing of beauty, the intricate detail effortlessly conveying the sense of a living, breathing community. Farmers farm, miners mine, bakers bake, and butchers butcher. Fisherman fish, wood cutters cut wood, and

“Blue Byte have managed to create another game capable of sucking your existence away”

soldiers soldier, unquestioningly sacrificing themselves at the click of a mouse button.

SAME MEAT, DIFFERENT GRAVY

A graphical facelift wouldn't really be enough to justify a sequel though, and thankfully there are some more fundamental changes. Unlike the previous games, *Settlers III* has three different civilisations: the Romans, Asians, and Egyptians. A lot of the pre-publicity has harked on about this feature, but to some extent it is a red herring. The logistics are essentially the same, regardless of which bunch you decide to play as, it's just that each race has slightly different needs and structures. For instance, Egyptians use more stone in their buildings, whereas Asians must build rice farms to make alcohol, required to keep military morale high. Each civilisation also has its own god, which it must placate with temples, priests and sacrifices. Pleasing the gods is an important strategic goal, because if you treat them well they will punish your enemies with plagues and so forth. The combat system has also been updated, giving you more control over your troops and their positions. Soldiers can gain experience and



The Asian community about to set sail. Note the stylised buildings.



The Egyptians are clearly recognisable from their structures. The pyramids give it away a bit.

ALSO CONSIDER

CAESAR III (Sierra, £34.99) Majestic city building in a Roman stylee. Immensely addictive. **PCZ #70, 92%**

POPULOUS III: THE BEGINNING (Electronic Arts, £34.99) Bullfrog do the business again. With spells and everything. **PCZ #70, 92%**

KNIGHTS & MERCHANTS (Interactive Magic, £39.99) Essentially a more straightforward version of *Settlers*, this is still a decent effort. **PCZ #70, 76%**

promotions, and the game incorporates sea battles, with a variety of warships at your disposal.

Settlers III is a complex web of dependencies and production lines, and one misjudgement can lead to your city grinding to a halt. Whatever happens though, it's your fault, and if you try harder you can eventually unblock the bottleneck, even if it means destroying buildings in order to re-use their raw materials – the equivalent of getting a mortgage in *Monopoly*. Of course, by the time you've worked out what's wrong, the enemy are swarming all over you like flies round shit, firing gigantic catapults at your settlement while you're still trying to work out which end of the spade to use. A fine balance is required between keeping your people fed, watered and armed. Invading the enemy's territory is also crucial, as capturing buildings enables you to steal resources from the surrounding area. Although they're doing exactly the same to you, and the game is constantly ebbing and flowing, with numerous battles shaping the landscape.

Chronic addiction is the order of the day, then, as the London traffic outside would appear to confirm. This is Class A gaming,



Every building requires a certain amount of resources. Finding the balance is the key to success.

and not to be messed with by the inexperienced. But if you can handle the pace, it could feasibly see you through another British Winter. *Settlers III*: it's the next best thing to hibernation. **PCZ**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Lush graphics • Compulsive gameplay • Huge game worlds
- DOWNERS The interface is occasionally a bit niggly • Not wildly different to the last version

88 Insomniac insanity



Available buildings are represented graphically. Holding the mouse pointer over one reveals what it is.



Trees are vital to all races, as wood is used for building and weapons.



Boats can be used to trade with faraway civilisations.

GOD BOX

The ludicrous story behind the game involves the gods of the respective races, and is relayed via an especially cheesy intro. It seems that they have all been larging it up a little too much of late, and the god of gods has therefore set them a task: they are each ordered to select a member of their race capable of leading his people to victory. Why *do* they bother? Anyway, here's them gods in full.



Jupiter, god of Rome.



Ch'ih-Yu, god of Asia.



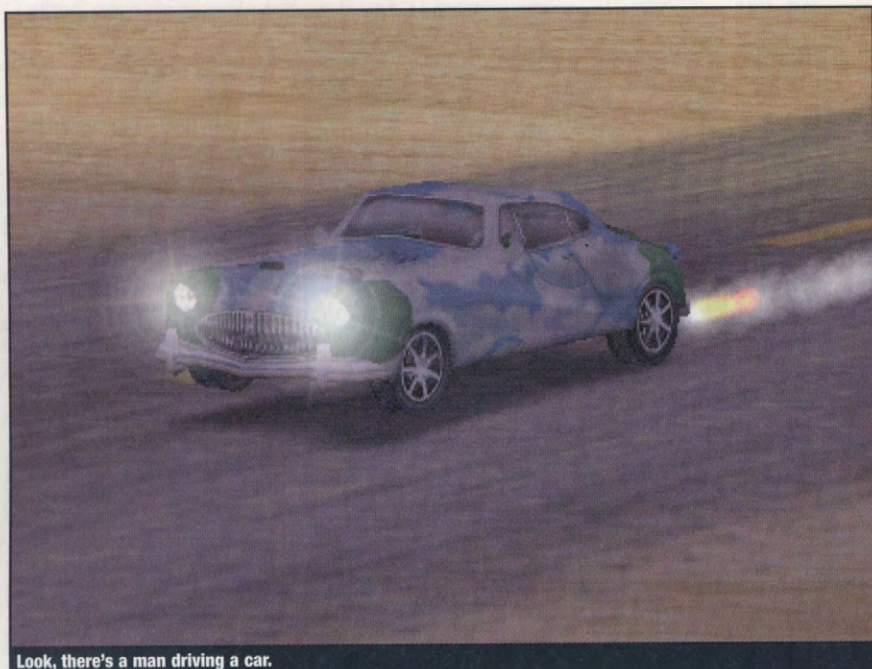
Ordus, god of Egypt.



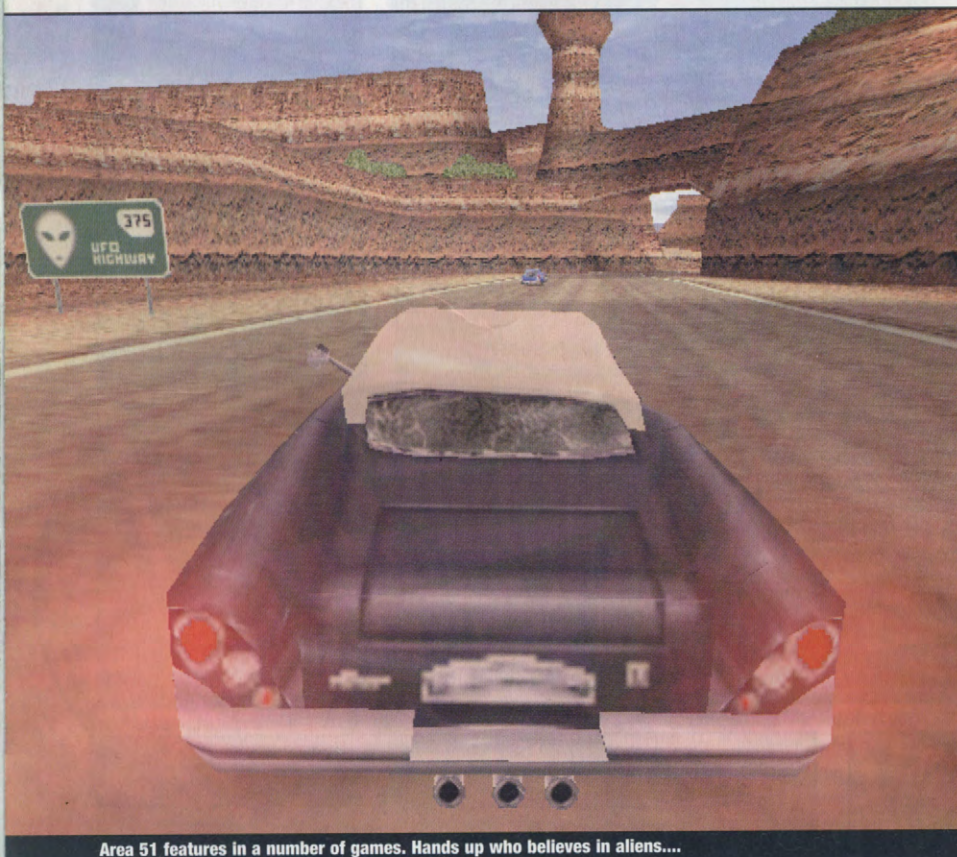
The small map in the top-left corner shows the whereabouts of potential enemies.



A Roman settlement. There's no need to build roads, as the settlers naturally create paths.



Look, there's a man driving a car.



Area 51 features in a number of games. Hands up who believes in aliens....



Ongoing construction work adds to the bedlam.



The idea is to speed past the cops, not drive into them.

SPEED

★ £29.99 • Ubi Soft • Out January

He's never been busted for speed. He can't drive, the tit. *Steve Hill* is obviously the man to put behind the wheel

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 **Memory** 32Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** Force feedback
ALSO REQUIRES 4Mb 3Dfx or D3D accelerator card **WE SAY** At least a P200 for full detail



Outrageous arcade racing is the order of the day. If you're the kind of person who gets gratification from camshaft specifications and tyre pressures, then you're better off sticking to *Grand Prix Legends* (PCZ #69, 90%). *Speed Busters* is for morons. But of course, there's a bit of moron in us all – as a quick glance round the office confirms – and the game does what it sets out to do, providing instant mindless fun for the man who doesn't have time to mess about. Easy to pick up and play, if a little harder to put down, the action proves to be a frantic tribute to *The Dukes Of Hazzard*, *Gumball Rally*, *Freebie And The Bean*, *The Blues Brothers* and any other low-rent American car chase movie you can think of. There's also a heavy dose of cultural references thrown in to add to the confusion.

To all but the most blinkered of idiots, it's obvious that there is a proliferation of driving games for the PC.

Punters seem to lap them up though, and the challenge to developers must be in coming up with an original twist. Of course, yer *Carmageddon* opted for the merciless slaughter of innocent pedestrians, whereas *Need For Speed III* has the long arm of the law breathing down your neck, if you'll excuse the double metaphor. *Ultimate Race Pro* has a devious deathmatch, and the futuristic *Motorhead* simply goes like shit off a shovel. All very nice. So what cunning take have the developers of *Speed Busters* attempted? Suffice to say that it's not a documentary.

SPEED FREAK

It's clearly not for the purist, and simply finishing with your car in one piece is a sizeable part of the

ALSO CONSIDER

CARMAGEDDON II (SCI, £39.99)
 The controversial murderathon that caused the BBFC so much consternation. It's clearly sick and wrong. **PCZ #69, 95%**

NEED FOR SPEED III (Electronic Arts, £39.99) This latest instalment of the long-running series enables you to be chased by the bizzies. Smart. **PCZ #69, 91%**

MOTORHEAD (Gremlin, £39.99)
 Ambitiously touted as the ace of games, it certainly shifts like a bat out of hell. Oof. **PCZ #63, 90%**

ULTIMATE RACE PRO (MicroProse £12.99) The office favourite for at least a week, this takes on new heights when played over a network. LANtastic. **PCZ #62, 88%**

THE TRACKS

Speed Busters features six tracks, all of which can be mirrored and reversed. You can tamper with the weather and there's a mystery track set in New York. But that's a secret



There's even a giant ape making a guest appearance. In the pissing rain.

BUSTERS

challenge, with pushing and shoving par for the course. If you're particularly proficient at braking in a straight line and accelerating into the apex of a bend, you've been wasting your time. Your best bet here is to hammer the nitro until the last second, yank on the handbrake and then tear out of the turn with no regard whatsoever for your personal safety. It's only a game, but even if it wasn't you'd be in no danger. Plummeting off the highest of cliffs represents no

from nowhere and treads on your car. Depending on your mood, this is either a hilarious aside or an incredibly annoying novelty. Each track has its own unique hazards, but other cars are equally at their mercy, and it can be a thing of joy to find two or three cars in distress while you sneak through the tiniest of gaps. The numerous obstacles ensure that each lap is slightly different, and the race certainly ain't over till it's over. Ludicrous shortcuts also feature, such as driving on to a train or

The championship mode has a well-stocked shop where you can buy upgrades and a variety of skins, enabling you to constantly customise your car. You can even insure yourself against damage. Bizarrely, money is earned by speeding through radar traps, and in a curious twist, the police award cash for speeding (something about a cop winning a million dollars on the lottery). As we said, it's not a documentary; if it was, Alistair Stewart would have plenty to froth about.

So, it's winner's dinners for *Speed Busters*. It's an idiot-proof racing game that has you frantically slapping your keyboard for another go, while providing enough variety to keep you interested in the long term. Of course, no one will probably remember it in six months' time, but in the meantime it's 30 quid well spent. [E]

“It's an idiot-proof racing game that has you frantically slapping your keyboard for another go, while providing enough variety to keep you interested in the long term”

threat to your life, as a magical invisible hand places you back on the track within seconds. In that sense, it's a bit like driving a Scalextric car. Except different.

And there's more. Not only are you faced with some frankly dangerous terrain, but a number of obstacles – both natural and man-made – also intermittently present themselves. This is where the game could potentially provide a split in the camp. Picture the scene: you're cruising round the first track (based on a Hollywood film set), the wind's in your hair, you think you're pretty cool. Then a dinosaur appears

being airlifted by a chopper. A reasonable amount of skill is required to use them though, and almost every course of action has some kind of payoff.

STUFF THA POLICE

All this tomfoolery might lead you to assume that *Speed Busters* is a shallow affair, but the driving model is actually fairly sound, based on a hybrid of Ubi Soft's *Pod* (PCZ #49, 90%) and *Monaco Grand Prix* (PCZ #69, 92%) engines. It certainly moves at pace, and there's barely time to take in the lush scenery, let alone pre-empt the numerous obstacles.

PCZVERDICT

- UPPERS Absolutely frantic action • Splendid graphics • No pop-up
- DOWNERS A maximum of six cars per race • A bit gimmicky • Suspect themed soundtrack

85 Blissfully moronic car antics



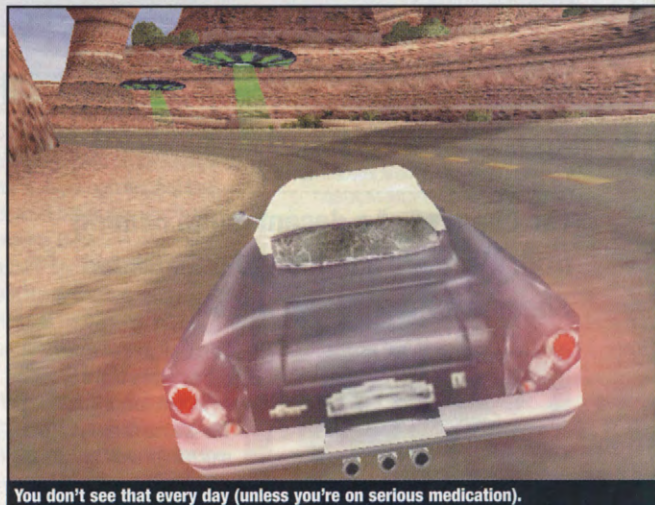
Now that's got to hurt. Except it doesn't.



Now that's off-road racing.



The cars incur visible damage, with parts flying off everywhere.



You don't see that every day (unless you're on serious medication).



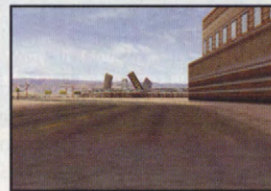
CALIFORNIA

Hooray for Hollywood. Sun, sand and sea abound, plus the occasional animatronic beast.



MEXICO

Tight turns, deep cliffs and massive volcanoes. The lava's murder on your tyres, mind.



NEVADA

Features the bright lights of Las Vegas as well as the desert, and Area 51 makes an appearance.



ASPEN

There's no business like snow business. Expect hazards like avalanches and snowploughs.



LOUISIANA

Varied terrain straddles the colourful bayou as you listen to jazz. Great.



CANADA

Where the game was developed. Consists of farms, saw mills, old fortresses and villages.

JEFF WAYNE'S WAR OF THE WORLDS

★ £34.99 • GT Interactive • Out now



Thanks to research, later on each side gets hold of some pretty neat war machines.



The Martian base in the dead of night. As you'd expect with all things alien, there's an eerie green colour to it all.



The Martians screens have an organic-metallic feel to them which, suprisingly, is a very Martian thing.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** All major sound and video cards **WE SAY** P200 with 32Mb RAM and a 2Mb video card are required if you want to play the game at a decent resolution

The chances of a decent game coming from Mars are a million to one. **Richie Shoemaker** weighs up the odds

PCZONE
RECOMMENDED

It's not often that a game comes along that's based on an album. Incredibly, *War Of The Worlds* actually retains much from Jeff Wayne's big seller of the same name, notably the music (most of it remixed) and

the Martian war machine artwork that graced the cover, which many of the units have been based on. Also, the introduction is lifted straight from the album and is made PC-friendly by adding some fitting FMV to set the scene. Richard Burton's narration is a definite highlight, along with the synthesised sounds of the Martian invaders. Anyone who fondly remembers cries of "oolah" will be well pleased.

IS THERE LIFE ON MARS

Although the game takes many of the ideas originally found in

Command & Conquer, there is one major difference that makes it feel entirely refreshing. Imagine if you will a version of *C&C* whereby you could establish a centre of operations in any region you wished, instead of just running through the missions in linear fashion. If the enemy doesn't hold a region you want to control, then your advance is unopposed and you can merrily start production as soon as you move the necessary hardware into place. If the enemy have been entrenched for any length of time, then battle ensues in the usual *C&C* manner.

The idea, if you choose the Martian side, is to eventually take London. If you're the humans, in this case Britain, you need to destroy the alien base in central Scotland. The battle map is limited to mainland Britain, which is divided into roughly 30 regions.

Depending on which side you choose, your strategy is entirely different. Both sides, of course, need to expand production into as many regions as possible, but it's the humans who are on the defensive. Initially with only armoured trucks, the Martians can attack with little resistance.



British ships can bombard from the coast.

WOTW - THE FACTS



Don't believe everything you read in the papers. Unless you're a Sun reader.

The game of the album of the film of the radio play of the book...

Along with Jules Verne, HG Wells was the most famous sci-fi author of his day. The

two never got on, and Wells has been quoted as saying: "Verne couldn't write himself out of a paper sack." Charming.

After a slew of classics - *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Island Of Dr Moreau* (1896) and *The Invisible Man* (1897) - Wells eventually topped the lot with *War Of The Worlds* in 1898.

In 1938 in America, a radio dramatisation of the book narrated by Orson Wells caused panic as thousands of listeners thought a real invasion was in progress. Typical Yanks.

Probably the most uncool album you could ever hope to own, at least everyone over the age of 25 should have memories of the musical version of *War Of The Worlds*. Released in 1978, over six million copies have been sold worldwide. The album compiled the various talents of David Essex, Thin Lizzy's Phil Lynott and a host of others. Spanish and German language versions were also recorded. In 1989 a dance version of 'The Eve Of The War' topped the chart.

So there you go, pub quizzers, your *War Of The Worlds* factfile is now complete.

Go too far though and their resources become stretched and poorly defended. Britain's research eventually finds a way to cripple the alien tripods.

Playing through the main battle map, the game can be played out at a pace defined by a clock which can either be paused or set to fly by at about six hours per second. Play stops if one of your production centres is idle or if one of the sides is forced to defend a territory. Because of the non-linear way in which the game is played, you can zoom into the sector map and place units in defensive positions prior to an impending attack. You also have to go to the sector map to place buildings, although mobile units can be built from the main map, which is essential, as it takes a few seconds for maps to be loaded. These waiting times can be quite a pain, especially if you want to start production on just one building in one sector. Annoyingly, you can only access resource information from the main map. If you forget what you need when you go to build it, you have to wait 30 seconds just to go back. Frustrating isn't the word.

WHEN MARS ATTACKS

Unlike most games of this type, research and production of various units can take anything from four days to a couple of months in game time, depending on what resources are available.

"War Of The Worlds marries in-depth resource management with one of the oldest and best sci-fi stories ever told"

During that period, counties can change hands a number of times, and the order you put in for those construction vehicles might have to be scrapped as the Martians go on the offensive. Building units on the fly is not an option.

Presentation-wise the game is excellent. The Martian screens have an organic-metallic feel to them, while the human screens are typically Victorian. Nigel Hawthorne provides the voice-overs for your generals, who proudly announce when units are built or destroyed, and compared to most similar games, you get the feeling that due care and attention has been given to even the most rudimentary elements.

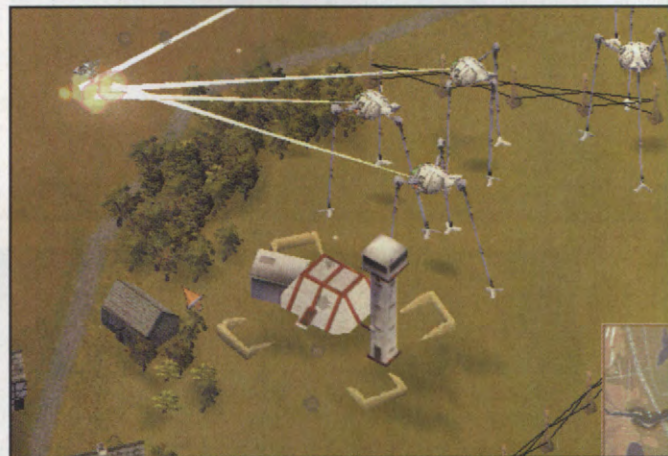
The music is a love/hate affair that depends on how fondly you



If the Martians are left in control too long their bizarre flora changes the landscape.



Perhaps a strategy of containment would be best - it's only Scotland, after all.



Doesn't look like those mines, fences or gun emplacements did the trick this time. What a shame.

remember the original soundtrack album - if you were even alive back then. Graphically, the units look superb. In 3D they're just as smooth as in *TA* (PCZ#70, 93%) and certainly more detailed. As night falls, the humans' trucks

you return. If you get things horribly wrong in a marathon session, there's little recourse but to start again from scratch. Which at least rams home a basic law of warfare: that errors of judgement and poor planning have to be put right, and quickly. There's no winding back the clock in this game.

THE WAY AHEAD

War Of The Wars is about as non-linear as this type of game can get. At the very least, one can imagine many developers taking many of the features and incorporating them into future titles. It marries in-depth resource management with one of the oldest and best sci-fi stories ever told. There are no skill levels or multiplayer options, but that doesn't mean you won't be playing the game again and again. Both sides are radically different, and many strategies need to be tried out before success is achieved.

War Of The Worlds may have its flaws, but in a year that's seen little in the way of innovation it's a major advancement from the usual C&C clone, and comes highly recommended. [C]

ALSO CONSIDER

TOTAL ANNIHILATION (GT Interactive, £12.99) Far more action-oriented than most games in the genre, this is the finest RTS on the planet. Now on budget it has no equal. **PCZ #70, 93%**

MECHCOMMANDER (MicroProse, £39.99) Another C&C clone, with large metallic bipeds roaming the landscape. Like *War Of The Worlds*, this was a brave stab at bringing new elements to the genre. **PCZ #66, 85%**

PCZ VERDICT

- UPPERS Strong on resource management and research • At last, a non-linear RTS • Two very different sides • Smooth 3D animations • Great introduction • The music
- DOWNERS Slow to access main screens • Real-time battles too simplistic • No multiplayer options • Automatic save feature • The music

85 A flawed but evolutionary step forward for RTS games

THIEF: THE DARK PROJECT

★ £44.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

Life on the straight and narrow can be dull. Paul Presley relishes the opportunity to shake the mothballs from his swag bag

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 with a 3D card, P200 without **Memory** 32Mb
RAM SUPPORTS All 3D cards **WE SAY** A P266 would be ideal, but anything over P200 should be fine with a 3D card

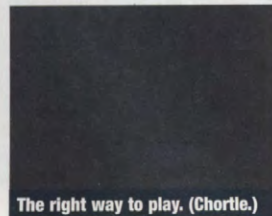
PCZONE CLASSIC

HOW TO PLAY

The difference between *Thief: The Dark Project* and other first-person action games summed up in the magic of two simple pictures



The wrong way to play *Thief*.



The right way to play. (Chortle.)

ALSO CONSIDER

HALF-LIFE (Sierra, £39.99) The benchmark for all 3D action games. Much more action, but equally good level design. **PCZ #71, 95%**

HERETIC II (Activision, £39.99) Third-person fantasy with more action. **SEE REVIEW ON PAGE 102**

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX (Take 2 Interactive, £34.99) Slower-paced action with similar sorts of sneaky goings on – but on the legal side. **PCZ #69, 90%**

This isn't the easiest of jobs, you know. Contrary to popular belief, we don't just spend all our time 'playing kids' games' and getting paid for it. Games like *Thief: The Dark Project* are the source of constant headaches and stress-related car fatalities, in this instance because every time I play the thing my opinion of it changes. You try writing an authoritative review under those circumstances.

It's not as drastic a swing as going from good to crap in the amount of time it takes for Carol Vorderman's contract-signing pen to emerge from her pocket, but it is the kind of annoying swing that makes me hesitate between awarding a Classic or a mere Recommended. But let's come to that in a moment...

BUT FIRST...

Thief is the tale of Garrett, a hard-bitten footpad in a semi-medieval fantasy world. A simple burglary results in you being contacted by a mysterious client who is searching for a mysterious artefact, pursued by a mysterious religious sect and protected by a mysterious group of benefactors.

The unique trick that *Thief* brings to the first-person action game party is that unlike most games in the genre, you're not asked to wade into room after room of bad guys, killing everything in sight. On the contrary, a thief needs to avoid



So much for the subtle approach.

being seen or heard, and that's what you have to achieve here. The NPCs have astonishing levels of realistic behaviour, and the tension created when you find yourself crouching in a darkened corner while a guard walks by

GOOD AND EVIL

But there is a problem, the one alluded to at the start. *Thief* is both excellent and annoying in equal measures. It spends the first couple of levels setting up something creative and unique to

levels forbid you to kill anyone.

But then, barely one level later, the zombies turn up and things quickly degenerate into the standard hack 'n' slash, sub-Conan sort of thing that *Heretic* (PCZ #25, 78%), *Hexen* (PCZ #33, 94%) and a million others gave us. Hopes that this is a momentary lapse seem to be founded as the haunted mines give way to a gloomy prison area, but then the very next level throws you back into the rotting arms of the undead as you're told to infiltrate a haunted crypt. And it keeps happening. After the crypt come another couple of enjoyable burglary sessions, which is then dragged down by a townful of zombies and demons in the next part. As is their wont, the undead just keep coming back, level after level, slightly marring what is otherwise a very different and very enjoyable kind of first-person action game.

What would have been better?

“Thief is a bloody good game. If you can live with the overabundance of rotting undead, you're in for a treat”

muttering about his job, or when you accidentally drop a plate on to a stone floor with a loud clatter and hear someone in the room next door say “Did you hear something?” is almost unbearable. The sound adds a whole new level of realism to the game and boosts that whole ‘total immersion’ thing to previously unattained levels. This is an aspect of the engine that really should be heeded by the rest of the genre and utilised in the future. It's that's good.

the world of first-person 3D action games, then spoils it all by resorting to the usual array of zombies, spider creatures, demons and so on that inhabit every other game set in a pseudo-medieval fantasy world. Tension is paramount during the first burglary, with sneaking, sniping and stealing in equal, addictive measures, unlike the usual gung-ho approach normally favoured by games in this over-crowded genre. Indeed, the mission objectives on the harder difficulty

★ WALKTHROUGH

HOW TO NICK STUFF

A day in the life of the typical quasi-medieval, pseudo-magical thief. Just make sure you don't get caught



1 Lord Bafford's gaff. Hidden away inside is a fabled sceptre and – surprise, surprise – your task is to 'teef' it.



2 Unfortunately the front entrance is heavily guarded and, being a thief, fighting isn't one of your better skills.



3 Luckily there's a back door and the guard has drunk too much booze, so you can sneak in without too much difficulty.



Early auditions for Rank Films' *Gong Man* were slightly more gothic.



"Ah, ah, ah, ah, staying unalive..."

Perhaps more flexing of the originality muscle by exploring the world of the thief, rather than just creating a game that boils down to a slower, darker *Hexen II* (PCZ #54, 94%)? The ordinary burglaries are some of the most well-designed and absorbingly playable levels ever encountered in a first-person game, and it's a shame more wasn't made of this. What it amounts to is an erosion of the storytelling skills that Looking Glass once had. Back in the *Ultima Underworld* days, they combined technical prowess with a superb balance of action and drama, and you can't help but feel that had Warren Spector been as in charge now as he was then, things would have been somewhat different.

BANG TO RIGHTS

Other than that, *Thief* is easily one of the best games of its type to come along in a good long while. Because of the slower pace and less combat-oriented nature of the game, it almost crosses boundaries at times, becoming more adventure game than action (especially in this new →



A water arrow

Now that's an elaborate security device.

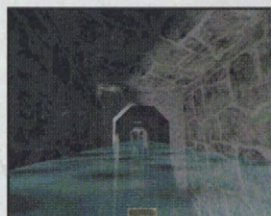
END



4 Say hello to my leetle friend. A Blackjack and a guard's head – the two just go so well together.



5 Inside the guard's hut. Dump the stiff so that no one stumbles over it, then head off down the well.



6 The well leads to an underground reservoir. The water's green; hope they invent water purification plants soon.



7 The reservoir leads to an underground store room. Hurrah! Inside at last. Now you can get on with your task.



8 Arse, they were waiting for you. I guess that means that they've found the unconscious stiff outside. Doh!

3D adventure game world). It's not quite on the same level as *Half-Life* (PCZ #71, 95%), for instance – but then what is? – and there are a few odd quirks that leave you curious: for example, why no multiplayer?

It is nice to see a game of this type concentrate so hard on producing a satisfying single-player game, but the idea of a multiplayer sneak and snipe fest really appeals. You could even do a sort of fantasy game of Tag: one person has a money bag, and the others have to sneak up and steal it from him. That sort of thing. Well, perhaps.

The bottom line though, despite worries at the start, is a simple one: *Thief* is a bloody good game. It's really well-designed, and only a few faults with the storyline pull it down. If you can live with the overabundance of rotting undead, you're in for a treat. The story also leaves itself open for an obvious sequel, so hopefully Looking Glass will take the opportunity to explore the uniqueness of the engine a little more then. Plus we hear that *System Shock 2* will be using it, and that one should be really special. We hope. [EW]

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Very atmospheric • A more relaxed, involving pace • Excellent movement and audio engines

DOWNERS Too much reliance on clichéd fantasy fare (eg zombies) • Not ambitious enough with the thieving theme • Multiplayer would have been nice

90 Very, very enjoyable, if somewhat clichéd



QUALITY VILLAINOUS CONTRAPTIONS

What every good tea-leaf needs to know – the essential tools of the thieving trade



BLACKJACK

The standard, run-of-the-mill, tried and tested, West Midlands-issue head-cracking

blackjack: sneak up behind your unsuspecting victim, smack him on the head and watch him go down like a sack of spuds.



FLASHBOMB

Not exactly the most stealthy of items, but flashbombs are handy when you want to

blind your opponents to prevent them from having the ability to see things.



MINES

Unlike real life, in *Thief* mines are A-okay weapons of hilarious destruction

rather than horrific instruments of sudden amputation or death. And there's also a handy gas variety to choose from.



WATER ARROW

The most useful of the arrows, used mainly for dousing torches to

aid your sneaking ways. Find a clerical font and turn them into holy water arrows to explode the undead.



ROPE ARROW

Pretty straightforward. It's an arrow. With a rope attached. If you need a description of

why then you really shouldn't be playing computer games.



MOSS ARROW

There's a joke about Kate Moss and the thinness of an arrow's

shaft here somewhere but we can't quite find the right words to phrase it. Basically, the moss arrow fires an amount of moss onto the floor, silencing your heavy footsteps.



FLAME ARROW

Thief's equivalent of the rocket launcher. If you need fire in a

hurry, here it is. Useful for exploding things, particularly zombies, who splatter in a really satisfying manner.



GAS ARROW

Does exactly what it says on the tin. Fire one into a crowded room and watch as

everyone goes: "What's that smell?" and then topples over in an exaggerated comedy manner.



NOISEMAKER ARROW

Thief is based around sound: you try not to make any, guards try

to hear you. Simple. The noisemaker arrow is for when you want a distraction to, er, distract the guards, enabling you to sneak past.



That's it – I'm getting a refund from that undertaker.



"THE MOST ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGY WE'VE EVER SEEN
IN A PC GAMING TITLE."

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD



Actual Screenshots

You find yourself alone on a remote island off the coast of Costa Rica.

It isn't your typical tropical paradise. This is Site B, InGen's long abandoned research facility, where genetic experiments resulted in the rebirth of history's most savage predators.

You know what happened here. You pray you're alone.

You soon realize... you're not.

**DREAMWORKS
INTERACTIVE**



www.trespasser.com

MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99

★ £34.99 • Eidos Interactive • Out now

He's young, rich and immensely talented. Here's *Steve Hill* instead



TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 16Mb **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx, Direct3D
WE SAY Abject lies. Even with a P200 and Voodoo2 some of the detail had to be switched off to keep the speed up



ALSO CONSIDER

FIFA 99 (EA Sports, £39.99)
 They've only went and gone and done it again, producing the best football game available for the PC. Although in fairness it is their third attempt in 12 months. **PCZ #71, 92%**

ACTUA SOCCER 3 (Gremlin Interactive, £34.99) We'll be reviewing this next issue, on sale Friday 15 January.

NOT REVIEWED

SENSIBLE SOCCER EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION (GT Interactive, £29.99) Comparatively risible graphics, but the umpteenth version of *Sensi* still maintains the magical gameplay of its predecessors. Surely the end must be nigh soon though.

PCZ #69, 90%

THREE LIONS (Take 2 Interactive, £34.99) A rubbish game, strictly for idiots. Skid graphics combined with a farcical targeting system make for an uninspiring experience.

PCZ #65, 60%

Regular perusers of game shops may have already seen this game clogging up the shelves. The Boy Owen's faux-sullen pose lurking amid the pre-Christmas detritus. So why are we so late in reviewing it? Because we didn't receive a copy until a couple of days before its release, traditionally a ploy by worried software companies to provide damage limitation on titles they consider suspect. They've clearly

with anything less than a Microsoft SideWinder pad would be folly, and even with this de facto controller it can still prove difficult to pull off every move.

Elaborate combinations are the order of the day, and even remembering them all may be beyond the ken of all but drooling beat 'em up fans, which in some ways makes the game more suited to the PlayStation. It's still a decent turn on the PC though, and graphically is up to scratch, although a 3Dfx card is pretty much a prerequisite. Detailed stadiums, varying weather effects, player shadows and so forth are thrown into the mix, and it all looks very pretty. The players have been tenuously modelled on

hairstyles are on display, as well as the occasional bit of facial hair experimentation. However, the bottom line is that even the most knowledgeable of football fans would be hard-pushed to recognise any of the players, with the pre-match line-ups often resembling a multiracial version of *The Krypton Factor's* identity parade.

IT'S IN THE NAME

As far as gameplay is concerned though, having cloned players doesn't really make a great deal of difference, and in fairness they do actually have their names on their shirts, and even hovering above their heads if desired. And

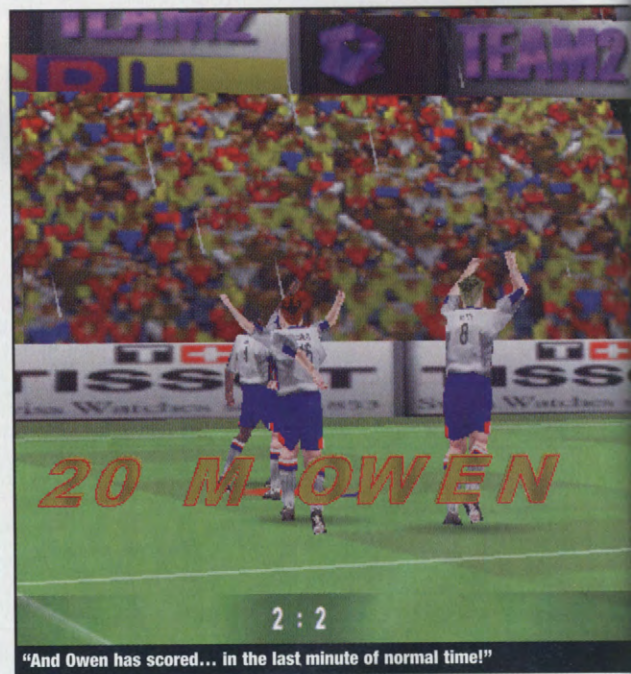
unlike *World League Soccer '98* (PCZ #65, 70%), Eidos have bitten the bullet and opted for real player names. This is a good thing – nobody is interested in fielding a forward line of Shoarrer and Kowen; football fans want the real deal. To the average prole, this may seem a trivial worry restricted solely to the type of people who store football programmes in laminated folders. A fair point. But if you're going to do it, do it right. Apparently the law states that as long as no unlicensed individual is being used to sell the game, then there is no valid gripe. Other developers take note: we never ever want to see another bastardised name in a game.

“Chelsea's Dennis Wise and Spurs' Jose Dominguez sport the build of wiry 14-year-olds, whereas most goalkeepers wouldn't look out of place in a gorilla pound”

got it wrong though, as *Michael Owen's WLS '99* is a decent game, building on the moderate success of its predecessor and correcting many of the flaws that rendered it so niggly.

If anything, the enhancements have made the game harder, as this is certainly no instant goal feast, and requires days of practice before any kind of proficiency is achieved. Manual dexterity is pushed to the limit, and attempting to play the game

their real-life counterparts with varying degrees of success, including a number of glaring omissions – such as a moustacheless David Seaman. The players' individual physical attributes have also been taken into consideration – with a fair amount of exaggeration. For instance, both Chelsea's Dennis Wise and Spurs' Jose Dominguez sport the build of wiry 14-year-olds, whereas most of the goalkeepers wouldn't look out of place in a gorilla pound. The universal flat-tops of the previous game have been dispensed with, and a number of more frisky



★ WALKTHROUGH

CAN YOU KICK IT?

Of course you can. It's a football game. Just press a button



Numerous formations can be employed, if you can be bothered.



Look. The shadows – see how they flicker.



The Boy Owen appears to have usurped Shearer as England's regular penalty taker. Can't think why.



On the right is presumably Dennis Wise – aged 14.



Check out the sky, man. It's real neat.



An overhead, pseudo-Sensi view is available, and can even be brought into play on the fly.



The goalkeepers are occasionally more Helen Keller than Casey Keller.

Anyway, Michael Owen is no bastard, and his first major foray into the hateful world of game endorsement seems largely to have paid off. *MOWLS '99* is a compulsive game, and narrow defeats leave you seething and gagging for another match.

But as the hapless Graham Taylor maintained, there's no such thing as an easy game at international level these days, and the slightest lapse in front of goal is often ruthlessly punished. Concentration is paramount, and

losing possession can be fatal. Sticking the ball into the back of the onion bag is no mean feat either, and cheeky one-tvos and shimmys all have to be employed to even get within shooting distance. Also, no longer can you rely on simply crossing the ball into the box and despatching a bullet header, as the marking seems to be a lot tighter, apart from at free kicks where it is non-existent. It's also possible to score free kicks from ludicrous distances, evoking memories of erstwhile Nottingham Forest slaphead Jonny Metgod.

A choice of tackles is offered: the perennial slide, or a hook; the lack of a soft tackle inevitably leads to a flurry of free kicks. It's all too easy for the game to become bogged down in the middle of the park, and it can often prove to be a stop-start affair. Skilful play is rewarded though, and goals have to be earned, which makes them all the

more satisfying to score.

As for the commentary, it's again provided by Ray Wilkins and Peter Brackley, who make desperate stabs at comedy, an onerous task when attempted by two straightmen.

So, despite some sloppiness – the first ten games in a league season are away from home, for instance – *Michael Owen's WLS '99* is a quality game. It's certainly not perfect, but by the time they get around to *Joe Cole's WLS '01* they might have got it right. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Real player names • Quite challenging

DOWNERS No soft tackle • A bit slow • Annoying loading times

84 The boy done good



3 ...the wall is in disarray...



4 ...the keeper's stretching...



6 ...and it's in! Check me out!

END

HERETIC II

★ £39.99 • Activision • Out now

Evil and mayhem have descended on the land of Parthoris. God-fearing *Craig Vaughan* investigates

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx and most 3D cards via D3D Multiplay over Internet and LAN **WE SAY** Try a P200 with a 3D card and 32Mb (64 meg without acceleration)

**PCZONE
RECOMMENDED**

The Ravensoft family of *Doom*-inspired shooters has now evolved so far that their latest offering takes the bold step of portraying the action from a third-person perspective. Anyone brave enough to question this dramatic change of viewpoint will initially have their fears vanquished by our hero Corvus' new-found versatility.

Corvus sprints, somersaults and bounds around like a demented acrobat on drugs, unfettered by the constraints imposed by his previous outings, and with more than a passing resemblance to Lara Croft's efforts in *Tomb Raider*.

Superficially, at least, *Tomb Raider* comparisons are inevitable – and to a large degree they're justifiable because *Heretic II* has a

remarkably similar look and feel, albeit via a superbly enhanced *Quake II* engine. Young Miss Croft should watch her back, because Corvus is faster, stronger, more agile and a damn sight more intelligent than his well-endowed female counterpart. And now we can actually see him on screen, it's far easier to empathise with him as he bleeds and visibly deteriorates from the ravages of his adventure.

This is an out-and-out 'hack and slash' action-fest – the puzzles are purely of the 'fetch this and combine it with that' variety, and serve only to provide brief respite from frantic bouts of maiming and slaughter.

PLAGUED TO DEATH

The action begins with Corvus discovering a virulent plague spreading across his homeland, causing mutilation and mayhem.

As the plot progresses via some sparkling cut-scenes, it becomes apparent that Corvus himself is infected. This adds a palpable sense of urgency to his quest as he makes his way across some beautifully detailed and varied landscapes – including towns, swamps, and caverns – which are as intricate and involved as anything *Quake*-heads or Lara fans will have seen.

Thankfully, a lot of hub-based action has been omitted and this prevents having to spend too much time tracking back and forth across previously completed areas. Here the levels are quite linear; there's rarely more than one route to the exit, and you can usually find it without too much trouble.

But disposing of the plague-ridden creatures proves more problematic. They may be ill, but they're certainly not stupid. The enemy AI was

never really apparent in *Heretic* (PCZ #25, 78%); the monsters were quite happy to act as retarded cannon fodder, bouncing off walls (and each other) with alarming regularity.

On this outing, Corvus has his work cut out. He's stalked through the levels by some foes and surrounded by others, who attack in packs. The improved AI means you're as likely to be ambushed by fearless denizens as you are to see plague-infested locals running for their life in blind fear of you.

SHOOTING FROM THE HIP

Corvus has an impressive array of weapons at his disposal, which you collect *Quake*-style (extra power-ups increase their range and effectiveness). *Heretic* fans will welcome the return of the Hellstaff (which fires electrified bolts of magical energy), and the Red Rain (which conjures up

“Corvus is faster and a damn sight more intelligent than his well-endowed female counterpart, Lara Croft”

hellish clouds and then bursts forth a torrent of acid rain. New weapons are as visually stunning as they are devastating. Many are magic-induced, but most have *Quake*-like connotations: the Hellstaff itself is no more than a glorified machine gun and the exploding arrows are effectively *Quake*'s rocket launchers.

There's a good supply of defensive weapons, too. These are primarily designed to repel the enemy by smart bombing or shock-waving them out of your



Corvus prepares to have a head loss (literally).



A plague-infested zombie has an axe to grind with Corvus.

ALSO CONSIDER

HERETIC (Activision £9.99) Above average for its day, but badly dated due to its pre-3Dfx engine. Utilises a first-person perspective and has a healthy mix of action and spell casting. **PCZ #25, 78%**

HEXEN 2 (Activision £39.95) Splendid 3Dfx graphics combine with fast and engaging action to provide a worthy alternative to the standard *Quakes*. **PCZ #54, 94%**

TOMB RAIDER II (Eidos £39.95) Lara returned, bigger and better than before, in a wonderfully played-out action game. Massive maps, tricky controls and puzzles – plenty prevented many from seeing the best levels. **PCZ #57, 94%**

vicinity, giving Corvus a chance to seek out mystical shrines, from which both health and munitions can be restored.

A CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

The game's strengths are many and varied: the mysterious plot is darkly engaging and the level of violence (which is adjustable) is extreme, but never too gratuitous – although Corvus does a neat line in instant amputations (minus anaesthetic, of course) and the blood flows freely.

The software renderer copes admirably, but obviously fails to pull off the speed and fluidity of the accelerated versions. The music is moody, atmospheric, and well complemented by excellent use of spot effects and character speech.

Single-player mode

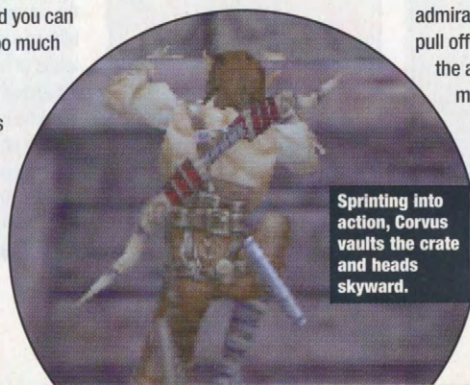
is both challenging and addictive (we averaged about three hours of gameplay, exhaustively exploring each level), but it could well be that *Heretic II* will garner most favour from deathmatch aficionados.

Clever programming allows for almost faultless multiplayer frolics, with the game predicting Corvus' probable actions and movements, and 'drawing ahead' of the actual visual play-field, thus avoiding 'drop-outs' and lagging graphics.

The change of perspective also adds a novel twist to the proceedings – it's a break from the norm and certainly requires a degree or two more lateral thinking, as precision is often required to avoid an early demise.

OUT OF CONTROL

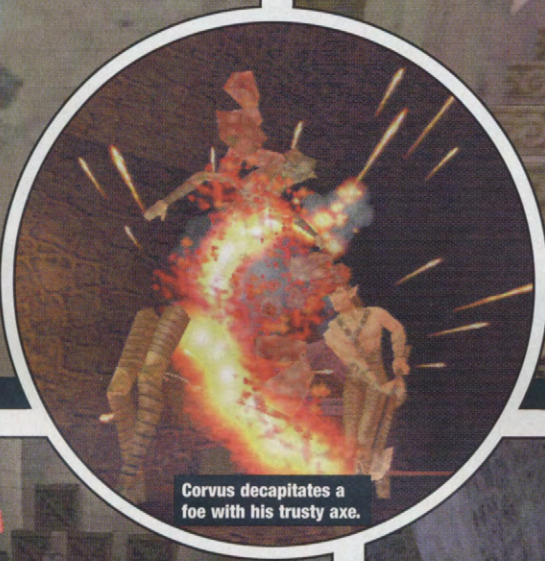
Ultimately, the perspective's facelift proves to be something of



Sprinting into action, Corvus vaults the crate and heads skyward.



Corvus dabbles with magic.



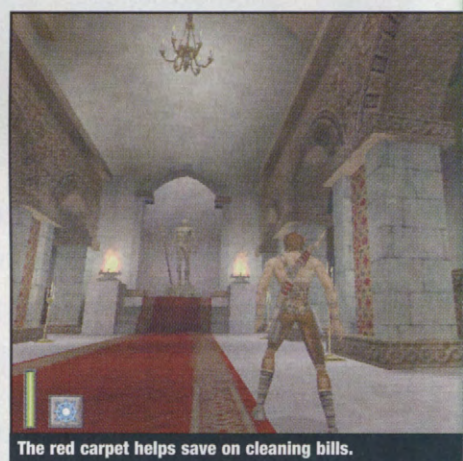
Corvus decapitates a foe with his trusty axe.



The blood-drenched aftermath of a vicious fracas.



Time for a 'murder-death-kill' type frenzy.



The red carpet helps save on cleaning bills.

a cleft stick. The almost inevitable 'camera tracking' problem largely fails to materialise – and that's a testament, no doubt, to hours of fraught playtesting.

Yet Corvus does have some potentially critical control problems: on many occasions, there's a small, but unforgivable, delay between key-presses and Corvus' on-screen responses. This would be annoying and sloppy at the best of times, but surely it's a cardinal sin in an action game?

Another gripe concerns Corvus' enemies, which are rather samey. It's obvious that a fairly small group of creatures were designed, which then had extra features bolted on in an attempt to increase the apparent range of foes. They may move and act differently, but they're basically the same under the surface.

Heretic II is a welcome

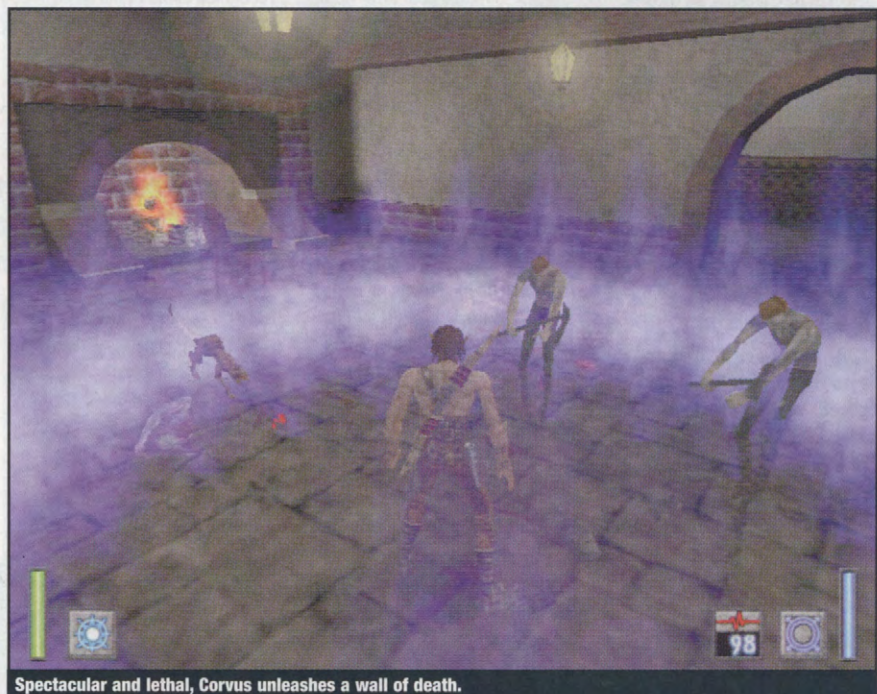
departure from the glut of first-person shooters currently flooding the market and introduces us to a character who might just go on to be a star in his own right. But, ultimately, it stands out as both a missed opportunity and something of a flawed masterpiece. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS The plot is engaging and the graphics are luscious • There's plenty to see and do • Loads of action, blood and guts

DOWNERS The change of perspective will upset some people • Sluggish controls • Little replay value once completed

83 Great action game, if slightly flawed



Spectacular and lethal, Corvus unleashes a wall of death.

ACTUA SOCCER 3

★ £39.99 • Gremlin Interactive • Out now



There are some 'skill' moves available, but not as many as in FIFA.



The number of teams on offer is rather impressive.

Well, is it better than EA's FIFA 99? Jeremy Wells is the man with as many questions as he has answers

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32 Mb RAM **SUPPORTS** 3Dfx, Direct3D **WE SAY** 3D card and two daisy-chainable gamepads needed for best results



ALSO CONSIDER

WORLD CUP 98 (EA Sports, £39.99) It may now all be over, but *World Cup 98* remains the best World Cup game on the PC. **PCZ #65, 91%**

FIFA 99 (EA Sports, £39.99) Features minor tweaks to the game engine of *World Cup 98*, and as a result plays even better. **PCZ #71, 92%**

MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99 (Eidos Interactive, £39.99) Represents less of an update than *FIFA 99* over *WC 98*, but it has its high points. **REVIEWED ON PAGE 100**

Almost a year after *Actua Soccer 2* (PCZ #59, 90%) was released, the third football game from the massively popular *Actua* stable is upon us. *Actua Soccer Club Edition* (PCZ #52, 80%) may have been voted the best sports game of last year, but one of the most popular games featured in this year's *PC ZONE* Reader Awards (see full results on page 125) is Electronic Arts' *World Cup 98* (PCZ #65, 91%), and that has since been bettered by the 'all-new' (ahem) and rather excellent *FIFA 99* (PCZ #71, 92%). So, is Gremlin's third effort any match for the mighty *FIFA*?

KEOWN OR GINOLA?

In terms of graphics, there's little to choose between the two. *Actua 3*'s players look more solid than *FIFA*'s, but they're

less detailed. When they start scampering around the pitch, you can tell that they both make use of motion-capture technology, though you never feel as though you're not in control. Both games stand head and shoulders above all other football games in terms of graphics and attention to detail, and it's actually possible to recognise some of the more 'unique' players when using some of the closer camera angles.

When it comes to overall presentation, however, *Actua* cannot compete with the super-

Lineker and co million-dollar extravaganza. You can tell that the menus were designed with the PlayStation in mind, and while it's pretty easy to navigate your way around the game, *Actua*'s menus lack that polished *FIFA* feel and aren't as instantly clear.

So, after the first round it's looking pretty even between them – until *FIFA* just snatched a 1-0 win in injury time.

RONALDO OR ANDY COLE?

A lot has been made of the special 'skill' moves in *FIFA*, and

the wrong way, and play the ball into space.

In terms of general play, there's little to separate the two games. *FIFA 99* can be a little on the easy side when playing on the lowest skill setting, and it's still possible to rack up double-figure scores when playing against worthy 'human' opponents (sorry, Steve) on the higher skill settings if you discover and consistently exploit one of the two dubious 'score almost every time' tactics. We've yet to find any such anomalies in *Actua 3*, which shows that Gremlin at least take their playtesting seriously, and on the whole it's generally a lot more difficult to score, and therefore the game may be considered to be more realistic.

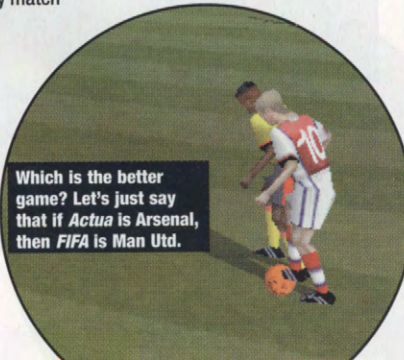
Unlike previous *Actua Soccer* games, goalmouth scrambles are not conspicuous by their absence, and it's now possible to lob the keeper from pretty close up. The heading has been improved too, and you have to direct headers and volleys, which makes scoring a spectacular goal from a pacy cross even more satisfying.

The tackling appears to be more realistic than *FIFA*'s, and it's generally harder to win the ball unless your timing is spot on. When playing *Actua 3* it's less of a

“Numerous Cup and tournament options enable you to fully customise your own leagues and competitions”

slick *FIFA*. Although the intro to *Actua* is in many ways a work of art, the superbly edited live footage cannot compete with *FIFA*'s Fat Boy Slim, Des Lynam,

this is something that Gremlin haven't ignored when developing *Actua 3*. Even if you don't actually use them, the fact that they're there is important, because when you do get bored of hammering your opponents 14-0, it's nice to have something new to get to grips with. *Actua 3* doesn't sport as many 'skill' moves as *FIFA 99*, but what's on offer is at least useful and helps prolong the game's appeal. With practice you can execute some slick one-twos, send your opponent



Which is the better game? Let's just say that if *Actua* is Arsenal, then *FIFA* is Man Utd.



battle in midfield to win and keep possession, which makes for a more fluid playing experience. The fact that you can now adjust the speed of play will be a boon for FIFA fans brought up on a diet of slow motion, and Actua fans will be pleased to hear that you can still play a game at the break-neck speed of Actua Soccer 2.

So, after a tremendously competitive second leg, Actua bags it to win in a five-goal thriller, scoring the winner from outside the box with a beautifully executed lob. That makes it one game apiece.

JAMES OR SEAMAN?

The weak point in many football games is the behaviour of the goalkeepers. Previously, those in Actua Soccer 2 were prone to some very stupid mistakes, as were the keepers in World Cup 98 though less so. The keepers in Actua 3 are improved, but they're still prone to making some silly errors. You could say this is realistic, but it can get frustrating. On the other hand, it's sometimes tremendously difficult to score in Actua 3, and this is rarely the case with FIFA 99. Everyone has their standpoint on this, but the general consensus is that people want consistency or, failing that, at least a little control over the situation. And while the keepers in both games are good, those in FIFA just edge it. That makes it 2-1 to FIFA with one match to go.

DES OR BARRY?

As before, Actua Soccer 3 is full of numerous Cup and tournament options that enable you to fully customise your own leagues and competitions. The choice of teams and tactics

available is impressive, and the secret teams that become accessible once you've got a couple of decent seasons behind you prove that Gremlin know their football; though the fact that you can now finally create your own competitions in FIFA 99 is a real boon, as is the 'two clicks and you're in' option.

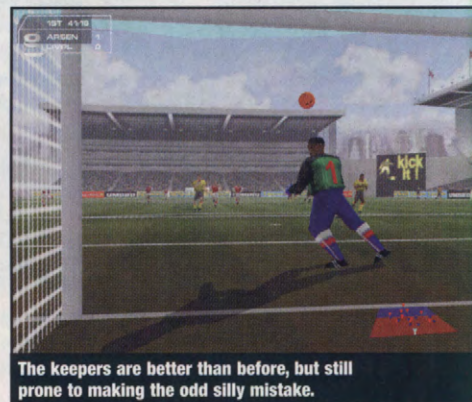
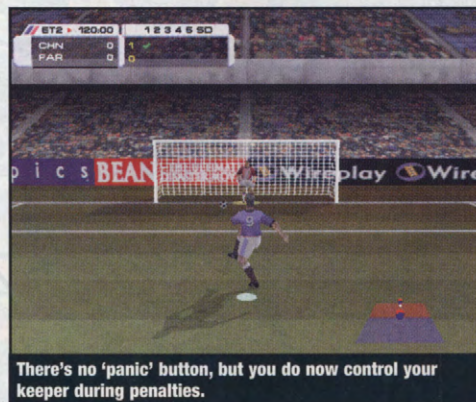
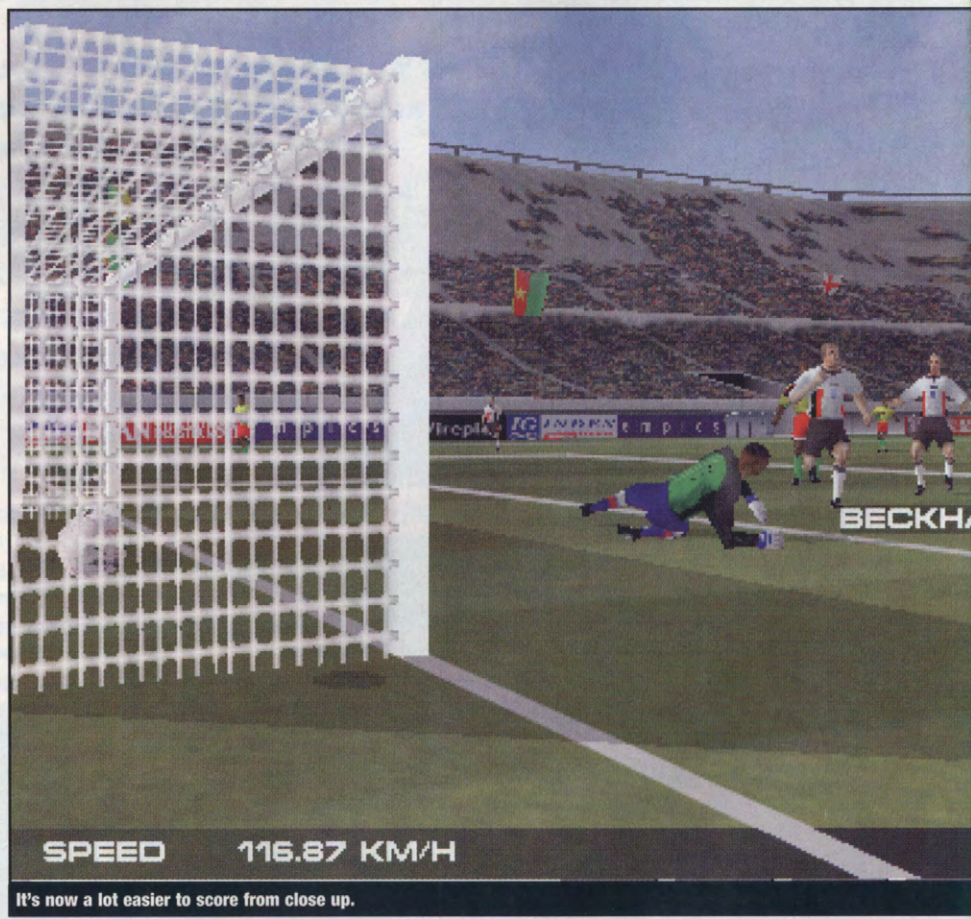
At the end of the day there really is little to choose between the two, and it depends on what you're used to. While I've always liked Actua Soccer, I must admit that I was very impressed with FIFA 99. Suffice to say that if you own and like Actua Soccer 2, you won't be disappointed with Actua Soccer 3. And at least you won't feel ripped off if you buy it, because the last one is over a year old and the next one probably won't appear on the shelves until this time next year.

If you consider that we've got both games set up in the office and that most people here prefer to play FIFA 99, that might suggest which of the two you should buy. Having said that, if you bought WC98 a few months ago then maybe you should try something a little different. **PCZ**

PCZVERDICT

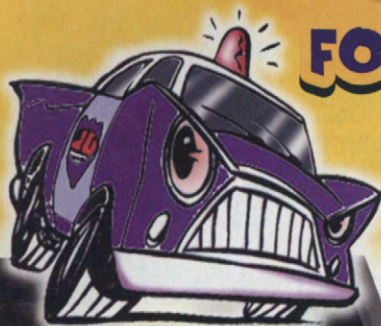
- UPPERS Superbly detailed motion-captured players and animation • Instantly accessible • Loads of teams and players • Fully customisable compos/tournaments
- DOWNERS Lack of skill moves • Virtually no heading

89 Great if you fancy a change from FIFA



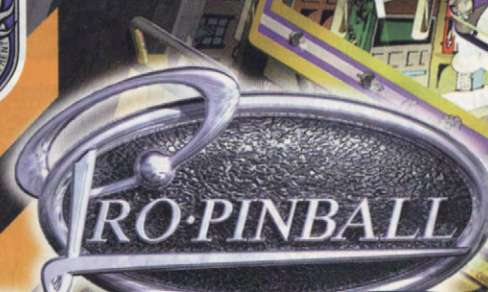
PINBALL HEAD TO HEAD

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER!



SET YOUR FINGERS FLYING AND YOUR SENSES REELING BY EMBARKING ON THE MOST NAIL-BITING ADRENALINE-PUMPING PINBALL EXTRAVAGANZA EVER TO HIT THE HIGHWAYS. OOZING CHARACTER AND ORIGINALITY FROM EVERY PORE, PRO PINBALL-BIG RACE USA WILL LEAVE YOUR WHEELS SPINNING AND YOUR HEART POUNDING.

- Road trip across America: 16 major cities as play zones •
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- Head-to-Head mode via LAN or Internet play •



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You can now queue the production of units, which helps to speed things up.



The scenario editor enables you to design your own maps and missions.



Double-clicking on a unit selects all units of that type.



The population limit can be changed for bigger battles.

AGE OF EMPIRES: THE RISE OF ROME

★ £24.99 (£14.99 with cash back voucher) • Microsoft • Out now

A year on and *Age Of Empires* is still a firm favourite in the ZONE office. Jeremy Wells takes a look at the official mission disc

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** P166 and 32Mb RAM for the bigger maps. NB You'll need a copy of *Age Of Empires* to run *The Rise Of Rome* expansion disc

PCZONE RECOMMENDED

It's a testament to *Age Of Empires'* long term appeal that most people at ZONE still play it more than a year after it was released – though if you saw how often we get slaughtered on Wireplay, you'd

be forgiven for thinking we'd never actually played it before. Even though the AI, especially the route-finding, occasionally causes the blood to boil, *AOE* is largely accepted as one of the best RTS games around, sharing critical acclaim at the top end of the genre with the likes of *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* (PCZ #47, 94%) and *Populous III* (PCZ #70, 94%).

We were originally promised a

sequel round about now, but that's been put back until much later next year. So, by way of a stopgap, we have what is essentially a mission disc, promising new missions, units and a few graphical and gameplay tweaks. There are four new civilisations to get to grips with (you can now take control of Carthage, Palmyra, Macedonia or Rome), new units, including an armoured elephant, camel rider, fire galley, slinger and scyther chariot, and there's heaps of new Roman architecture to gawp at. As well as the usual single and multiplayer options, there are four totally new campaigns made up of dozens of scenarios, including the Rise of Rome campaign from which the mission pack derives its name. Four new researchable technologies (Logistics,

Martyrdom, Medicine and Tower Shield) give you something to aim for and even bigger maps and four new map types (mountainous highland, large island, the Mediterranean and a peninsula) make for even more diversity.

BETTER SOUND

The soundtrack is even better than before, and the little gameplay tweaks, which allow you to queue the production of units and double-click on a unit to command all of that type, make things a little easier on the mouse hand. The rather erratic route finding will still occasionally have you screaming with frustration but, as with just about every other RTS game, you just have to live with it and baby-sit units to make sure they go where they're told.

ALSO CONSIDER

AGE OF EMPIRES (Microsoft, £29.99) is an all-time classic and deserves a place in anyone's collection. The game's minimal system requirements and compelling gameplay prove that you don't need a fancy 3D engine to make a great game.

PCZ #54, 94%

POPULOUS III: (Bullfrog/Electronic Arts, £39.99) The long-awaited third instalment to the original 'god' game series doesn't disappoint, though traditionalists may be initially at odds with the new 'bells and whistles' format. Pah!

PCZ #70, 94%

SETTLERS II (BlueByte Software, £29.95) is now pretty dated and the third game in the series is almost upon us, but any game in the *Settlers* series is well worth a look if you're into real-time strategy games.

PCZ #41, 92%

The fact that you can now alter the population limit using the game settings, coupled with new 'gigantic' maps, makes for some very impressive battles involving hundreds of units. Overall, there's more than enough to justify fans of the original game buying *The Rise Of Rome* – especially at the generous 'cash back' price of £14.99. Now – bring on *Age Of Empires II*. **WZ**

PCZ VERDICT

UPPERS Great graphics and animation

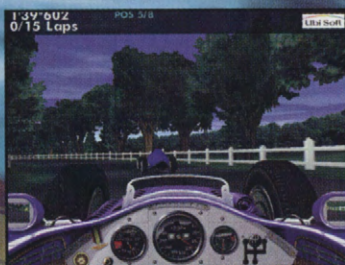
DOWNERS Unit AI still annoying

83 A worthwhile stopgap for *AOE* fans waiting for the true sequel

MONACO

GRAND PRIX

racing simulation 2



PC ZONE
CLASSIC **92%**

'Best Racing Sim around'
'a worthy sequel'

PC ZONE November 1998

Ubi Soft Entertainment, 1 Weir Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 8UX
Tel: +44 (181) 944 9000 • Fax: +44 (181) 944 9300 • Ubi Soft web site: www.ubisoft.co.uk

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PC CD-ROM



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TAG HEUER



Castrol



That'll teach you to smoke in public places.



"Die, mutant scum."



Flash graphics alert!

FUTURE COP L.A.P.D.

★ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P150 Memory 32Mb RAM
WE SAY Supports 3Dfx and Direct3D – we suggest you use it

With the game having received some pretty good reviews on the PlayStation, EA have finally come up with the PC release of their futuristic third-person shoot 'em up. The story goes that the LAPD, having failed to keep the city in order, have brought in the ultimate in crowd control – ED209. Well it isn't really, but looking just like the ill-fated droid from *Robocop* it's not difficult to spot where the developers found their inspiration.

Before each mission, you can alter your loadout from three different hard points, and as you progress through the 12 missions up to 15 new weapons become available, each of which can be powered up to deliver either more damaging projectiles or multiple warheads. Aiming is automatic, with your weapons locking on to targets in your field of view, and thanks to an intuitive control method you're strafing criminals within seconds.

As you would expect, with a 3D card the game looks great, especially the pyrotechnics, and watching human torches falling from exploding buildings is one of the most satisfying parts of the game. The various camera angles help move the action along, and when trundling around in a recently deserted spot you can speed up your progress by transforming into a nifty hovertank.

Where the game loses it's frenetic pace is during those times when your platforming skills come into play. Although few and far between, there are occasions when, after getting deep into the large levels, you fail to reach a distant ledge. Losing purchase time and time again, your patience is stretched to the limit, and as you can't save the game during the mission it becomes even more so when you come back to it at a later date.

Having said that, with a wonderful two-player mode, *Future Cop* is an instantly engaging game that should appeal to arcade junkies and *Tomb Raider* fans who want something just that little bit different.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZVERDICT

75%



Some innovative match-day options and not a lot else.

FOOTBALL WORLD MANAGER

★ £34.99 • Ubi Soft • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90
 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** You need a P200 and 32MB RAM to access all the features in the game

If while at Villa, 'big' Ron Atkinson had been asked how much the pies should be, his answer would no doubt have been short and to the point. Like Ron, we at ZONE believe football management games should be just that. That's why we like *Champ Manager* – that plus the fact that it's deep and easy to use.

Scarily enough, *Football World Manager* is also deep and easy to use. Or rather, it pretends to be. Instead of concentrating on the English leagues, you have the option to include every other major league around the world. It could so easily have been the game to knock *CM3* out of the competition. It won't, of course, and the reasons are easy to spot once you've played both games for any length of time.

While there is undoubtedly a lot going on under the surface, the way everything is displayed on-screen is enough to send *Champ Manager* fans running. The game screen takes up roughly two thirds of the screen, and the most important areas are crammed full of tiny buttons. It takes so much getting used to that it's easier to give up rather than plough through a second season.

A serious mention has to go to the wealth of options you can make use of during match day: the way you can buoy up your team is a nice touch, and the amount of information at your disposal is almost overwhelming.

But all football management games should have but two main concerns: to be deep, and accurate and easy to use. Although full of features hitherto unseen in this type of game, the developers have failed to deliver a user-friendly game. Shame, really.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZVERDICT

60%



Rage Of Mages: RPG classic? Not quite.

RAGE OF MAGES

★ £34.99 • Microids • Out Jan '99

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133
 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Yes, that's pretty much right

PCZONE RECOMMENDED: Well, wouldn't you know it, it's another real-time strategy game with sorcerers and sword-wielding maniacs and everything else you'd expect from a fantasy-based RTS.

More similar in style to *C&C* than to *Diablo*, *Rage Of Mages* puts you in the role of either a sorcerer or fighter at the beginning of the game, and then plunges you head-first into a mystical world of, er, fairly predictable mission-based real-time strategy tomfoolery. But there are areas in which *ROM* excels, particularly in its unique approach to resource management. Rather than placing financial resources randomly across a level and leaving the player and his digital opponent to fight over who gets the most, *ROM* places a finite number of 'special' items (like gold coins, weapons etc) around a playing field and simply tells you at the beginning of the mission what your objectives are for that particular level. Once you've successfully met your objectives, you can carry on to the next level, or continue on the current one.

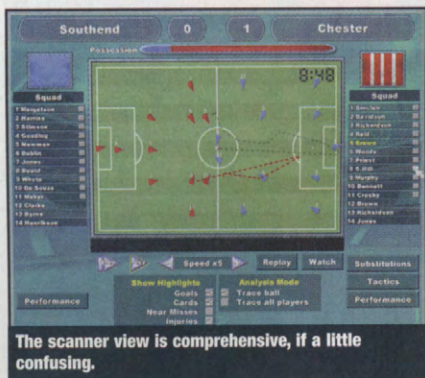
Which brings us to the 'clever' bit. If you decide to continue on a particular level and explore the whole environment, you're sure to come across additional items you may have missed. You can take these with you to the next mission and trade the extra items you've found at a local shop, where you can buy bigger, better weapons.

ROM is a good game, which becomes great if you're willing to stick with it to the later levels where you discover some pretty nifty spells and items. It won't tax experienced RTS fans, but it's fairly enjoyable and rewarding.

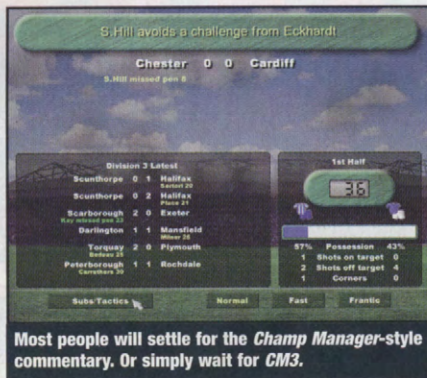
Chris Anderson

PCZVERDICT

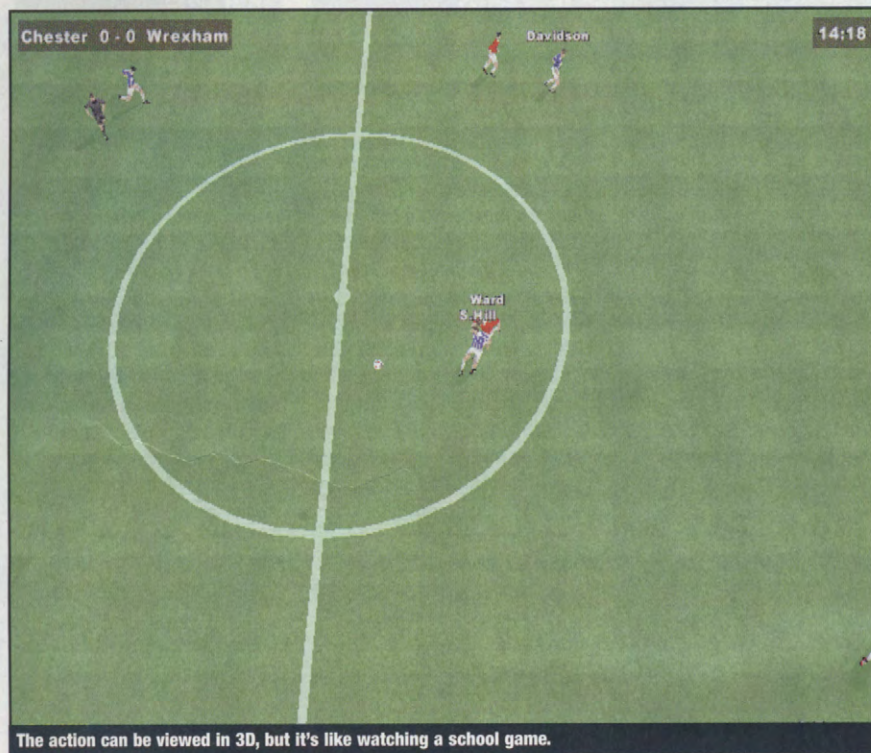
80%



The scanner view is comprehensive, if a little confusing.



Most people will settle for the *Champ Manager*-style commentary. Or simply wait for *CM3*.



The action can be viewed in 3D, but it's like watching a school game.

← PLAYER MANAGER — SEASON 98-99

★ £29.99 • Anco • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P120 Memory 32Mb RAM
WE SAY You need a bit more for hi-res graphics

'Experience Is Everything,' claims the logo on the box. And that's something Anco would have done well to consider before releasing this game. Why? Because it isn't stable, and somehow managed to crash five separate PCs. As they used to say on *That's Life*, we contacted Anco... who informed us they were releasing a patch immediately. Bugged software is symptomatic of a game being rushed out for Christmas, and a quick perusal of the manual appears to ratify this, parts of it having seemingly been written in the dark. Extended play reveals further annoying bugs, and the game really should never have got to the shelves in this state.

All of which is a shame, as the player search engine is well realised, transfer prices are realistic, and the authenticity is particularly impressive, with even the coveted Auto Windscreen Shield included for the benefit of lower-division dullards. There's even a direct copy of the Grandstand vidi-printer. The title is also accurate, as you can indeed trade sheepskin for shinpads and attempt to get among it on the pitch — an option that can firmly test your grasp on reality.

Despite the abundance of provincial sloppiness, there are some good things here, with a clear nod in the direction of *Championship Manager 2*. If you can't wait for the real thing, and don't mind faulty goods, it could be worth a dabble. But don't say we didn't warn you.

Steve Hill

PCZVERDICT

66%



Just the one table, unfortunately.

PRO PINBALL: BIG RACE USA

★ £19.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90
Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P166 and 32Mb RAM is more like it

PCZONE RECOMMENDED As justification for only including one table, the manual states that as a simulation, *Big Race* represents value for money by requiring zero maintenance, "...and it only costs one per cent the price of the real thing". Well that's nice to know.

Following on from *The Web* and *Timeshock*, this is the third in the *Pro Pinball* series. What that means is that even with only one table it is without doubt the most accurate pinball game on the market. The ball physics are impeccable, and graphically there is little to complain about. You can play the game from a number of views, everything can be customised, and you can even adjust the slope of the table and it's general condition. If you want your pinball table to look like it's done the rounds in every South London pub, then you can.

The idea behind the game is to travel the States from east to west, eventually competing in the *Big Race* all the way home again, with the help of a yellow cab, a map of the USA and other stereotypical Americana. What makes the game so enjoyable is the music and the sound effects. Normally this wouldn't be so important, but the cool jazz and drum & bass punctuate the action perfectly. If nothing else, *Big Race* is certainly the funkiest table to be seen on.

But it's still only a pinball game, and if you've already got one, say *Pinball Addictions* or *Balls Of Steel*, then it's unlikely you'll want another, no matter how many features it boasts. It's still only one table, after all, although the head-to-head Internet option and the price definitely swung it for us.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZVERDICT

83%



Not the best view to play the game in.

GRAND TOURING

★ £34.99 • Empire • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166
Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** Fine, but as usual a 3D card would make things smoother and prettier

We first saw an early version of this game about 18 months ago, and to be honest it wasn't too impressive then. At that stage we'd been far more excited by *Screamer Rally* and *TOCA*. Now of course finished, the game looks a lot better, although yet again there are a number of other racing games that are far more deserving of our attention — *TOCA 2*, for instance.

Offering an arcade mode and a simulation element, *Grand Touring* is a direct competitor to Codemasters' fine efforts, and as such it doesn't stand a snowman in hell's chance against it. Simply put, it's bog-standard in every department.

In arcade mode the game is the most unforgiving driving game we've ever seen. Here you can only play a game against other drivers by getting to each checkpoint before the clock runs down. The problem is that you aren't given enough time to reach them. And don't even think about turning the checkpoint option off, because you can't.

Just to add insult to injury, apart from certain instances, the in-game camera angles are completely unplayable, and by the time you've cycled back to the one you want your opponents have already lapped you. The game picks up immeasurably when you switch to simulation mode, although to be honest there's nothing we've seen before and you won't have to look too far to find something better.

Rest assured, it won't be too long before this topples from the new release shelf into the bargain bin, by which time *TOCA 1* will no doubt have joined it. Even so, we vehemently suggest you go for the latter.

Richie Shoemaker

PCZVERDICT

60%



American soldiers stop off and ask for directions.

PEOPLE'S GENERAL

★ £34.99 • The Learning Company/SSI • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** That'll do nicely

The fifth in the *Panzer General* series. And although the graphics are lush (for a strategy game) and the gameplay is good, there are a few changes from the original that seasoned *PG* players will find irritating. The air units are now 'remote' controlled, the troop replacements system is incomprehensible and the missions are very similar. Despite all that, it's one of the better turn-based strategy games out there.

Daniel Emery

PCZVERDICT

68%



Glover: one for the kids, clearly.

GLOVER

★ £34.99 • Hasbro • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** That seems fair enough

This is a platform game of the much-copied-but-never-bettered *Mario 64* variety. It's aimed at a younger audience, which means that you bounce your ball along to the occasional strains of a nursery rhyme or two and the action is rather pleasantly non-threatening.

It's all good, clean, harmless fun in reasonably rendered 3D landscapes. One for the amusement of younger pre-pubescent. Hairier youths will be less impressed.

Paul Hales

PCZVERDICT

67%



Our money is on the favourite – Big Brown Bear.

3D HUNTING: GRIZZLY

★ £34.99 • Macmillan • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P120 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** It looks rubbish whatever you run it on

Pity the poor sod who asks Santa for *Half-Life* and ends up with *3D Hunting: Grizzly*. A perfectly good reason to kick off the obligatory tantrum early, if ever one were needed. Almost as far removed from state-of-the-art as it's possible to get, *Grizzly* looks like the kind of thing a promising student would submit for a project, as opposed to something that has been developed commercially. It is, of course, *Deer Hunter* with bears, and indeed shares comparable production values with its cervine counterpart. That is, it looks shit. In fact it's scarcely deserving of its '3D' tag. These are graphics that would barely have raised an eyebrow ten years ago.

Grizzly does have a key gameplay difference to *Deer Hunter* though, namely that bears don't run – at least not away; they prefer to cuff you to the ground and take a sizeable bite out of your throat, a course of action that will strike a chord with viewers of the exemplary *When Animals Attack*.

For the cableless among you, *When Animals Attack* is standard amateur video fodder, but with amusing mishaps overlooked in favour of violent attacks by animals on humans. The program is genuinely mesmerising and highly entertaining.

Sadly, this game is neither. There is a modicum of tension to be had from a wounded bear circling for an orifice – before proceeding to tear you a new one – but it's certainly not enough to warrant paying for.

So if *3D Hunting: Grizzly* does turn up in your Christmas stocking, by all means feign gratitude, but just make sure you get the receipt.

Steve Hill

PCZVERDICT

36%



Missed again, huh?



Nice dinosaurs, shame about the frame rate.



The real-world physics are superb.

TRESPASSER

★ £34.99 • Electronic Arts • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P166 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** P200 and a 3D card at least, and the more memory the better

Coming from Steven Spielberg's Dreamworks Interactive and including the vocal talents of Richard Attenborough and Minnie Driver, you'd have thought *Trespasser* would be a bit of a winner, especially as it's basically a sequel to *The Lost World* movie. Unfortunately, it has one major failing – actually two – which we'll come to in just a second.

Don't be mistaken into thinking *Trespasser* is a straight *Quake* clone, because it isn't. Although played in the first-person and featuring a host of weaponry, there is one huge difference that sets it apart: the control system. The mouse controls your head, the left button extends your arm, while the right button causes you to pick up whatever is in front of you. Another key can stow the object (up to a maximum of two), while the spacebar fires. And

when all your ammunition is spent you can just toss the empty weapon away. In theory it's a great idea, but in practice you feel that you are a bit of a retard. Considering it's populated by dinosaurs, the island on which you're marooned is strangely well-stocked with guns. Some are just lying around, while others are perched on top of tall crates and have to be dislodged with a well-thrown rock.

The game itself is played out at quite a leisurely pace, although when the velociraptors appear it becomes quite frightening, especially as your gun waves about in front of your face when trying to aim the damn thing. Graphically the game is quite impressive, especially the dinosaurs' animation. However, even our office P233s with 64Mb RAM and a 3Dfx card regularly chugged when things got busy.

But try it. If you can live with the inadequacies, then you're sure to find the full game more than enjoyable. Especially with our hero sporting a nice set of bristols.

Richie Shoemaker

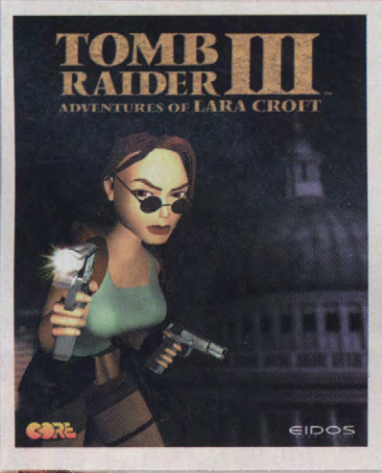
PCZVERDICT

70%



VIRGIN FESTIVE BRIBE SHOCKER!

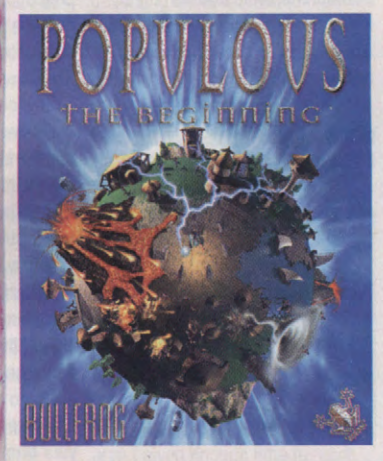
SPEND €50 AND WE'LL SLIP



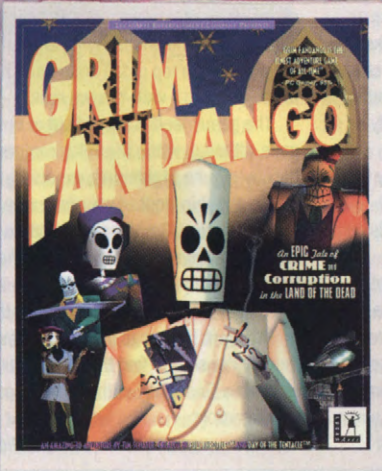
Tomb Raider 3 PC CD-Rom



Fifa 99 PC CD-Rom



Populous: The Beginning PC CD-Rom



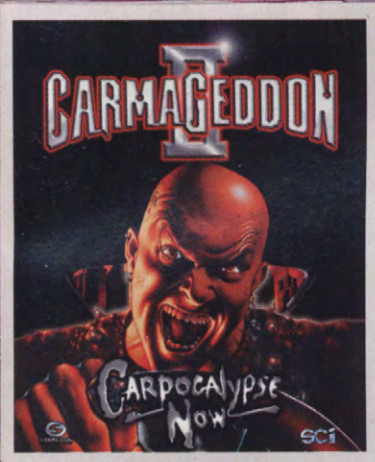
Grim Fandango PC CD-Rom



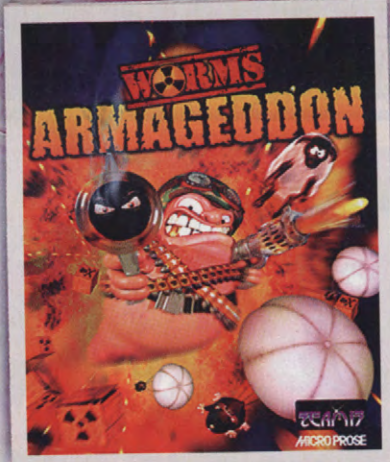
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* See Instore For Details.

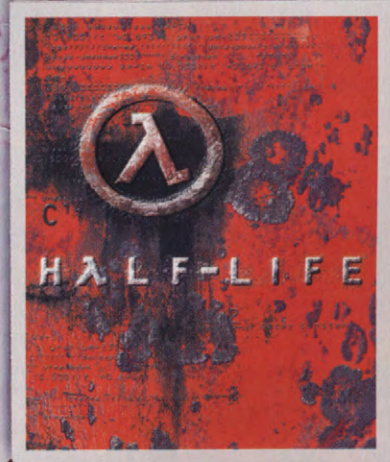
YOU A€5 VOUCHER*



Carmageddon 2 PC CD-Rom



Worms Armageddon PC CD-Rom



Half - Life PC CD-Rom



MEGASTORES

BUDGET ZONE

Games compilations are like boxes of chocolates – you never know what you're going to get. Unless, that is, you read the bloody reviews

★ GUMP Richie Shoemaker



MDK is a gem of a kill-everything-that-moves arcade platform title.



Interstate '76 has become less prone to jerkovision.



Carmageddon: the opening of the Newbury Bypass doesn't go to plan.



The Action Hall Of Fame package is worth it for MechCommander alone.



Men In Black: go and watch the movie again instead.



Motorhead: it's a cracker, as Frank Carson used to say.



Premier Manager 98/99: not even up to date when released.

OVERLOAD

★ £34.99 • Gremlin Interactive
• Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100
Memory 16Mb RAM

It's always good to see a mix of genres in a compilation pack – in this case a 3D action adventure, a football management game and an arcade racer. Unfortunately, the degree of quality ranges from shit-hot to shit.

Men In Black (PCZ # 59, 49%) is the weakest of the three. Sure, it's based on the hit film and plays a lot like *Resident Evil*, but the control system is so annoying in terms of gameplay that you'll soon give up and go back to your VCR to watch the real thing.

Premier Manager 98/99 (PCZ #68, 55%) is the newest game here, so you might assume it's the best. Wrong – it's rubbish. When it first arrived for review, it was difficult to tell it apart from the previous version. It still has an annoying interface, the player ratings are not only out of date, they're just plain wrong, and the less said about the 3D action sequences the better.

Fortunately, the final game in this compilation is *Motorhead* (PCZ #63, 90%), and it's a cracker. With or without 3D acceleration, it looks incredible and moves with a fluid grace that only the most recent games can match. A great game on its own, then, but if you look at the compilation as a whole it makes for a pretty grim package. If it was ten quid cheaper, things would be different, but they aren't.

ACTION HALL OF FAME

★ £19.99 • Interplay • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM

The first thing that grabbed our attention with this compilation was the price – 20 quid. Then you notice that top of the bill is *MechCommander* (PCZ #66, 85%), a more than decent real-time strategy game that first appeared in September. Not only has the price essentially dropped by £15 in just three months, but you also get three top games bundled with it.

As *Interstate '76* (PCZ #51, 79%), *MDK* (PCZ #50, 90%) and the original *Carmageddon* (PCZ #50, 95%) are essentially free, there's little we can do to criticise them. *I'76* is certainly the weakest game here, but as PCs have become more powerful, *I'76* has got better (it's less



prone to 'jerkovision'). Graphically, it's looking pretty spartan, but the '70s soundtrack lends the game unrivalled style and the gameplay is more like *MechWarrior* on wheels with an afro on top. Coupled with *Carmageddon*, these two driving games offer a massively different gaming experience than the usual *Screamer*-style driving titles currently available.

In reference to Paul Mallinson's underrated video debut, *Mallo Does Kidderminster*, *MDK* is a little gem of a game – one of those kill-everything-that-moves arcade platform titles we've seen little of since.

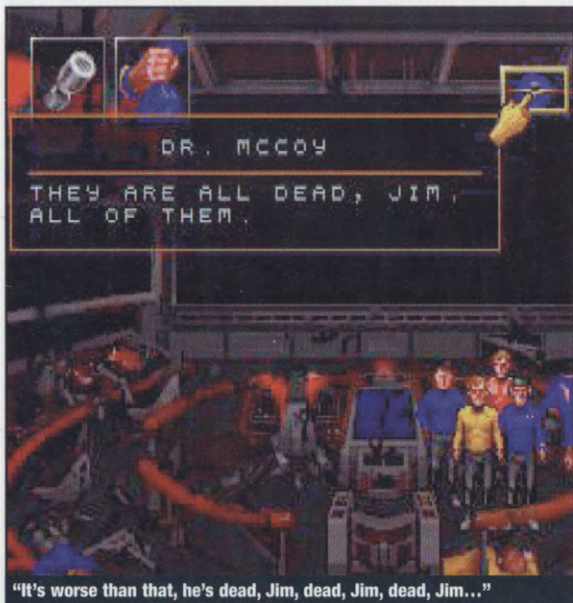
Overall, *Action Hall Of Fame* offers incredible value for money, even if you already own one of the titles on offer. In fact, it's one of the best compilations we've seen, period.

PCZVERDICT

93%

PCZVERDICT

65%



"It's worse than that, he's dead, Jim, dead, Jim, dead, Jim..."



A *Final Unity*: nice puzzles, shame about the crew.



Generations: good adventure, awful combat, scary wigs.



Starfleet Academy is a pretty average space combat sim...



...Take away the *Trek* licence and you're left with norra lot.

STAR TREK: FEDERATION COMPILATION

★ £29.99 • Interplay/MicroProse • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM



No matter how good the games are, if you're a non-Trekkie you should avoid this collection of games like the proverbial plague.

The oldest game here, *25th Anniversary* (PCZ #13, 86%), is a graphically dire point-and-click adventure based on the old '60s TV series (nearing its 30th anniversary). If not for the vocal interjections from the original cast, it wouldn't be worth bothering about.

Although it's based on the Next Gen crew, *A Final Unity* (PCZ #27, 94%) is probably the best game in the pack. The SVGA graphics and excellent puzzles combine to make it an enduring adventure that's yet to be bettered, at least by usual *Star Trek* standards.

Not the best *Star Trek* film by any means, *Generations* (PCZ #53, 72%) blended the genres and produced a fairly mixed game that incorporated *Doom*-style action adventure – which was actually fairly engaging – and 3D space combat, which was, and still is, awful.

Finally, we have *Starfleet Academy* (PCZ #56, 87%) – a fairly good space combat sim. But there are far better out there – just take a look at the Supertest on page 116. And so it is with most of the games on offer. Take away the *Star Trek* licence – which is exactly what Activision have recently done to Interplay and MicroProse – and all you're left with are some pretty run-of-the-mill titles. For the *Trek* fan, though, this is fairly good value.

PCZVERDICT

84%



The *Full Wormage* will appeal chiefly to *Worms* completists.

THE FULL WORMAGE

★ £29.99 • MicroProse • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 16Mb RAM

Who on earth would want to play *Worms United* (*Worms I* with the *Reinforcements* add-on pack), when they've got *Worms 2*? No one. It's like having two Sharon Corrs, each holding a tub of maple syrup, standing naked in front of you, the only difference between them being that one of them is real and the other inflatable. Now which would you choose? (Depends on the size of your PC, I suppose – Ed.)

Some people may have preferred it, but *Worms United* is redundant – which means that a year or so after *Worms 2* (PCZ #58, 82%) was first released, all you're getting for the same price is *Worms 2* and the *Worms* pinball table taken straight out of *Addiction Pinball* (PCZ #65, 83%). It doesn't make for a worthwhile compilation unless you're a *Worms* completist.

Having said that, *Worms 2* is a fantastic game, which comes into its own when you have a couple of people huddled round a monitor with a few beers. It's a turn-based strategy game, but that does nothing to detract from the fact that it's fast-paced and has a great sense of humour, thanks to some attractive cartoon graphics and a feast of weapons ranging from shotguns and bazookas to exploding sheep and napalm strikes.

As far as pinball games go, the *Worms* pinball table is a good one, with crisp graphics and some great samples taken from the original game. The problem is that it's not quite enough to justify the price. Our advice would be to wait for *Worms 2* to appear on budget and buy *Pro Pinball: Timeshock!* (PCZ #53, 91%), which is already available for a tenner.

PCZVERDICT

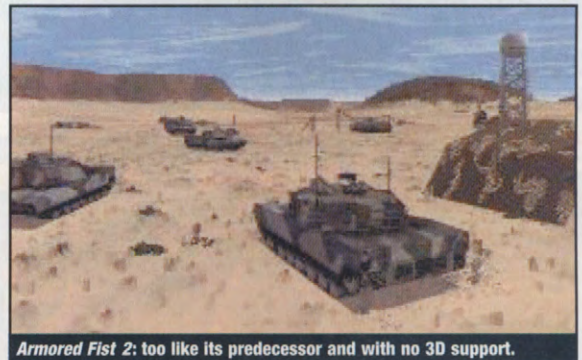
72%



F22-Raptor is a bog-standard 2D sim, but fun to play online.



Comanche 3 works as a proper sim and as a triff arcade game.



Armored Fist 2: too like its predecessor and with no 3D support.

WORLD OF COMBAT 2000

★ £34.99 • NovaLogic • Out now

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM

Comanche 3 (PCZ #51, 92%) has been a favourite around the office for over a year now. It's not the greatest looking simulation in the world (none of the games in this compilation are) but, thanks to a dead-easy 'arcade' option, it's probably the best budget chopper sim on the market, especially for action fans. Thankfully, it works pretty well as an out-and-out 'proper' simulation as well.

And so the trend continues with *F-22 Raptor* (PCZ #60, 79%). Next to every other flight sim, it's pretty bog standard – but without the spiffy 3D accelerated graphics. In its favour, it's a great laugh as an online game, especially via the NovaWorld service.

The runt of the litter has to be *Armored Fist 2* (PCZ #58, 76%), which was, unfortunately, far too similar to its ageing predecessor to be taken seriously. Yes, the graphics were an improvement, but again, without 3D hardware support, NovaLogic have shot themselves in the foot. Until very recently, anyway.

Though they're not the best in their field, these three games offer a rich diversity for fans of military simulations, unparalleled in any other compilation currently available. If you've yet to buy into the 3D revolution and refuse to get with the times, you should stick with these. They are all good-looking and highly accessible sims that should appeal to a wide range of PC gamers.

PCZVERDICT

79%



Who's the best space fighter of all? Read on...

PCZ SUPERTEST

SPACE COMBAT SIMS

It rarely gets the spotlight, but the space combat sim can be a rewarding genre. Planet Earth may be blue, but *Paul Presley* knows what to do... and it's got nothing to do with protein pills

THE MINI-RATINGS

The total score of each game is made up from combined ratings of the following five categories:

INTERFACE How intuitive is the game to play? Does it flow like a natural extension of your psyche or are you pausing every three seconds to look at a key list?

VARIETY Is every mission/flight the same old thing or does the vastness of space keep throwing surprises at you?

REALISM Is it *2001* or *Star Wars*? Do you have to deal with inertia and gravitational pull, or can Isaac Newton take a flying leap?

GRAPHICS Is the majesty of space represented in all its glory, or are we talking a large black square with a few white dots for stars?

GAMEPLAY Is it fun? Is it dull? You get the idea.

Each category is rated out of 10. The main score is a percentage, which is followed by a summary comment. Got that? Good.

John Glenn, eh? As we write this, the space-faring septuagenarian has just finished orbiting the planet, electrodes attached to his anus to see how zero gravity affects bowel movements in the elderly (or somesuch) and the International Space Station has just begun to take shape. Mankind's continued future in space seems all the more real again and guess what? You're never going to be a part of it. Never. Face it and weep.

The only way your flabby, unkempt frame is ever going to experience life in space is via the computer. Space-based games have been a staple of gaming life since the early days of BBC Micro Bs and the seminal *Elite*, despite never really achieving the fame and popularity of *Quake*-clones and Lara's breasts.

The focus of such titles usually tends to fall into one of two areas: spaceships blowing the crap out of other spaceships, or gruff, futuristic pilots making a living by trading goods from one end of the galaxy to the other (and blowing

the crap out of other spaceships along the way).

Evidence of the genre's niche appeal is given on the following

“As we write this, the space-faring septuagenarian is orbiting the planet, electrodes attached to his anus”

pages when you realise that several of the games under scrutiny are at least two years old. Still available on budget, thankfully, but old nonetheless.

The other dividing line that space games encounter is the issue of realism. Does a game

take all the complex Newtonian physics into account, or do they go the *Star Wars* route and pretend to be WWII fighters in

space? You'll get differing arguments but as games like *Darklight Conflict* and *I-War* prove, you can get playable games that offer a fair balance between the two.

So, who'll rule the galaxy? Only one way to find out...

FRONTIER: FIRST ENCOUNTERS

★ £39.99 • Take 2 Interactive • Reviewed PCZ #28

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor 386DX Memory 4Mb RAM **WE SAY** Windows 95 actually buggers it up a bit, but you can probably get it working in DOS mode

Old? Old? Did someone say old? Probably not, but it's as good a lead-in as any. We've included *Frontier: First Encounters* simply because no one in the office could agree whether *HardWar* counted as a space combat sim. For the record, I disagreed because it's set on one of Saturn's moons and not in space. Richie thinks I'm being anal but we have to draw the line somewhere, lest we collapse into anarchy.

Anyway, *Frontier: First Encounters* caused one hell of a storm initially. A second sequel to the classic space trader *Elite*, *Frontier: First Encounters* was supposed to boost the graphics, the options and the realism. It didn't, and was full of bugs.

Instead it rehashed old themes, proved completely

unworkable and crashed just about every machine it was installed on. Patch after patch followed, but the public's unrest just kept growing, with calls to boycott Gametek (the publishers), kill David Braben and storm parliament (almost).

With hindsight, it all seems a bit harsh. It's by no means perfect, but when you finally get an almost workable version, it isn't too bad a game. The combat sucks, but then this is probably down to Braben's over-reliance on realistic flight physics. This is a game where spaceships have turning circles of several months if they are going fast enough.

The trading is as nice an option as it always was in the *Elite* games and the sense of freedom – the feeling that you

can pretty much do whatever you want, remains. The variety in missions also keep things ticking along nicely. Sadly, it could never be enough to fight off the onslaught that the *Wing Commander* series unleashed. It's like the difference between Hollywood and the Welsh film industry.



Okay, it looks crude, but this was before any sort of acceleration...

Actual: 111.8 Km/h Set: 112.2 Km/h Alt: 0 m Relative to Merlin

...Although, saying that, its ships had pretty funky designs.

PCZ VERDICT

Interface	4
Variety	7
Realism	9
Graphics	3
Gameplay	5

60 Bold, ambitious and very realistic. But not very good



Actual: 36.9 Km/h Set: 37.5 Km/h Alt: 0 m Relative to Merlin

Frontier: First Encounters scores over its forerunners by actually having landscapes – no matter how basic.



Explosions look particularly nice in *Darklight Conflict*.



The interface is straightforward once you're used to it.



This looks great when it's moving, honest.

DARKLIGHT CONFLICT

★ £9.99 • EA Classics • Reviewed PCZ #65

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** You'll probably need at least a P133 and 16Mb RAM

You know how there are moments in life that leave you unfulfilled? Fun-size Mars Bars. Bruce Willis films. Sex. Well, *Darklight Conflict* is like that. At first, everyone was stunned by the graphics – not a 3D card in sight and yet it still looked better than similar games of the time. It also had a good combat engine – none of your

Newtonian laws of physics here.

But that was all it had. Some might say good graphics and a good engine are enough. Fools. *Darklight Conflict* suffers from a lack of ambition. Games such as *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* or *Wing Commander* have a reason for you doing the derring-do. *Darklight* just puts you there and shrugs its

shoulders, as embarrassed by the whole affair as you are. Which is a shame, because it deserves to be so much more. This seems to be Rage, the developers', stock-in-trade. *Incoming* (PCZ #63, 90%) is another example of stunning graphical quality slightly marred by having a run-of-the-mill arcade game tagged on to it.

Basically, *Darklight's* gameplay as follows: "Look – there's some bad aliens that look like ducks; go and shoot them," and then you're left to it for the

rest of the game while it goes and has a coffee. There isn't even a storyline going on while you're doing it. You almost start looking for the 50p slot on the front of your PC after a while.

In its favour, age hasn't dulled its glossy sheen and now it's 25 quid cheaper than it was when it first appeared. Those of you on a budget and not looking for anything particularly deep or taxing may well be encouraged to give it a shot. Just don't expect *Wing Commander*.

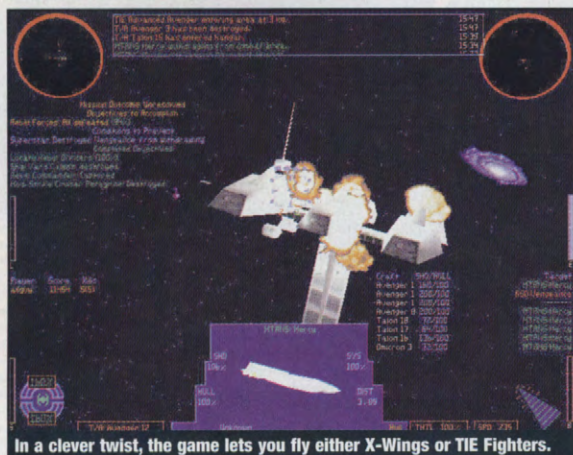
PCZ VERDICT

Interface	6
Variety	4
Realism	5
Graphics	8
Gameplay	4

68 Good for its time, but not deep enough to last very long

X-WING VS TIE FIGHTER

★ £34.99 • LucasArts • Reviewed PCZ #52



In a clever twist, the game lets you fly either X-Wings or TIE Fighters.



A-Wings in flight, I want to see you tonight.

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Surprisingly, you actually need a bit of oomph to get the best out of it. A P200 at least

LucasArts' track record in the *X-Wing* arena was sound until *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* turned up. Which was surprising, to say the least, as the one thing everyone had been clamouring for since the start was a multiplayer version and now, finally, here was the game that would provide it. Except that it proved to be a bit of a damp squib.

There's nothing majorly wrong with it – it's just that our dreams of flying against the Death Star with a squadron of friends didn't materialise. For a start, the multiplayer options only support four players, which is pretty daft considering that the thrill of the film battles was that they dealt with dozens of fighters at once. Second, everything moves so fast

when you're in a fight that it doesn't matter all that much who's piloting the opposing ships – you barely see them anyway.

The combat engine itself is still first-rate. You really get a sense of being in a 3D space, in contrast to the *Wing Commander* posse, which felt more like rotating in front of a flat bitmap. The graphics are also pretty good, with a sense of scale that is almost unparalleled. Star Destroyers don't just look big – they feel big.

It has lost some of the engaging storylines and mission structures that previous games in the series had, and somewhere along the line the interface has changed from comprehensive but intuitive to complex and fiddly. No

one knows quite how or why, but one suspects the Dark Side.

X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter is a blip – a blemish on the otherwise smooth face of LucasArts' space simulations. It's fun, but both *Privateer 2* and *Wing Commander: Prophecy* are more satisfying experiences. Of course, for the ultimate *Star Wars* experience, it's probably a better bet to wait for the upcoming *X-Wing Alliance*.

PCZVERDICT

Interface	4
Variety	4
Realism	3
Graphics	7
Gameplay	7

78 The Force is only fair to middling with this one

WING COMMANDER: PROPHECY

★ £39.99 • Electronic Arts • Reviewed PCZ #59

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P100 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Use a 3Dfx card if possible and pump up the processor for best results

Wing Commander. Now we're talking. Here was a series that would quite happily push back the boundaries of acceptable minimum spec requirements and not give a damn in the process. I still remember the very first time I opened the original game's box and was immediately confronted

with a big red WARNING! sign saying that anything less than a 386 PC wouldn't be acceptable (this in the days of 286s and EGA graphics). Forget market trends and buying habits, *Wing*



The action is always fast in *Wing Commander: Prophecy*.



Quick, annex it!

Commander dictated the pace and the rest could go to hell.

Five games down the line and it's still going strong, still setting the pace, still employing Mark Hamill. *Wing Commander: Prophecy* is the first of the series to employ 3D-accelerated graphics and, as a result, looks pretty damn smart. Not quite as good, oddly enough, as non-3Dfx games like *Darklight Conflict* or *I-War*, but still pretty fine.

Where *Wing Commander: Prophecy* still scores most highly is in the FMV. 'Proper' actors doing 'proper' acting (and a porn star sadly not doing any 'improper' acting). The whole thing reeks of cash, so it came as no surprise when Origin announced that there was to be a full-length movie (except, perhaps, to Mark Hamill, who had figured his big-screen days were forever behind him).

The actual combat sections



A jobbing actor paying the rent, yesterday.

are a little less enjoyable than those of *Privateer 2* or *Conflict: Freespace*, mainly because of the rigid, inflexible nature of the missions. Also, the engine Origin have used isn't quite as fluid as that in *X-Wing* or *Freespace*.

Wing Commander: Prophecy has a pedigree, make no mistake. It's just that it's one of those American pedigrees, which means you either really 'get' it, or you just sit there with a cynical sneer on your face, asking: "Is that it?"

PCZVERDICT

Interface	7
Variety	4
Realism	3
Graphics	7
Gameplay	7

79 More like a good film than a good game

I-WAR

★ £39.99 • Ocean/Infogrames • Reviewed PCZ #60

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** Not too shabby, but a P233 would be ideal. Plus 32Mb RAM

The constant struggle that space combat sim designers face is knowing how realistic to make their games. Put too much emphasis on realistic zero-gravity physics and you get the kind of game that requires a degree in science just to do a three-point turn. Whack the options to zero realism and you get little more than a World War II sim in space (ie *Star Wars*).

I-War is surprising in that it has a very realistic feel to it (as far as you'll ever know, at any rate) but still manages to be fairly playable in the combat stakes. It isn't easy, and it's certainly not as immediately playable as other titles, but with practice you get used to the control system. The

missions are good, with plenty of variety and a decent storyline holding everything together. The graphics are astonishingly good, too, without a 3Dfx card in sight.

None of which explains why *I-War* got so little attention at the start of the year. Perhaps it was simply bad timing – when it was released, everyone was still spellbound by *Wing Commander: Prophecy*. Perhaps the realism put everyone off. Perhaps, perish the thought, Ocean realised they had a minor game on their hands and tried to just push it out quietly without causing any fuss.

Whatever the case, *I-War*, like *Darklight Conflict*, is a game that deserves a wider audience. Unlike *Darklight Conflict*, there's actually



Frankly, it didn't care about asteroid fields, it was just that hard.

a game of substance beneath the flashy graphics. It doesn't have the weight of the 'big boys', but you won't be disappointed.

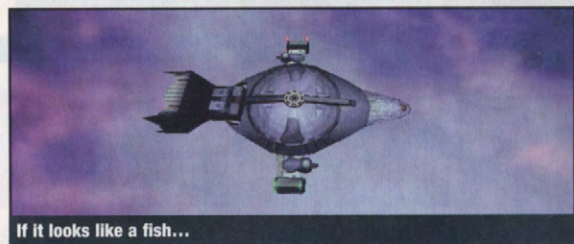
PCZVERDICT

Interface	5
Variety	8
Realism	8
Graphics	9
Gameplay	7

81 A sadly overlooked gem



Huge ships are at your command.



If it looks like a fish...

STARFLEET ACADEMY

★ £44.99 • Interplay • Reviewed PCZ #56

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P90 Memory 16Mb RAM **WE SAY** At least a P166 and 32Mb RAM

"It's shit," says Editor Chris, before admitting to never having played *Starfleet Academy* in his life. Which is the only real problem that *Starfleet Academy* faces – the narrow-mindedness of non-*Trek* fans. Interplay have actually put together a damn fine game here. A very credible engine recreates just about everything

involved in piloting a Federation starship, while a pretty decent storyline conveys life at the futuristic school of learning and keeps you hooked enough to want to see it through to the end.

But because *Starfleet Academy* came slap bang in the middle of *Privateer 2* and *Wing Commander: Prophecy*, very few

people outside the solid *Trek* fan base gave it a second look.

Compared to Origin's meisterwerk, *Starfleet Academy* can seem somewhat limiting and stifled. True, the FMV is less entertaining than the Mark Hamill saga, and yes, the action does seem more clinical than the freewheeling, down-and-dirty nature of the *Wing Commander* or *Privateer 2* universe. But *Starfleet Academy* scores in providing a more structured gameplay. You know where you

are when you join Starfleet.

Because of the game's nature (young cadet passing his Captain's exams by playing out missions in a simulator), the missions are a lot more varied than *Wing Commander's*. They seem to require more than just autopiloting, shooting lots of aliens, autopiloting again, shooting some more aliens, then autopiloting home. You have to negotiate with other races, try to be diplomatic, not fire until fired upon, etc. Between missions you

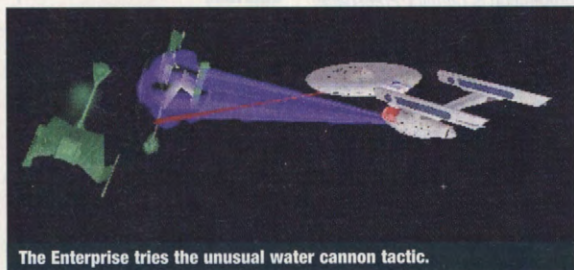
have to sort out the social lives of your fellow students. There's a real soap opera feel to some of it.

Starfleet Academy is good. Very good. It's the cleaner alternative to Origin's gritty realism. Thanks to the mission variety, you're unlikely to get bored. Top tip: this game is in the *Federation* pack (see page 115), which is only £29.99.

PCZVERDICT

Interface	8
Variety	9
Realism	5
Graphics	6
Gameplay	8

84 Surprisingly good. One of the best *Star Trek* games around



The Enterprise tries the unusual water cannon tactic.



A starship warping, yesterday.

CONFLICT: FREESPACE

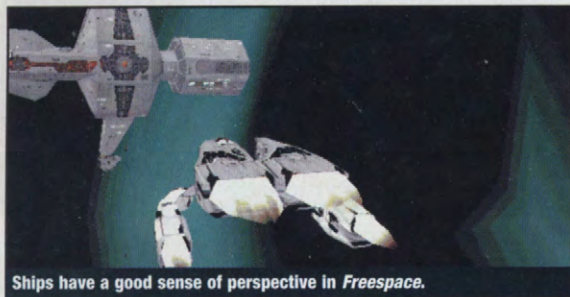
★ £39.99 • Interplay • Reviewed PCZ#66

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P133 Memory 32Mb RAM **WE SAY** A P200 with a 3D card and the more memory the better

Modern, state of the art, damn playable, fun, fun, fun, fun, fun. There is only one reason why *Conflict: Freespace* isn't the top-

rated game in this round-up, but we'll come to that in a moment. All you need to know is that the most recent addition to the genre



Ships have a good sense of perspective in *Freespace*.

has practically got it all. The graphics look astonishingly good (particularly if you're 3Dfx'd up), with special mention going to the smaller effects, such as fire trails, explosions and so on.

The gameplay is good, too – plenty of mission types, lots of options in-flight, wingmen buzzing about all over the shop, and all with impressive levels of artificial intelligence. Your full-on hectic action jamboree, basically. And the interface is so simple that it would make Bill Gates give up writing operating systems and take up badger-stuffing instead. Everything you could possibly need is presented with visual ease on a transparent HUD – meaningless words to the

average man on the street, but music to the ears of any budding young space pilot.

Obviously, the storylines aren't as glossy as its *Wing Commander* and *Privateer 2* counterparts, but if they were, everyone would be saying it's just a *Wing Commander* rip-off. As it is, they're saying that anyway. You can't win in this business.

But why isn't it the best? Well, the simple answer is that *Privateer 2*, despite its age, provides a slightly better feeling of total involvement. It boils down to this: if you're willing to spend the extra cash and can't really be arsed to step into yesterday's gaming arena, buy *Conflict: Freespace*. Otherwise, read on...



The HUD may look cluttered, but it's very concise when you're used to it.

PCZVERDICT

Interface	9
Variety	7
Realism	5
Graphics	9
Gameplay	8

89 The best of the bunch for modern gamers

PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING

★ £12.99 • EA Classics • Reviewed PCZ#44

TECH SPECS

MINIMUM SYSTEM Processor P75 Memory 8Mb RAM **WE SAY** Well, if you've got one of today's entry-level machines and still can't run it, you've obviously got a dud PC

It's over two years old. The graphics are looking a little dated and there appears to be no hint of 3D support on the horizon. It's got dodgy FMV sequences with dodgy British actors. So why on earth is *Privateer 2: The Darkening* the best space sim of them all? (Because Chris says so? – Ed.)

The reason is that despite its advancing years, the antics of Clive Owen, Christopher Walken et al still provide the most 'complete' space combating experience of all. *Conflict:*

Freespace might have the graphics and youthful vigour, *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* might have the most well-known spaceships, *Starfleet Academy* might have the most licensing power (arguably), but *Privateer 2* has the gameplay.

When *Elite* first introduced the open-ended, go-anywhere game structure to the space-based genre, nobody thought it would be matched. Indeed, Origin's first steps into the field with *Wing Commander* suggested that they were heading in completely the opposite direction – fixed missions, rigid storyline, no flexibility. *Privateer* decided to marry the two schools in a grandiose affair, complete with mariachi bands and conjurers. *Privateer 2* took the same concept and ran it through an expensive makeover in the process. Consequently, we've got a game

SUPERTEST WINNER

that has graphics that were superb for the time (and are still perfectly adequate today), FMV sequences with 'name' actors and all the gloss of the *Wing Commander* series. Plus we've

“The game enables you to delve into the main storyline at will or just do your own thing”

got a game that enables you to delve into the main storyline at will or just do your own thing by trading, pirating or bounty hunting until you feel you've had enough.

But why should you consider it in this day and age, especially if you've gone to the trouble of buying a top-end PC with all the bells and whistles? Why step backwards in time? Well, for a start, it's cheap. And true playability, like a good wine, doesn't diminish with age. There's still a load to get your teeth into, and the space battles, helped by the fact that they were written by



Wahey! Go on Clivey, me old son. Get in there. Phwoaarr!



Cut-scenes show the difference in terrain from planet to planet.

X-Wing enthusiasts, rather than *Wing Commander* fans, are still exciting and enjoyable. It also helps that the only real modern competition is *Conflict: Freespace*, and that decides to skimp on the storyline aspects, which makes *Privateer 2* seem like a more rounded package overall.

There is supposed to be a *Privateer 3* happening some day, but who knows when it'll turn up. Our advice is to fork out for both this and *Conflict: Freespace* and enjoy the best of both worlds.

PCZVERDICT

Interface	7
Variety	8
Realism	4
Graphics	5
Gameplay	9

90 The best of the bunch for everyone else



It can get confusing in the midst of battle, but that's part of the fun.

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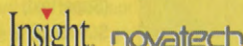
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FEEDBACK

So what do you reckon – are the games we've reviewed recently the pinnacle of perfection, or a pile of old poo? Write in and let us know.

Richie Shoemaker rounds up this month's responses

“Klingon's level design bears a close resemblance to something a 15-year-old could make during a few nights with the Unreal editor”

CHARLIE

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in PC ZONE over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words, and include your name, age and address.

WRITE TO Feedback, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL Alternatively, email them to us at letters.pczzone@dennis.co.uk with 'Feedback' in the subject line.

NEED FOR SPEED III: HOT PURSUIT

REVIEWED Issue 69, November
SCORE 91%

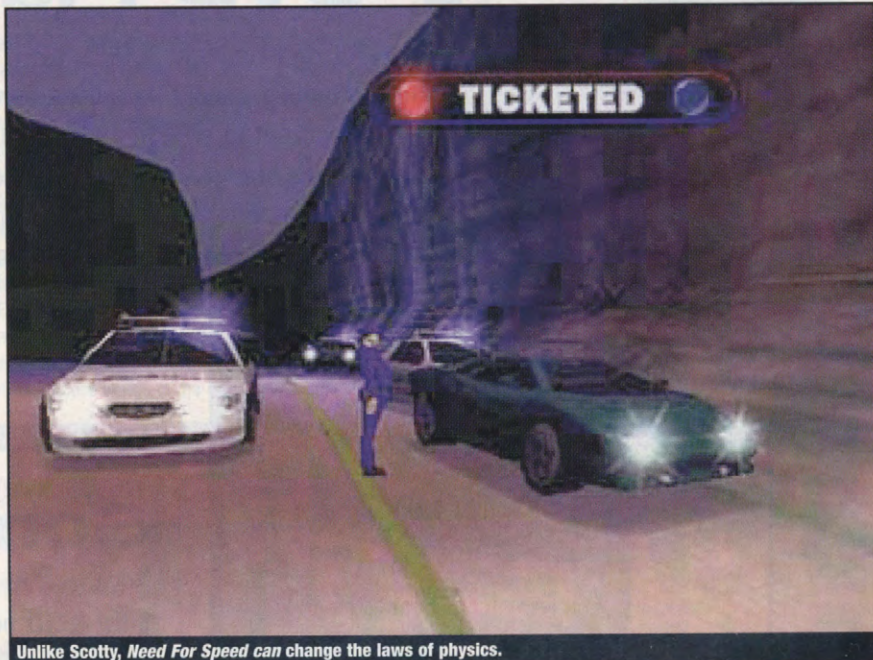
What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC “Succeeds in bringing the fun factor back to driving games and therefore comes highly recommended. It's the kind of game that you'll spend ages playing and then keep coming back for a quick spin. Go buy it and burn some rubber. You'd be a fool not to.”

What you think

★ “Why do the cars lean the wrong way when going into corners? Also, when accelerating, the cars pitch forward, whereas they should lean back. And, when braking and turning simultaneously, you lose far too much speed – it's as if the handbrake is being pulled. What's more, if wheel-spinning in first gear and turning, all the cars understeer. Surely they should oversteer and go into a 'doughnut'? This was correct in every version of NFS so far – how come it isn't correct now?”

“I feel that EA should've spent more time making a game that feels right, and less time on adding minor details like leaves flying up onto your windscreen. It's more important that a game plays well than having fancy graphics. Maybe you could argue that they've implemented a simpler approach to driving to make it easier to get into, to which I would have to say



Unlike Scotty, Need For Speed can change the laws of physics.

“bollocks”. Look at Gran Turismo on the PlayStation. That has perhaps the best driving feel yet experienced on a game, and look how well it has done. If NFS3 had the feel of GT it would be ten times better.”

Andrew Lowe

★ “Absolutely fantastic! In my opinion, it leaves Gran Turismo standing in a puddle of piss. It's so much more exciting when you've got cops on your tail or when you are the cop ramming racers off the road. Who cares that you can't buy new parts for your cars – like in GT – when you have excitement like this? The only downer is the tracks; there aren't enough of them – especially when the second half replicates parts of the first half. Are EA just plain lazy, or what?”

Barry Ward

MECHCOMMANDER

REVIEWED Issue 69, November
(Supertest)
SCORE 75%

What we thought

“Here it's extremely difficult to work out what's going on right from the start. Referring to the instruction manual is no immediate help as, like the

interface, it's cluttered with irrelevancies and is hell-bent on milking the BattleTech licence instead of teaching you how to play the game.”

What you think

★ “I think you should really leave MechCommander alone – dropping it to 75% was really uncalled for, because I think it is an extremely good game. I agree it maybe isn't a classic, but many of your criticisms are unjustified. For one thing, I found the interface extremely intuitive and easy to use. Its strategic appeal is underplayed and there's no mention of the excellent AI. Finally, the multiplayer game is a joy and the qualities of the game really shine through.

“Many of your criticisms also apply to the other main games of the genre. Red Alert took me a lot less time to finish than MechCommander and the missions are, for the most part, all the same: build a base, harvest the stuff, build loads of troops and kick some ass. While this can be fun, it becomes very repetitive and the missions are virtually indistinguishable from one another.”

Graham Macpherson

KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD

REVIEWED Issue 68, October
SCORE 94%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC “For the Star Trek devotee, Christmas has come early, and Klingon: Honour Guard will have you making like a chimp for the foreseeable future. As for normal people, it's almost enough to make you watch an episode of Star Trek. Almost.”

What you think

★ “My expectations were soaring. I started playing. And I played. And played it some more. And I was amazed. I was amazed that it was possible to take such a fantastic game engine and make such a crap game with it. And I was amazed that your magazine could be so completely blind to the truth. 'It is already better than Unreal,' you stated. In only one respect is it possibly better than Unreal, and that's in the weapons department. In every other aspect, it's not even worth a comparison. The textures are unbelievably crude and simple, and the lighting effects don't come anywhere near Unreal's



We have been told off for picking on MechCommander and pinching its tuck shop money.

sophisticated, muted brilliance. And the goddamn monsters look like they're made out of cardboard or stolen from a lousy cartoon. Just try comparing the incredibly stupid big ape things on Rure Penthe with *Unreal's* Titans! It doesn't exactly help that the level design bears an alarmingly close resemblance to something a 15-year-old could make during a few nights at home with the *Unreal* editor. Even *Jedi Knight*, which barely, barely can be argued to contain simpler graphics than *Klingon*, is a far superior game, thanks to its great level design."

Charlie, Norway (An *Unreal* fan, perhaps? - Ed.)

★ "It's not that bad - better than *Unreal*, anyway. You can't say that throwing the knife from a way off and scoring a direct hit isn't satisfying. Mind you, I still can't really see *Quake II* coming off my hard drive any time soon."

Forkhead

★ "As these things go, *Klingon* isn't too bad. I definitely prefer it to *Unreal*, but you can't help thinking that a bit more adventuring should've been added. *Star Trek* isn't really suited to this type of game, although it would've been nice if we could've gotten onto the bridge of the Enterprise and shown Beverly Crusher a thing or two about Klingon anatomy."

Frak

LINKS LS '99

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 50%

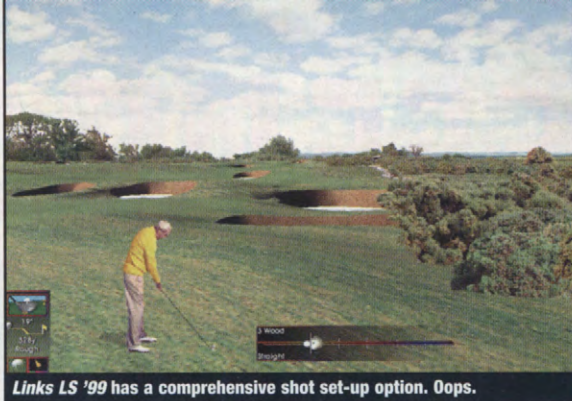
What we thought

"Links LS '99 does very, very little that sets it apart from: a) any other golf game currently out there, or b) any previous version of Links... More than that, Links LS '99 still hasn't addressed the problems of all the previous versions: a confusing and unfriendly aiming system, an impossible-to-judge power meter and a lack of shot adjustment options."

What you think

★ "The most average golf game yet! On what basis? Are you comparing it to previous LS releases or to another game? Surely not another game - it blows the others away. What game offers realism like LS? I've played them all, and none come close."

"Links 99 is vastly superior to any previous release. It boasts so many more additions that it's a game to last, and it's easy to use if you take enough time to read the manual and play a few holes.



Links LS '99 has a comprehensive shot set-up option. Oops.

"Real golf takes a little longer to master - is that what you're comparing the game to? That would be more understandable."

Ian Downs

CAESAR III

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 92%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Food remains uneaten, cups of tea go cold, and cigarette ash tumbles to the floor under its own weight. Unless you are in prison, unemployed or a student, be warned: Caesar III will screw you up."

What you think

★ "Wow! I can't believe it. It's just f**king wicked. I ended up playing it for four hours - I didn't even realise I'd spent so long on it. It's just so addictive, and there are so many things to discover. Personally, I think this is actually better than *SimCity 2000*. Bravo."

PeriOD

★ "The Caesar III review was spot on. Horribly, horribly addictive. At least with the weather being so crap, I don't feel so guilty about the lost weekend."

Daniel Hemmant

CARMAGEDDON II

REVIEWED Issue 69, November
SCORE 95%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Carma II does for Carmageddon what Doom did for Wolfenstein 3D: it takes the concept and fine-tunes it, producing a game that is a ghoulish dream come true for fans of the original ... and a kick in the cock for the critics."

What you think

★ "I've just bought this game and it is seriously cool. There's nothing better to vent the frustrations of a bad day than to effect a head-on crash that totally wipes out a competitor."

Peter Dadswell

★ "I had my reservations, especially with it being the 'green' version that I reluctantly paid out for. After a couple of hours, though, my doubts quickly

dispersed in a killing frenzy. The new cars are wonderful - except the new Eagle, which sucks - and the power-ups are hilarious. And the replays? Oh no, I think I've just come."

Mop & Bucket

NIGHTLONG: UNION CITY CONSPIRACY

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 43%

What we thought

"Gameplay consists of wandering around Union City, trying to sort out the mystery. The trouble is that the story is so generic and unexciting that you'll often find yourself almost falling asleep after a few minutes of playing."

What you think

★ "I know it's not in the same league as *Monkey III* and *Broken Sword*, but it's full of puzzles (which I found harder than the games I've mentioned), and it has a plot that keeps your interest and slowly reveals itself. I've been playing adventures since the *Larry* and text adventures. Take my advice - buy this game. It's no way as bad as you say. You can blame me if hardened adventure fans think it's shite."

Sean O'Donovan

DUNE 2000

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 62%

What we thought

"Where the first game was ground-breaking, this is just another clone - albeit from the originators. It's obvious that *Dune 2000* is at best a stopgap before *Tiberian Sun* appears; at worst it's an excuse to print money."

What you think

★ "Who cares if it is fundamentally the same game? That was great, and now it's just as great, but with better controls, graphics, units and some cool FMV."

"It's certainly better than *Red Alert*. Granted, it hasn't got any cool 3D units like *TA*, but it still rocks. I didn't think the 3D was great in *TA* anyway - *Dune 2000* looks better."

Ben Campbell

HALF-LIFE

REVIEWED Issue 71, Xmas
SCORE 95%

What we thought

PCZONE CLASSIC "Half-Life is a sensational game with a massive variety of gameplay. Some parts are in the mould of a psychological thriller. Other parts are simply all-out war, with tanks and helicopters raining down on you."

What you think

★ "This is probably the best thought-out, most detailed, *Quake* game I have ever played. If you don't buy this game, you are a nutter."

"With *Unreal*, the designers

took the best game engine in the world and made a complete pile of arse. With *Half-Life*, they took a two-year old, rusty, but tried-and-tested engine and made the best game in the world.

"iD Software should be crapping themselves because this beats the shit out of *Quake II*. I am amazed I haven't found a fault with *Half-Life* yet."

Eddie Kay

FA PREMIER LEAGUE MANAGER 99

REVIEWED Issue 70, December
SCORE 72%

What we thought

"The first team selection for many teams seems wildly at odds with reality. The transfer market is not what you'd call realistic. And the 3D match view is both time-consuming and largely useless."

What you think

★ "What makes a footie game is the transfer, tactics and match sequences. EA have gone horribly wrong. The search options are inadequate compared with *CM*, but the transfers are totally unrealistic, and to get a player's stats you need to scout the player out. The tactics section is in-depth, but how many options actually effect the match? The match sequences are cumbersome and muddled and the 3D view is awful, having limited, predictable motion-captured moves."

"I think EA have failed to capitalise their licence and the title is more style over content."

Simon Beaumont, Portsmouth

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX

REVIEWED Issue 69, November
SCORE 89%

What we thought

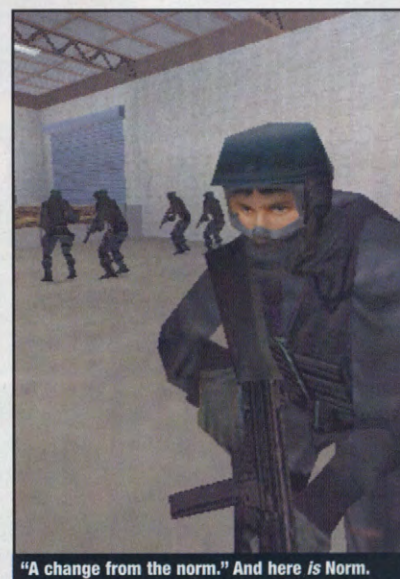
PCZONE RECOMMENDED "Rainbow Six is a game that, thanks to its replayability, makes it something you'll keep coming back to time and time again. For the dedicated *Quake* fan who's been longing to apply a bit of strategic thinking, *Rainbow Six* could well be the game you've been waiting for."

What you think

★ "It ran like a dream on my timid P166. The atmosphere, sound and graphics made it instantly the most realistic looking game I've played. The missions are very well made and are so replayable - especially in the Spanish fair ground mission."

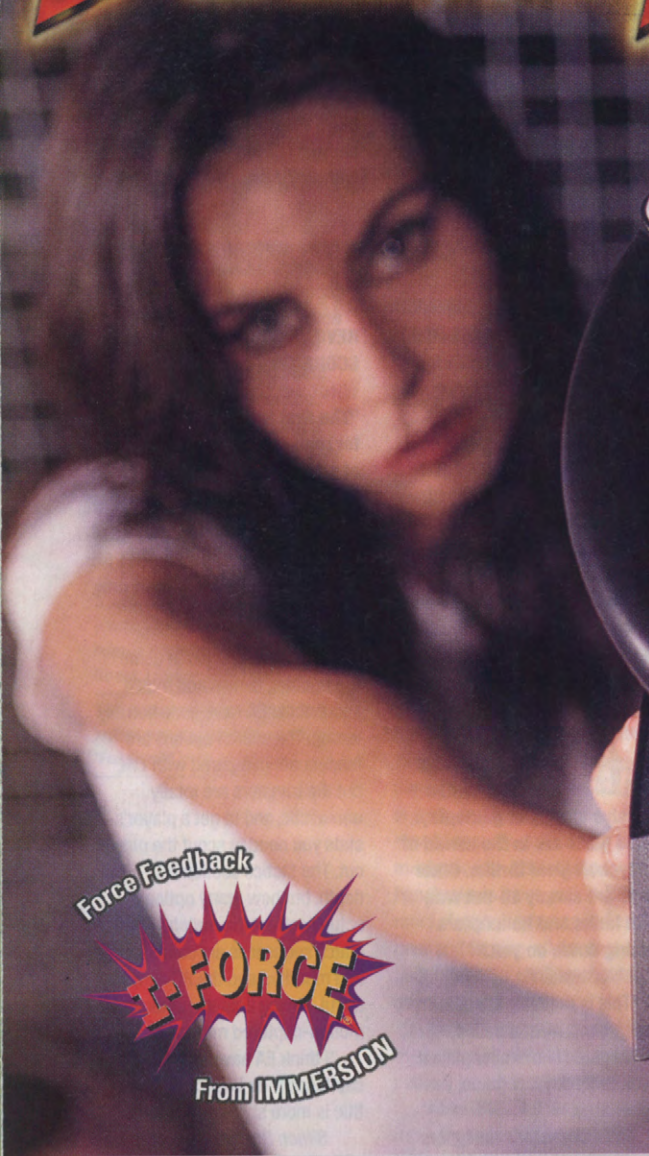
"This game is a great change to the norm and could finally cause my copy of *Quake II* to pick up some dust. I think it should have got at least 94%. Everyone involved with the game deserves a well-earned pat on the back."

David Pinto, Derby



"A change from the norm." And here is Norm.

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READER AWARDS

1998

So which was the best strategy game of '98? Is *Quake II* still king? Is *Grand Theft Auto* really a better game than *Carmageddon II*? After 12 months of telling you what to buy, it was time for you to tell us and the whole of the computer games industry what *you* think. Here's who won what

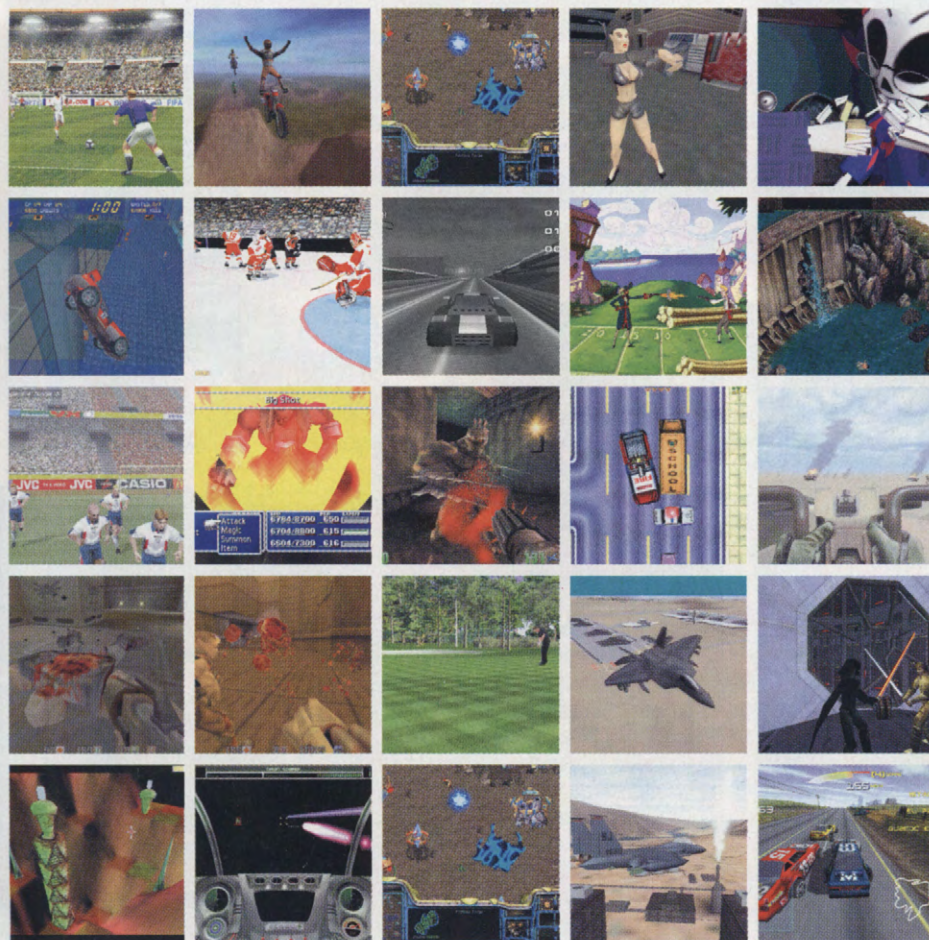


So, which really were the best PC games released during the past year? A quick flick through the *PC ZONE* Top 100 on page 154 should tell you exactly which our favourites are but, as our Feedback section shows (see page 122), it's pretty much impossible to please everyone all of the time.

The fact that we probably spent more time playing *Quake II* and *World Cup 98* over the past 12 months than Paul Gascoigne spent getting pissed with his mates seems to lend weight to our claim that we know what we're talking about. Both those games were two of the year's biggest sellers, and both amassed a sizeable chunk of the vote - and you don't need to be a genius to presume that they figure prominently in the results overleaf.

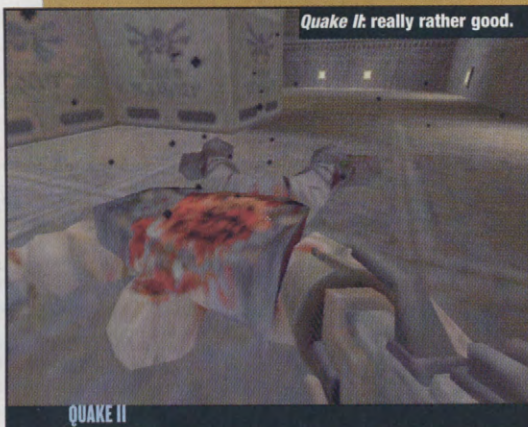
But what of the year's other big hits? Could you name the five most popular flight sims of '98, for instance? Was last year's Game Of The Year just a flash in the pan, or will Stainless Software/SCI prove that there's plenty of mileage left in *Carmageddon*? Has Lara finally lost it? After compiling all your votes and nominations, two things at least have become clear. Firstly, you're a very demanding bunch, and only the cream of the year's releases get a nod of recognition. Every one of this year's nominees received at least a *PC ZONE* Recommended award, and all but one winner achieved Classic status by attaining a score of 90 per cent or above. Secondly, you know what you like and like what you know. Five of this year's winners are sequels or the latest in a series of games - four glistening '98 awards now sit on the sideboard alongside a trophy from last year. It looks like whoever said originality was dead was right.

But enough of the questions, let's have some answers. Let's find out what you think are the best games of '98. ➔



← BEST ACTION GAME

WINNER
QUAKE II
(Activision) PCZ #59, 97%



RUNNERS-UP
Carmageddon II: Carpocalypse Now (SCi)
Unreal (GT Interactive)
Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith (LucasArts/VIE)
SIN (Activision)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER
Quake (GT Interactive) PCZ #43, 96%

The fact that *Quake II* is still on everybody's playlist almost a year after it was originally released is testament to its long-term appeal. If you've only got one game on your hard drive, chances are that this is it.



Scoring a whopping all-time high of 97 per cent, *Quake II* combines a state-of-the-art 3D engine with wrist-wrenching action and exploration. A compulsive online community, as well as various excellent add-on packs, have ensured that it will go down in history as one of the most popular computer games of all time. Despite serious challenges from *Unreal*, *Jedi Knight: MMOTS* and the *Quake*-powered *SIN*, *Quake II* has reigned supreme as the shooter of choice in the office since its release last year.

With the recent *Half-Life* earning rave reviews, and *Duke Nukem4Ever* just over the horizon, the guys at iD Software have a new challenge on their hands if they want to make it three in a row next year.

BEST ADVENTURE GAME



It looked good on the PlayStation, but it looks even better on the PC.

CHARM	MP	SP	LIMIT	MONEY
Barret	7222	8900	573	
Tifa	5219	6500	406	
Aerith	6177	8200	919	

FINAL FANTASY VII

WINNER
FINAL FANTASY VII
(Eidos Interactive) PCZ #66, 93%

RUNNERS-UP
Monkey Island III: The Curse Of Monkey Island (LucasArts/VIE)
Grim Fandango (LucasArts/VIE)
Blade Runner (Westwood/VIE)
Fallout (Interplay)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER
Little Big Adventure II (Electronic Arts) PCZ #33, 93%

Perhaps proof that there's not that much of a gap between the PlayStation and PC markets, one of the year's biggest-selling console titles made the often difficult transition to PC with relative ease and cleaned up. Mixing Japanese-style visuals with a massive plot and superbly realised pre-emptive combat, *Final Fantasy VII* was one of the surprise hits of the summer, sweeping aside the likes of *The Curse Of Monkey Island*, *Grim Fandango* and *Blade Runner*.

More RPG than pure adventure, the sheer size of *FF VII* and the number of NPCs you encounter guarantees that you'll be playing it for hours on end and still be unsure whether you're anywhere near finishing it. Of the *ZONE* clan, only Dep. Ed Chris can lay claim to such talk – and he's got the complexion to prove it. Suffice to say he's one of a very select band indeed.

Looking to next year, the eighth game in the series is already causing eyes to dilate among PlayStation owners, though with stiff competition from Blizzard's *Diablo II* and LucasArts' 3D *Indiana Jones* game it's gonna have to be a bit special.



BEST DRIVING GAME

WINNER
CARMAGEDDON II: CARPOCALYPSE NOW
(SCi) PCZ #69, 95%

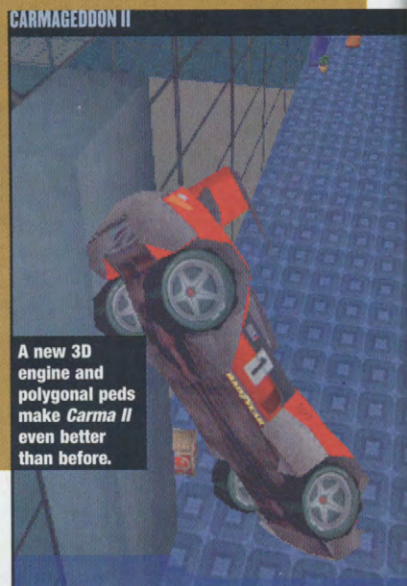
RUNNERS-UP
Grand Theft Auto (BMG Interactive)
Motocross Madness (Microsoft)
Motorhead (Gremlin Interactive)
Ultim@te Race Pro (MicroProse)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER
Carmageddon (SCi) PCZ #50, 95%

With *Grand Theft Auto* just a couple of votes behind the recently released *Carmageddon II*, this was always going to be a close-run category, as last month's Supertest will confirm.

The standard of driving games available for the PC is exceptionally high, and it was going to take a game with added originality and innovation to lift it above and beyond the chasing pack. *Carmageddon II*, although a sequel, doesn't disappoint on either count. The revamped 3D game engine, seemingly endless levels and vehicles and increased blood and gore make it an even more enjoyable experience than before. If someone's laughing out loud in front of their PC screen, chances are they're playing *Carmageddon II* – it's that kind of game. Hopefully the censors see it as a harmless piece of fun and don't go messing with it too much.

If the rumours are to be believed, an add-on pack for *Carma II* is already on the way. And who can discount the possibility of *Carmageddon III* appearing before the end of the millennium? This genre is always going to be a tough one to crack, though with talk of a *Grand Theft Auto II* in the pipeline, and the probable release of *Need For Speed IV* and Geoff Crammond's *F1 Grand Prix 3* in '99, only a fool would bank on Stainless Software walking off with the award again next year. Then again...



BEST FLIGHT SIM

WINNER
F-22: AIR DOMINANCE FIGHTER
 (Ocean) PCZ #60, 93%

RUNNERS-UP

- Jane's F-15 (Electronic Arts)
- Jane's Longbow 2 (Electronic Arts)
- F-22: Total Air War (Ocean)
- Microsoft Flight Sim 98 (Microsoft)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

Flight Simulator '98 (Microsoft) PCZ #55, 94%

We might have rated the later *F-22: Total Air War* higher than the original *F-22: Air Dominance Fighter*, but who ever said that anyone could fathom how the average propeller head's mind works?

Flight sims traditionally score very highly in *PC ZONE*, and no one's quite sure why. Could it be the near perfect

blend of super-realistic gameplay coupled with the intensity of the in-depth task at hand? Or does it just boil down to the fact that you get to shoot/drop bombs on Germans/Russians/Iraqis? Whatever the reasoning, it's clear that as a platform the PC is light years ahead of the competition when it comes to flight sims, and that situation doesn't look like changing for a long time.

Competition for the top spot in this genre is always high, and with the keenly awaited *Falcon 4.0* finally around the corner, developers DiD could have a bit of a (dog)fight (ahem) on their hands next year with the boys from MicroProse and the chaps at Jane's. But for now at least, the message is clear: DID rule the skies.



Ooh, look! That's where I lost my virginity down there!

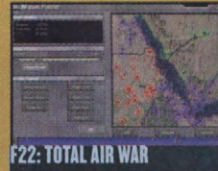
F-22 AIR DOMINANCE FIGHTER



JANE'S F-15



JANE'S LONGBOW 2



F22: TOTAL AIR WAR



MICROSOFT FLIGHT SIM 98

BEST SPORTS GAME



WORLD CUP 98



NHL 98



VIRTUAL POOL 2



FIFA: ROAD TO WORLD CUP



THE GOLF PRO

WINNER
WORLD CUP 98
 (EA Sports) PCZ #65, 91%

RUNNERS-UP

- NHL 98 (EA Sports)
- Virtual Pool 2 (Interplay)
- FIFA: Road To World Cup (EA Sports)
- The Golf Pro (Empire Interactive)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

Actua Soccer Club Edition (Gremlin Interactive) PCZ #52, 80%

Proof – if any was needed – that EA continue to dominate the genre. And if the recent crop of annual releases are anything to go by, EA are looking stronger than ever.

The much hyped *World Cup 98* proved to be one of the most popular games in the *ZONE* office, and many a summer's afternoon was spent lobbing balls into the box, curling in corners and gazing dreamily into space, thinking about what might have been...

The sequel to *WC98*, *FIFA 99* is undoubtedly the best football game available on the PC, and will probably remain so until next year unless the *ISS Pro* boys suddenly have a change of heart and attempt a near perfect N64 to PC port. Stranger things have happened.

BEST STRATEGY GAME

WINNER
COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES
 (Eidos Interactive) PCZ #66, 87%

RUNNERS-UP

- StarCraft (Blizzard/Cendant Software)
- X-COM Interceptor (MicroProse)
- The Sentinel Returns (Psygnosis)
- M1 Tank Platoon II (MicroProse)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER

Command & Conquer: Red Alert (Westwood) PCZ #47, 94%

Commandos sort of crawled out of the undergrowth and just appeared out of nowhere, with relatively little warning as to just how good it was. Which was a nice surprise.

Although looking a little dated, it was to all intents and purposes a triumph of gameplay over graphics, mixing

cunning, real-time strategy with keenly conceived and well-constructed levels. It was also bloody hard. Almost too hard, in fact. Our reviewer, Mr Steve Hill, lost a large chunk of his life to it over the summer, and (rumour has it) it took him almost a week to complete the first two levels.

The fact that a sequel is imminent and that a number of *Commandos* clones have been spotted recently indicates how good a game it really is. And although it failed to achieve *PC ZONE* Classic status, it makes a compelling change to the more run-of-the-mill *C&C* clones that now lie unwanted in the bargain buckets.

Looking ahead, the arrival of *C&C: Tiberian Sun*, *Dark Reign II*, *Total Annihilation II*, *Age Of Empires II* and LucasArts' *Force Commander* in '99 means that Eidos will be up against tougher competition next year; and maybe strategy aficionados MicroProse will run away with it with *X-COM 5*. Who knows?

☛ You're in the army now, private. Drop 'em and bend over. This won't hurt a bit...



STARCRAFT



X-COM: INTERCEPTOR



SENTINEL RETURNS



M1 TANK PLATOON

COMMANDOS: BEHIND ENEMY LINES



GAME OF THE YEAR



CARMAGEDDON II

WINNER
QUAKE II
 (Activision) PCZ #59, 97%

RUNNERS-UP
Carmageddon II (SCI)
Unreal (GT Interactive)
Final Fantasy VII (Eidos Interactive)
Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith (LucasArts)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER
Carmageddon (SCI) PCZ #50, 95%

With so many great games out there it was always going to be close, and it's no surprise that many of the games shortlisted in this category were also nominated for other awards.

Overall, *Quake II* was the clear winner, securing almost half the votes in this category and completely trouncing both of the first-person shoot 'em up challengers, *Unreal* and *Jedi Knight: Mysteries Of The Sith*. If anything, this confirms that PC gamers love their action games, and above

game in the Best Sports Game category, it failed to make an impact in the Game Of The Year category.

And where are the flight sims and strategy games – the genres that traditionally make up the bulk of PC owners' game collections? Not one flight sim or RTS made its way into the top five for Game Of The Year.

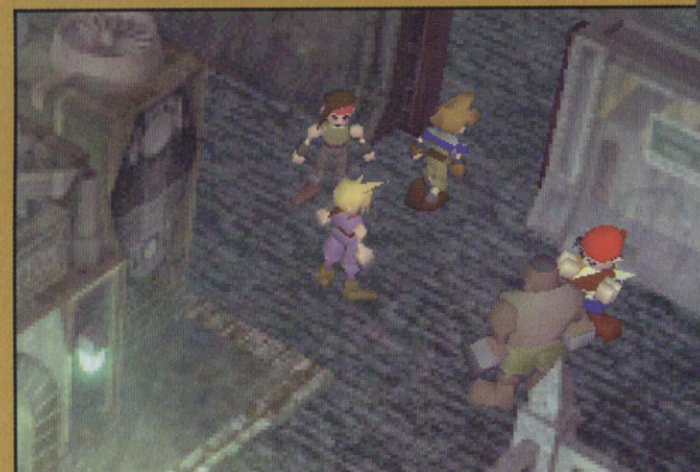
And what of originality? Four of the top five games are sequels in one sense or another. It's no secret that sequels often sell better than the originals, but are we really getting the new games we deserve, or are they just revamped mission discs in disguise? Whatever your opinion, there seems to be little room for originality at the top, and if you want to develop a hit game you're better off taking someone else's idea and trying to better it than coming up with something completely new.

Thankfully, the game from the developers who created the genre came out top at the end of the day. But as *Half-Life* (PCZ #71, 95%) has now proved, it's unlikely to happen this way next year.

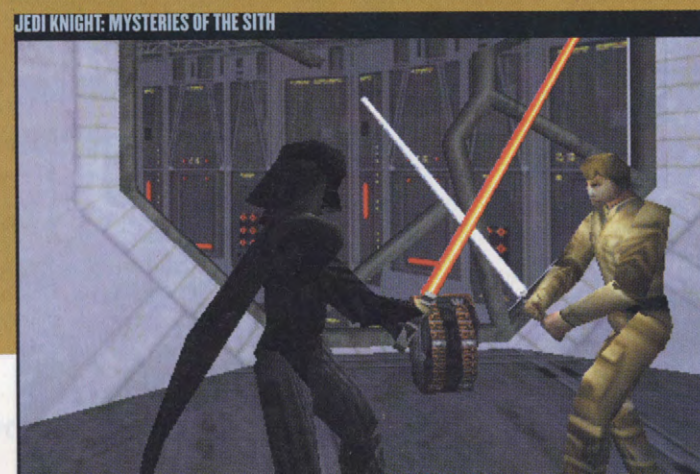
👉 *Quake II* a clear winner as Game Of the Year, securing almost half the votes in this category.



UNREAL



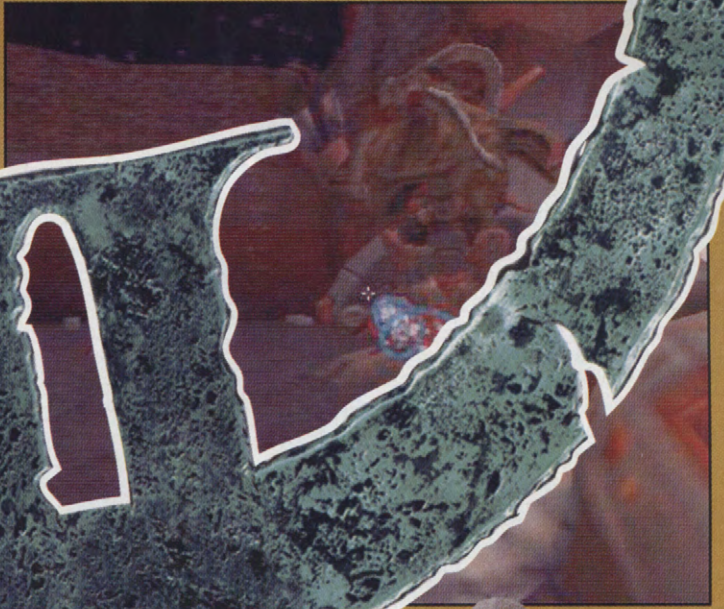
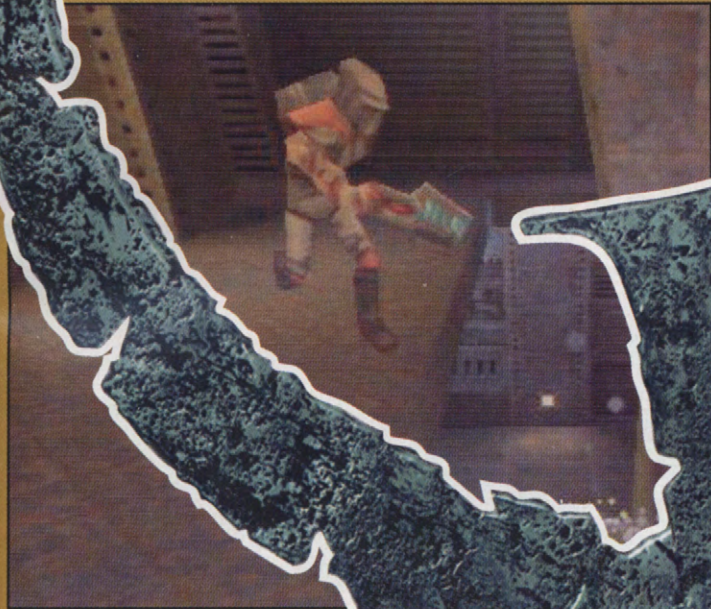
FINAL FANTASY VII



JEDI KNIGHT: MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

all love their first-person shoot 'em ups. The fact that *Carmageddon II* secured so many votes is far from surprising considering its mass appeal, and it's encouraging to see a role-playing game in the top five for the first time. More surprising, perhaps, is the absence of a certain Ms Croft. The results here seem to indicate that *Tomb Raider's* success is based largely on its appeal to PlayStation owners. However, the fact that each game in the series has achieved *PC ZONE* Classic status, and that developers Core Design were shortlisted for the Developer Of The Year award, seem to put paid to any such notion. It's also interesting to note that while *World Cup 98* received more votes than any other

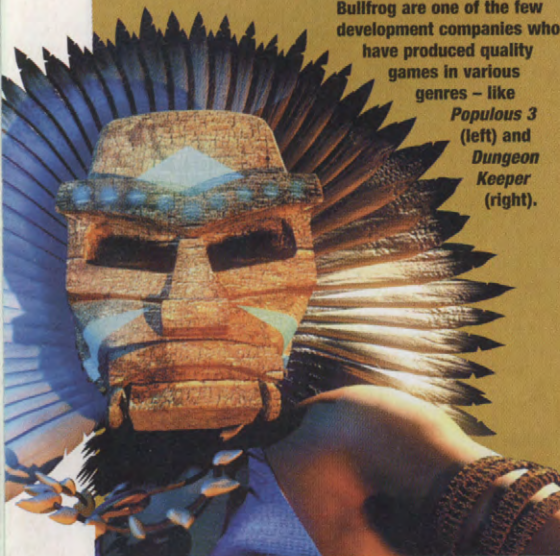




QUAKE II



← DEVELOPER OF THE YEAR



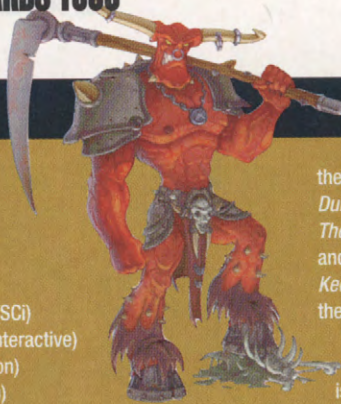
Bullfrog are one of the few development companies who have produced quality games in various genres – like *Populous 3* (left) and *Dungeon Keeper* (right).

WINNER
Bullfrog
(Electronic Arts)

RUNNERS-UP
Stainless Software (SCI)
Core Design (Eidos Interactive)
id Software (Activision)
LucasArts (Activision)

LAST YEAR'S WINNER
Bullfrog (Electronic Arts)

It seems that you don't necessarily need to release a game very often in order to win the PC ZONE Developer Of The Year award. Although we've just recently received the delightful *Populous 3* (PCZ #70, 92%), overall it's been a quiet year for the Guildford-based developer. Still, this award proves that there is life after Molyneux, and that hopefully next year we can expect great things from



the team that gave us *Populous*, *Dungeon Keeper*, *Magic Carpet*, *Theme Park* and *Theme Hospital* and have promised us *Dungeon Keeper II* and yet another game in the excellent 'Designer' series.

The fact that shortlisted stalwarts LucasArts and id Software make a repeat performance as runners-up is no real surprise, but it's nice to see that three of the top five developers in the world are based in Blighty.

It's also interesting to note that all the developers here produce very different types of games, and that in the case of three of the shortlisted ones – Stainless Software, Core Design and, to a lesser extent, id Software – one big hit can put you on the map in a major way. Whether these companies will go on to diversify and embrace other genres in the same way that both Bullfrog and LucasArts have done, and achieve similar success, is something that we can only hope for. Whatever route they decide to take, we certainly wish them the best of luck for the future.



PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR

WINNER
Eidos Interactive

RUNNERS-UP
Electronic Arts
MicroProse
Activision
Microsoft

LAST YEAR'S WINNER
Eidos Interactive

Once again, Eidos Interactive scarpers into the night with the much coveted Publisher Of The Year award, and well-deserved it is too.

It's been a busy year for the Wimbledon-based outfit who have gone from strength to strength, with massive



sellers such as *Tomb Raider*, *Championship Manager* and *Final Fantasy VII* all helping them attain the accolade of most popular publisher. The fact that two of this year's category winners are published by Eidos is perhaps indicative of their profile within the industry, and their reputation for signing the best new talent and developing strong consumer relations.

Often the bridesmaid but never the bride, the corporate giant that is Electronic Arts came a close second. With games shortlisted in almost every category, it's perhaps surprising that this massive games factory doesn't stand proud at the top of the popularity stakes. Maybe releasing too many soccer games in 12 months has had a negative effect, and the games-buying public (that's you lot) are a bit peeved at having to buy what is essentially the same game three times in a year in order to own the best version. That aside, EA are

EIDOS
I N T E R A C T I V E

arguably the biggest and best publishers of PC games in this country, and alongside MicroProse, Activision and newcomers Microsoft they can claim to be one of the most popular publishers in the world today. Which is nice.

Once again Eidos walk away with the Best Publisher award. And with games such as *Tomb Raider* (left) and *Michael Owen's World league soccer* (right) it's not difficult to understand why.



THE VIDEOLOGIC AWARD

FOR THE BEST USE OF 3D SOUND AND GRAPHICS

WINNER
UNREAL
(GT Interactive) PCZ #65, 93%

SPONSOR'S PROFILE

VideoLogic, the creators of the PowerVR graphics accelerator, are also leading the way with PC audio and multimedia. VideoLogic have a range of PCI sound cards ideal for gamers, the latest of which, the SonicStorm Pro, features full hardware 3D audio acceleration. This 'frees up' computer resources for faster frame rates, and lets you have the full range of cool audio effects in games like *Unreal* without any slowdown.

Our sister magazine, *Computer Buyer*, recently said of VideoLogic's Sirocco speaker system: "Expletives don't cover the reaction these speakers get. The only drawback is that they'll make your hi-fi sound wimpy!" The revolutionary Sirocco design brings amazing

high-end, hi-fi quality sound to the PC. With two satellite speakers, each with bass/mid-range and separate tweeter, plus a sub-woofer, active filter and power amps, Sirocco's 'near field monitor' performance is designed with the serious PC gamer in mind.

VideoLogic and NEC's PowerVR Series2 technology is already being used in Sega's Dreamcast console and



Naomi arcade systems, and will debut for the PC soon. The advantage of having one graphics technology used on all the main games platforms is simple: because of the wider number of ways to sell the new game, developers will have more incentive to put time and resources behind new titles, making them bigger and better than ever. And because the graphics technology remains the same, gamers will get the game they were expecting to see on all the platforms – not a wildly differing 'port'. What's more, VideoLogic promise that they will deliver PowerVR Series2's exceptional performance at an unbeatable price.

VideoLogic's range of products also includes DVD Player for stunning full-screen, MPEG2 playback of movies or cut-scenes in games, and Captivator PCI/VC for desktop video conferencing via direct modem connection or the Net, as well as still and video capture.

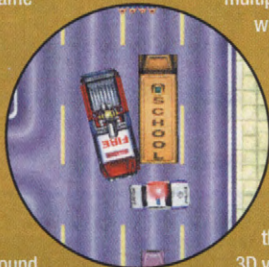
Product details, news, technical support and the latest software are all available on the VideoLogic website at www.videologic.com.

PCZONE SPECIAL AWARD

WINNER GRAND THEFT AUTO (DMA Design) PCZ #58, 92%

It didn't make the top five in the Best Game Of '98 category, but *Grand Theft Auto* missed out on winning the Best Driving Game to *Carmageddon II* by just a couple of votes.

We at least felt that *GTA* deserved special recognition, not only because it's a bloody good game, but because, unlike so many of the winners here, it's also both innovative and highly original. Okay, driving round an American city stealing cars may not be the most educational subject matter for a game, but it's a damn good laugh and



thoroughly addictive to boot. Surprisingly, its appeal seems to be almost universal, with everybody on the *ZONE* team finding something they like to recommend it. The single-player game is structured in a way that keeps you up into the small hours, while multiplayer network play is on a par with the likes of *Quake II*. The soundtrack is also worthy of a mention – suffice to say that if a Best Soundtrack category existed in these awards, *GTA* would have won hands down. So, when can we have a sequel please, DMA? We love the original and now we want a 3D version, with a special level with Mini Coopers, and voice-overs going on about "blowing the bloody doors off". Can we have it soon? Can we? Can we, please?

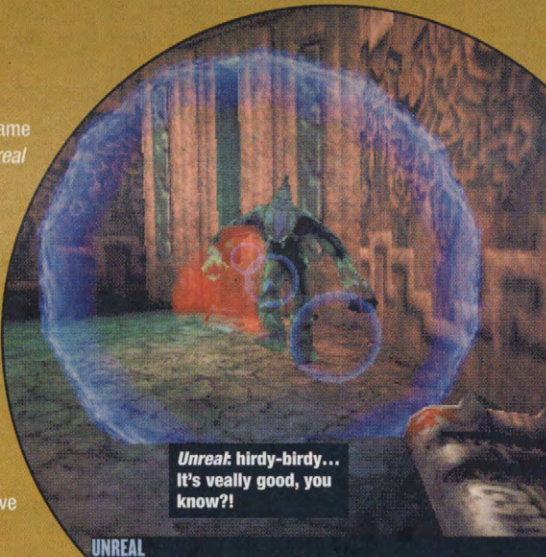


PCZONE BENELUX AWARD

WINNER UNREAL (GT Interactive) PCZ #65, 93%

Featuring both as a runner up in the Best Action game category and shortlisted for Game Of The Year, *Unreal* scored a whopping 93 per cent when it was reviewed earlier this year, making it one of the highest-rated releases of the last 12 months.

Across the water, our oddly accented friends also rated it, except they found it better than *Quake II*, *Carmageddon II*, *Final Fantasy VII* and *World Cup 98*. Still, they also rated the dire *Lula - The Sexy Empire* (PCZ #68, 32%) highly. It's not that *Unreal* isn't a good game or anything, it's just that we agree with the majority of you who voted and said that it's simply not better than the likes of *Quake II*. So there. Maybe it's got something to do with the fact that over there they've decriminalised soft drugs. Who knows?



THE BT WIREPLAY AWARD

ONLINE GAME OF THE YEAR

WINNER QUAKE II PCZ #59, 97%

RUNNERS-UP
Air Attack
Quake

SPONSOR'S PROFILE

Wireplay, the games network from BT, is the UK's biggest and fastest nationwide dial-up gaming network service. It enables PC users to meet up and compete against one another in more than 50 top games, including Microsoft's *Age Of Empires*, GT's *Total Annihilation*, *Red Alert* from Virgin Interactive and, arguably the greatest multiplayer



game of all time, id Software's *Quake*. Wireplay uses the standard telephone network and a dedicated server, which offers a faster and more stable service than the Internet. Players need a multimedia PC, modem (at least 28,800 Kbs recommended), the Wireplay client software (available free of charge) and the original game software. Wireplay customers pay in either one of two ways: either 'pay as you play' (charged at 2.5p per minute off-peak), or by credit card subscription costing £9.95 per month (with calls to the service charged at local rates).

Since its launch in November 1996, Wireplay has attracted more than 85,000 registered users in the UK alone. Wireplay is currently available in Australia (through Telstra), with announcements of further international expansion imminent.

HALL OF SHAME

20 GAMES WE NEVER WANT TO SEE AGAIN!

1. *Lula - The Sexy Empire* (PCZ #68, 32%)
2. *3D Pets* (PCZ #66, 25%)
3. *The 3rd Millennium* (PCZ #66, 30%)
4. *Adidas Power Soccer* (PCZ #60, 06%)
5. *Adrenix* (PCZ #68, 37%)
6. *Atlantis* (PCZ #56, 30%)
7. *Codebreaker* (PCZ #66, 37%)
8. *Commodore 64 15 Game Pack* (PCZ #59, 14%)
9. *Corporate Warrior* (PCZ #57, 13%)
10. *Decisive Battles Of WWII: The Ardennes Offensive* (PCZ #53, 15%)
11. *Deer Hunter* (PCZ #68, 27%)
12. *Dink Smallwood* (PCZ #66, 30%)
13. *Emergency* (PCZ #68, 37%)
14. *Hopkins FBI* (PCZ #66, 04%)
15. *Iron Assault* (PCZ #66, 25%)
16. *Man O War* (PCZ #57, 12%)
17. *NBA Hang Time* (PCZ #65, 34%)
18. *Project Paradise* (PCZ #57, 38%)
19. *Sensible Golf* (PCZ #63, 36%)
20. *Sim Safari* (PCZ #63, 20%)



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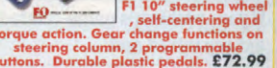
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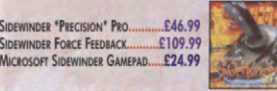
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CHEAT
MASTER
FOR
YOU

Stuck on a game?
Computer keep falling
over? Girlfriend keep
falling over? Forgot your
Mum's birthday? Don't
worry, here comes the PC
ZONE team to the rescue,
their proud, steely gazes
fixed on the middle
distance just like Paddy
Ashdown...

IN TRUBS THIS MONTH...

134 CHEATMASTER

If at first you don't succeed, cheat. Allow us to show you how it's done.

135 DEAR KEITH

Need a hand? Keith Pullin, our man with the plan, is here (just over there on the right, in fact) to help.

136 POPULOUS III

Part 1 of Keith Pullin's guide has a comprehensive walkthrough of the first 12 worlds, and shows you how to make the most of your spells and followers.

142 SIN

To get through all *SIN*'s levels you need to know your primary and secondary objectives. Keith Pullin (*Him again? - Ed*) does, and he's happy to share his knowledge with you. He's nice like that, is Keith.

149 DEAR WAZZA

Need a hand with a technical query that's bugging you? Our tech-head Wazza is here to help.

152 WATCHDOG

Has someone pissed you off? Not satisfied with the service you've received? Allow *PC ZONE* to take up your case.

YOUR HOSTS



Warren Christmas



Keith Pullin



Adam Phillips

CHEAT MASTER



So, what'll be your New Year's resolution, then? Quit the snouts? Stop biting your toenails? Stop cheating at games? You FOOL. New year, new cheats, we say...

CHEATMEISTER Keith Pullin



Blood II demo: lots of bloody brilliant cheats.

ON THE CD


We've got over 1200 games solutions squeezed onto this month's CD. Check out the Editorial section of your CD-ROM browser to track them down.

NEED HELP?

If your problem's game-related, get organised and...

WRITE TO Dear Keith/CheatMaster, *PC ZONE*, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with 'Dear Keith' or 'CheatMaster' in the subject line.

H.E.D.Z.

Hasbro Interactive
Just a couple for this one.
Press 't' for the message prompt and then type:

- OH MY GOD** God mode
- TOO HARD FOR ME** AI off

BLOOD II DEMO

GT Interactive
While playing, hit 't' to talk, then type in these codes:

- MPGOD** God mode
- MPHEALTH** Full health
- MPAMMO** Full ammo
- MPARMOR** Full armour
- MPKFA** Full ammo, armour and health
- MPPPOS** Toggle position on/off

- MPCAMERA** Adjust camera angle
- MPLIGHTSCAPE** Toggle lightscape on/off

THE 5TH ELEMENT

Kalisto
Type in as many of these cheats as you want at the main menu, then choose New Game.

- RALPH** Level select
- JEROME** Shield
- OLIVIER** All weapons
- FANETTE** All objects
- BERNOIT** All films
- JOEL** All cheats enabled

ESCAPE: OR DIE TRYING (ODT)

Psygnosis
Type these at the Main Menu. You'll know when it's activated because you'll hear a chime.

- LACRIMOSA** Activates a level selector when game begins
- SOPHIA** Include Sophia as a playable character
- KARMA** Include Karma as a playable character
- ★ Press 'Esc' to pause the game and type these:**

- ALEX** 50 lives
- BOZ** Max mana
- XUL** Max energy
- JBB** Max capacity for all weapons
- MATH** Slightly increase power on all weapons

- GRABO** Slightly increases armour, weapon, and spirit levels
- MUMU** Max experience
- RIK** All spells
- VINCE** Adds one star to each spell
- CACHOU** All the above

HERETIC 2 DEMO

Activision
Go to the console by pressing the '~' key, then type in:

- Playbetter** Toggle God mode on/off
- twoweeks** Toggle infinite power-ups on/off
- aquaticape** No target on/off
- kiwi** Clipping on/off
- angermonsters** Monsters get a bit testy
- crazymonsters** Monsters go absolutely berserk
- victor** Kills all monsters

★ Try out other codes too. Games of this type have pretty basic rules when it comes to cheating, and you can easily find new ones.

KNIGHTS & MERCHANTS

Interactive Magic
Open an inventory window by clicking on a storage house, and click once on all the following items. As each box is selected, a red triangle appears.
Wooden boards (row 1, item 3)
Iron bars (row 2, item 2)

Wine casks (row 2, item 4)
Bread (row 3, item 1)
Cooked meat (row 3, item 5)
Animal hide (row 4, item 1)
Plate mail (row 4, item 5)
Hand axes (row 5, item 1)
Swords (row 5, item 2)
Lances (row 5, item 3)
Pikes (row 5, item 4)
Longbows (row 5, item 5)
 * Now click on **Crossbows** (row 6, item 1) to add 10 of each item to your storage house. Or click on **Horses** (row 6, item 2) to complete the current mission.

AGE OF EMPIRES: RISE OF ROME

Microsoft

Like the original, type these codes into the chat window:

- king arthur** Changes birds into dragons
- pow big mamma** Creates a rock-hard baby on a tricycle
- convert this!** Creates a lightning-chucking priest
- stormbilly** Creates the killer robot Zug 209

CAESAR III

Sierra

About the only thing you could possibly want on *Caesar III* is loads of money. Well, here it is.

* Go to the Senate. Click the Emperor icon, and give yourself a nice little wage of 500 denarii (Caesar's wage).

* Go off and do whatever it is Emperors do.

* When you've got 3000 denarii, return to that screen, hit the 'Give to city' button, then the 'all' button, then the 'give' button. You'll be cleaned out, but it doesn't matter. Press the 'Give to city' button again, but DO NOT press 'all' again - the amount is already set, so just hit 'give' again.

Your savings stray into the red but it doesn't matter, because the city's coffers are now swelling.

* Repeat the above to amass a small fortune. You can return to it later if you're running a bit low.

HARDWAR

Gremlin

At the Game Launch screen, go to the 'Controls' option, then the 'Buttons' menu for joysticks. Select any button and change its function to 'God Hangar'.

When you press this button in the game, you are transported to a hangar where you can kit out your Moth with weapons and software, and boost your cash by as much as you need. Unfortunately, as soon as you leave the hangar the police are after you. But it's a small price to pay, don't you think?

NHL '99

EASport

Type these codes in during the game for bizarre and sometimes helpful effects:

- MANTIS** Gives players elongated arms, legs, and necks
- NHLKIDS** Turns players into fun-size miniatures
- VICTORY** Sets off a fireworks display
- PENALTY** Instant penalty
- INJURY** Causes an injury
- CHECK** Knocks opposing player to the ice upon contact with a body check
- GRAB** Similar to CHECK but with a stick-hold instead
- ZAMBO** Puts Zamboni on the ice
- FLASH** Camera flashes from the stands
- SPOTS** Turns on the pre-game spotlights

COLIN MCRAE RALLY

Codemasters

Type in these codes as the driver's name:

- DARKSIDE** Drive all stages at night
- BACKAGAIN** Drive all tracks backwards
- FREEWAY** Unlock all stages
- PASSEDOUT** Pass control to Colin McRae
- WHITEOUT** Race all tracks in fog
- PRESSFAST** Gives car pedal power
- CHOIRBOY** Give Colin a tug on some helium
- SPECIALD** Replay transition mode
- ROCKETMAN** Turbo boost
- BIGGUNS** Double power
- TURNBACK** Forklift steering
- ALIENGOO** Jelly car

DEER HUNTER 2

Activision

If you can't seem to get those damn animals in your sights, try typing these in while playing:

- dh2tracker** Shows the deer on the map and GPS
- dh2shoot** Puts you in shooting range of nearest deer
- dh2deadeye ArrowCam!** Follows your shot to the target
- dh2honey** Attracts deer to your location
- dh2circle** Attaches you to a deer
- dh2sightin** Sights-in your weapon without Target Range
- dh2wright** Flying mode
- dh2doolittle** Unspookable animals
- dh2flash** Makes you run very fast

- dh2supaflash** Makes you run extremely fast
- dh2thunder** Thunder
- dh2light** Lightning
- dh2rain** Rain
- dh2snow** Snow
- dh2blizzard** Cycles through weather quickly
- dh2deerzilla** Giant, monstrous deer
- camera set crow1 CrowCam!** Change the number for different crows
- camera set fox1 FoxCam!** Change the number for different foxes
- camera set deer1 DeerCam!** Change the number for different deer
- camera set player** Return to view through hunter's eyes [L2]

DEAR KEITH

Attempting to answer more of your woeful tales of failure: *Keith Pullin*

BOY SEEKS EGG

Q Me and my dad bought *Grim Fandango* and now we're trying to solve it. We've got to the bit with the little bony bird's eggs, but the attacking... my dad... said bread... pecker...?

Joel Gates (aged 6), Dumfries

A What? I am sorry, Joel, but at that point your letter may as well have been in Arabic. I couldn't understand a word of it. But reading between the lines, I believe you're trying to get the eggs for Salvador. You need to drop the balloon shaped liked a dingo and the ceremonial bread into the bird bath. That way, the birds are frightened off when they accidentally pop the balloon while feeding.

BIO-FREAK

Q I'm a fair way through *Bioforge*, and I've reached a room that requires me to solve a coloured puzzle on a screen. I'm not quite sure how this works, so can you give me the sequence, please? I just want to finish the stupid game now.

Lewis Farmer, Liverpool

A All right, calm down. Try: green, red, blue, red, green, red, blue, green, blue, green, orange, yellow, violet, yellow, orange, blue, yellow, green, yellow. You can now return to the central tube chamber to activate the other two lower tubes.

YOUR FISH COME TRUE

Q I'm playing *Pro Bass Fishing* and my American penpal told me there is a cheat which makes all the fish show up on radar. Is this true?

Paul Gittings, Hartlepool

A To show all the fish, type in 'pbxray' at the prompt where you type your name. If the text disappears, you've typed it correctly. Try 'pbpowerpole' for a stronger line and 'pbsuperbait' for bait the fish cannot resist.

ALL AT SEA

Q I'm playing *Pacific Islands*. I am struggling to make headway in some areas and would appreciate a cheat to give me 'loadsamoney'. Can you oblige?

Edwin Williams, Burnley

A Create a new tank commander, quit the game and use a hex editor to edit the 'PLAYFILE.DAT' file. Find the name of your commander, and after seven 0s you find the hex code '08 7C 15'. Change the 15 to FF, and money will pour into your offshore account.

HOLIDAY IN HELL

Q Anyone who reckons *Holiday Island* is fun is talking out of their arse. Maybe I just don't have any experience of attracting people to beautiful places - I work for Brentford Tourist Board. Are there any cheats to get a bigger budget?

Ike Noynan, Brentford

A Everybody wants money this month. Yes, there is a cheat. During the game press 'Shift', 'Ctrl', 'Alt', 'g' all at the same time to get plenty of money. Hopefully, this will help attract people to beautiful Brentford.

BIG RED MOLAR

Q I'm finally approaching the conclusion of the superb *Big Red Adventure*. Unfortunately, I have to admit I'm stuck again. I'm seeking the lion's tooth for that Zelda woman in the weird town. I've found some lions but I can't get any teeth out of them. What do I do?

Rees Morgan, Berwick-upon-Tweed

A A lion won't just give you his teeth. Tch. No. Actually, this is quite a fiddly bit of the game, and it's not entirely your fault you're stuck. You have to be pixel-perfect when clicking on the left-hand lion's mouth. Experiment a while and eventually the tooth will come out.

ICE-BREAKER

Q I've reached a kind of huge, futuristic laboratory in *Prisoner Of Ice*, but now Ryan can't return to the Nazi base. What do I do?

Terry Wooden, Stubbington

A First, collect all the objects on the floor, then use the computer terminal to see Ryan's father's message. Pick up the battery from the table and place that into the slot on the scanner. Press the red button and the screen flickers into life. Use the barrel, butt and middle section on the screen. Ryan receives the FND gun. Fire it at the rock in front of the cupboard - you can now open the cupboard. Pick up everything inside and then use the solar disc on Ryan. Finally, Ryan can return to the Nazi base.

ROKER SPACE CADET

Q I am playing *Privatier 2* and I cannot find the bloke who is in charge of Interplanetary Aid. It says in my diary that I must go to the planet Anhur, but when I get there his address is not listed as an option in the 'Exit to Transit' screen. Am I doing something wrong, or is the game shagged?

Peter Reid, Sunderland

A Well, Peter, truly it's a twisted world. While us games journalists escape from the immense pressure of life by playing *Championship Manager* and fantasising about being football managers, real football managers sit in their office playing space combat games and worrying about interplanetary aid. Excuse me, but that's our job. You're meant to be negotiating contracts, or swearing or something.

Oh, and in answer to your question: sorry, I don't know. If anybody else can help Peter, please drop us a line.

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

STRATEGY GUIDE PART 1

Is your shaman a shambles? Is your mana meagre? *Keith Pullin* has the remedy for your pithy *Populous* predicament

★ REVIEWED PCZ#70 SCORE 92%

Populous: The Beginning is a complex affair with multiple solutions and strategies. But don't fret. This two-part guide begins by providing a comprehensive walkthrough of the first 12 worlds, and expert advice on making the most of your spells and followers. The road to immortality starts here.

PLANET 1 THE JOURNEY BEGINS

You start with eight followers. Send three into each hut to start breeding, and build another hut with the remaining two. Worship the stone head. Use the land bridge spell to reach the centre island. Worship the Vault of Knowledge to learn about warrior training, and then the other stone head to get lightning. Now build a warrior training hut; train about ten warriors. Use the land bridge again and storm the Dakini island. Send your warriors straight towards their shaman while blasting their huts with lightning bolts.



That's it, in you go. Dead easy, this level.

PLANET 2 NIGHT FALLS

Extract your shaman to the totem pole and begin worshipping. Use your followers to build two extra huts and a warrior-training hut. Move a follower to the stone head to worship with your shaman once she's finished at the totem pole. Create approximately ten warriors and march past the guard tower into Matak territory. While the shaman heads for the Vault of Knowledge, your warriors should make a start on the nearby hut. Cast tornadoes at the Matak huts

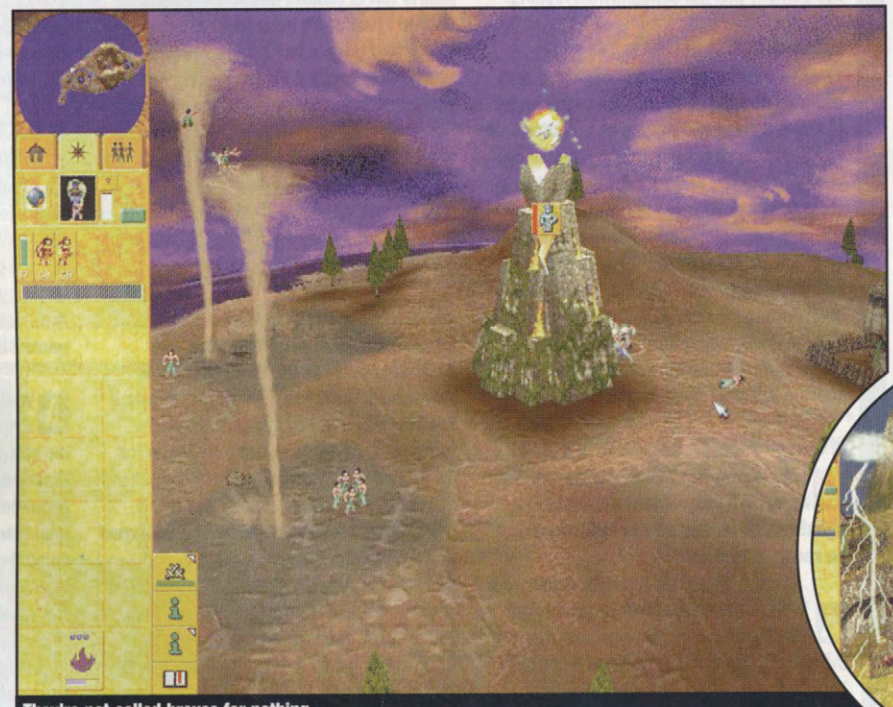
and send in the warriors to clean up. Use the swarm spell to keep your foes from grouping together.

PLANET 3 CRISIS OF FAITH

Get your followers to start building two huts. Send Shabby off to the totem pole. When she's finished there, move her over to the Vault of Knowledge to learn about temples. Now build a temple. Train ten preachers and send them into Matak territory. Spread out and watch the poor impressionable fools sway to your plight.



As long as your preachers outnumber the enemy preachers, you'll be fine.



They're not called braves for nothing.

PLANET 4 COMBINED FORCES

Take the shaman over to the Vault of Knowledge, then the stone head. Set breeders going in three huts and build a warrior hut with the remaining few. Use the shaman to convert about 15 wild men, and then train up 20



Use two or three lightning bolts in succession to maximise damage.



And you think British weather is bad.

warriors in total – they can be the shaman's bodyguards. Move towards the next Vault of Knowledge and use blast to remove any Matak preachers. Worship at the vault, keeping your warriors close by. Wait until you have amassed at least three lightning bolts. Attack the right flank of the village and use blast again to remove any lurking preachers. Use lightning primarily on the Matak temple and warrior hut, and throw the remaining bolts at anything that deserves it.

PLANET 5

DEATH FROM ABOVE

Worship the stone head near the start to gain the convert spell, then head back right to the stretch of coast near the guard tower. Use the convert spell to reach across to the savages on the island. Then use these new followers to worship the totem pole.

A boat appears – use it to take your shaman and four warriors further right to the land mass where the Angel of Death statue lies. Divert the waiting warriors



Stretch your powers across the water to convert these natives.



Leg it! With a bit of protection she'll make it.

on the hills surrounding your base, and man them with fire warriors and preachers. Worship the stone head in the stone circle.

The enemy soon attacks. Soak up these onslaughts and eventually a bridge appears to the stone head across the channel. Worship here. Now you can hypnotise the Chumara warrior by the totem pole on the island. Get those holy knees bending and another bridge forms further up the channel.

The Matak and Chumara tribe can now throw bees at each other in a bizarre ritual apparently known as battle. Meanwhile, sneak about ten preachers into each camp and watch them fall like flies. Bring in a dozen or so warriors accompanied by lightning spells. If you're ultra-cunning, worship the stone head above the Matak base for the firestorm spell.

followers and build a temple on the coast opposite the island. Next, build a warrior hut and three normal huts. Create about ten preachers. Cast a land bridge spell to the island and lead five preachers to worship. Watch out for the enemy shaman's lightning spell – she tends to come along while you pray.

Once you have the erode spell,

cast another land bridge spell to the Chumara side. Infiltrate all your preachers into the right side of their camp and cast offensive spells. Concentrate mainly on destroying the Chumara preachers, temple, and the guard tower in the middle. The battle should slowly swing in your favour. Add a few warriors to mix it up a bit.



with a lightning spell, get your braves to guard our mighty shaman and try to squeeze her through to worship the Angel. Use the blast spell for protection.

PLANET 6

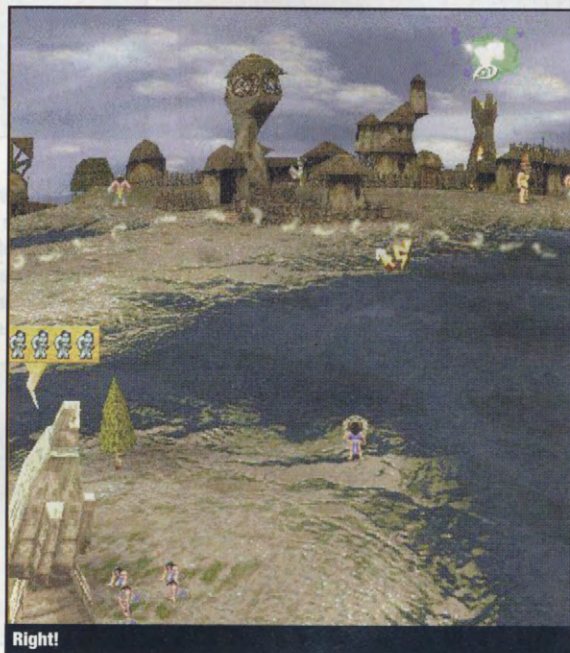
BUILDING BRIDGES

Okay, things start getting tricky now. Your shaman should worship the Vault of Knowledge, then start converting wild men pronto. Build up a strong base near the large pool above the reincarnation point and start producing preachers sharpish. Also build guard towers

PLANET 7

UNSEEN ENEMY

The enemy tribe barely appears if you get through this level fast enough – which is in less than 20 minutes, ideally. Begin by converting about 20 savages. Merge them with the rest of your



Right!



Wrong!



SPELLBOUND

These are the first eight spells. We'll give you more next month when you can handle them



BLAST
This is the simplest, but also one of the most powerful spells in your arsenal, even though it has a short range. Tactically it's brilliant near water if any enemy followers are running along the coast – cast the spell to the other side of them so they're blown into the drink.



SWARM
Often this will just scatter the enemy and, ultimately, cause more problems – although it's a good way of stopping your followers from being converted by preachers. Cast it on boats and balloons and watch the occupants throw themselves over the side in terror.



INVISIBILITY
Invisibility doesn't last long, so only cast it on your target followers at the very last moment. Preachers become visible again when they start preaching, and fire warriors reappear when attacked or ordered to attack.



LAND BRIDGE
As well as being used to join two areas of land separated by water, it can also level hills and valleys for building on. By placing the shaman on one side of a hill and casting the spell on the other side, you level the land.



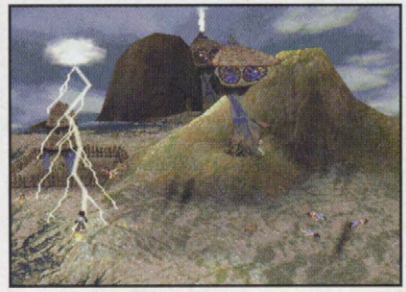
SWAMP
Swamp can be very useful when placed in the enemy's path, especially in front of your defences. But remember: your followers are vulnerable to your own swamps.



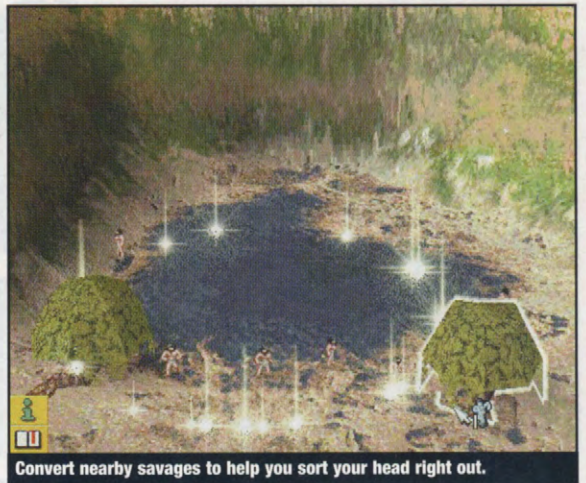
HYPNOTISM
When you first attack a settlement, use the hypnotism spell to temporarily convert enemy followers so they begin attacking their own kind.



CONVERT
This is only really useful at the start of the level when you have plenty of wild men to convert.



LIGHTNING
A more powerful version of the blast spell, and kills anyone it is directly cast upon.



PLANET 8 CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

Your base should consist of five huts and a temple. Guide your shaman across the world converting simpletons as you go. Guide her towards the Vault of Knowledge, and if she's well protected you obtain the fire warrior knowledge. Now head over to a stone head on a ridge by a pool to get a shield spell.

Back home create an army of ten fire warriors and ten preachers. With the shaman, march your army north into the Chumara camp, covered by shield and invisibility spells. As before, destroy the tower in the middle and the fire warrior hut next to it. Have your shaman lend a hand with lightning.

up the island. Before you reach the Chumara base, cast invisibility on the braves and send them scurrying along the left coast until they find some boats – steal one and flee. Point your shaman towards the Vault of Knowledge at the end of the peninsula; cause havoc with spells as you try to reach it. Ultimately, worship here to learn about boat building.

Send the shaman over to the island teeming with natives, and convert a few to worship the head containing the volcano spell. Keep the Chumara shaman well away from your base until the volcano spell has been learnt. Sail the shaman and some protection over to Chumara territory and whop down a volcano. Let fly with lightning too. Don't despair if your shaman is killed – sail back over there with two boats packing invisible fire warriors and preachers. Start the finale with earthquake and tornado spells, then let the infantry clean up.

PLANET 9 FIRE IN THE MIST

Usual tactics: convert wild men and raise a base consisting of four huts, a temple and a fire warrior training hut. Send the shaman walkabout to find two stone heads: one containing an earthquake spell, and the other a tornado one. Keep some followers and continue



PLANET 10**FROM THE DEPTHS**

Don't worry about the frightening start – escape in the boat with your shaman and four preachers. Cruise to the small island with the totem pole – mumble at that for a

while and 'Atlantis' rises out of the depths. Convert the wild men and repair the slightly wet base. Sneak some invisible preachers over to pray at the enemy totem pole and half the island sinks. Ha! Revenge. That'll teach 'em. Finish off their miserable hides with fire warriors.

PLANET 11**TREACHEROUS SOULS**

The main thing here is to keep expanding your base. Once you've disposed of the Matak tribe, a big army is required to stop the Chumara scum. Send your

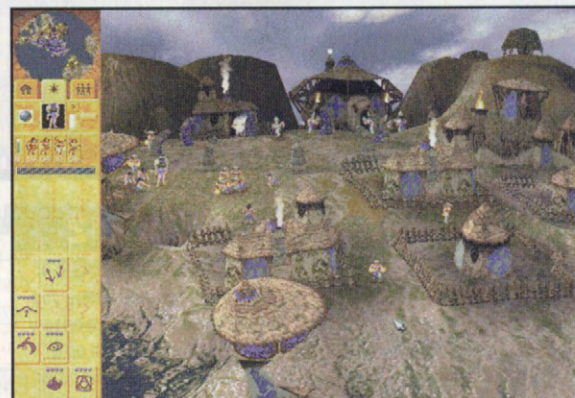
**BUILDING BLOCKS OF LIFE**

Establish a strong settlement using the following guidelines

- ★ Disable all spells apart from convert. Send your shaman into the wilderness and convert as many wild men as you can – you can often find them near water (either small lakes or the ocean).
- ★ While the shaman is busy recruiting, begin building. Find a flat, spacious area of land near plenty of trees. If this land is away from the reincarnation site, build a guard tower first.
- ★ Build four or five huts at a time, keeping key huts like temples and fire warrior training huts away from the main settlement – invading forces always home in on them first.
- ★ Try to build huts in rows, you can fit more huts into less space that way. To achieve a large population, construct 30 or more huts – but always keep a careful eye on wood supplies.
- ★ If you find you're running low on wood, try sending some invisible braves into the enemy settlement to steal some. Destroying the enemy trees with spells or spies can actually be quite a useful tactic.



Repair this underwater base and launch your assault from there.



With luck, your settlement will eventually look as prosperous as this.



Grab a lifeboat. Shaman and preachers first...



The Chumara's hypnotise spell causes your own followers to temporarily turn against you.

◀ shaman with a boatload of invisible fire warriors around the back of the Chumara base and attack from there. Cause as much mayhem as possible before you're hopelessly slaughtered. Send another two boats in, while simultaneously attacking with a bigger invisible invasion force from the other side. Back up this horde with your shaman, and head straight for the temple and fire warrior huts. Strike at these with lightning, and head for the Vault of Knowledge during the ensuing chaos. Keep adding preachers and fire warriors as back-up.

PLANET 12 AN EASY TARGET

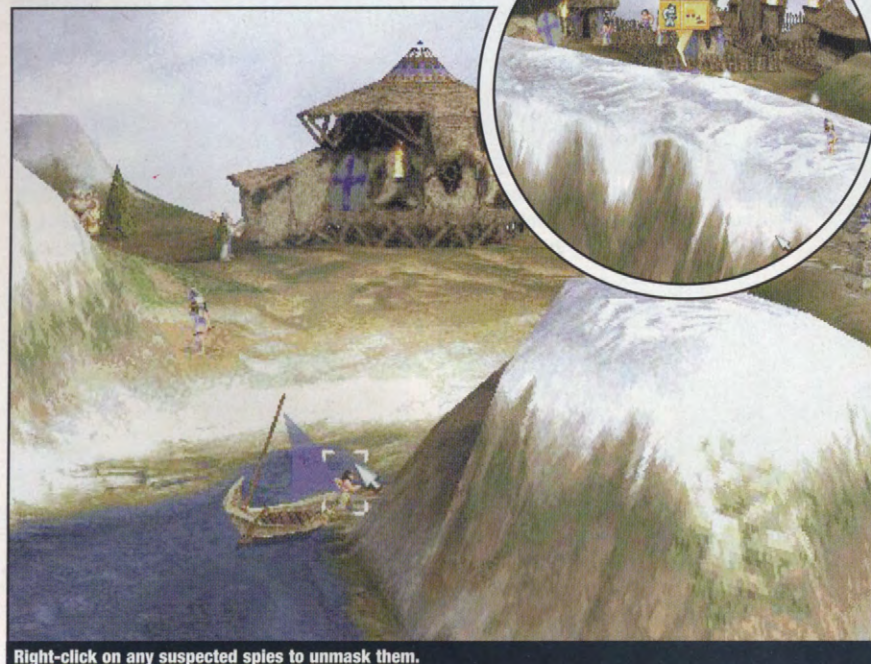
This is the first world where you are pitched against three enemy tribes. Luckily, you begin on a separate island, while the other conquistadors fight each other on a bigger continent. You don't get much land to build on here so use land bridge to landfill the ocean. Also cast land bridge across the corner hills to wall yourself in and guard against any waterborne attacks.

Each tribe guards a Vault of Knowledge: the Chumara, spy training hut; the

Matak, erode spell; and the red tribe, the tornado spell. The red and green tribes will try to cripple the yellow tribe, leaving you to finish them off. Keep a lookout for any spies who might try to sabotage your settlement. [M]

★ Well, that's the end of part one. Hopefully you now have a better idea of what's going on. Join us next issue (on sale Friday 15 January) for the final 12 levels, multiplayer deathmatch strategies and more.

Protect yourself by using the land bridge spell.



Right-click on any suspected spies to unmask them.

FOLLOWERS

They follow you about like lovesick puppy dogs, but they do other stuff too



SHAMAN

She is the only member of the tribe who can fire spells. Seeing as how spells are the only way you're going to get through the game, your shaman must be well protected at all times.



PREACHERS

Preachers, though weak, are surprisingly powerful if used in groups. Try smuggling invisible, shielded preachers into a camp - the effect can be devastating. Unfortunately, the same works in reverse, so watch out!



SPIES

Spies sneak into enemy bases and set fire to huts. They are best used during the early stages of a match when each player is still setting up their settlements. Spies delay the enemy's progress and lower his mana rate. Groups of spies are fairly formidable foes.



FIRE WARRIORS

These guys have quite a long range, so keep them at a distance from the enemy, preferably on higher ground. Once again, this type of follower is highly effective when invisible and shielded. And in a balloon, well... they can be frightening.



WARRIORS

Warriors are the toughest of your followers, but lack special abilities. Keep them away from preachers, and use them to back up your attacks. Warriors should be your last line of defence.



BRAVES

Braves are the foundation of your tribe. They generate four times more mana than any other follower, but only when building or resting in huts. Keep huts populated to keep the mana flowing, man.

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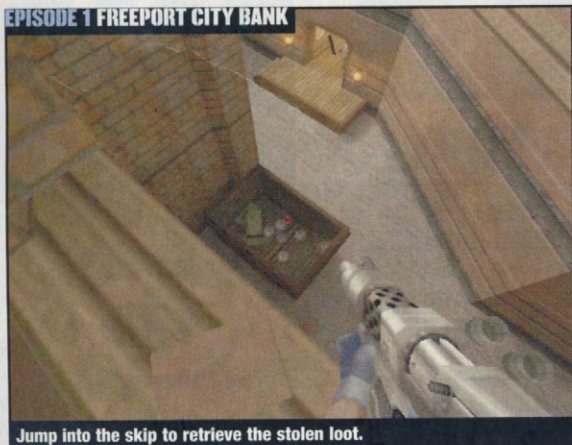
WALKTHROUGH



Has Elexis got you by the short and curlies? Never fear, here's Keith Pullin to guide you through the hard times

REVIEWED PCZ #70 SCORE 91%

EPISODE 1 FREEPORT CITY BANK



Jump into the skip to retrieve the stolen loot.

To successfully bore through every level *SiN* has to offer, you're going to need to know your primary and secondary objectives. This concise guide does just that and leads you effortlessly through to the ultimate showdown. Off you go then, Elexis awaits...

EPISODE 1 FREEPORT CITY BANK

After taking out the terrorists on the roof, the bank stage is really quite simple. Once you've found the security key, go round to the rear entrance, smash through the window at the top of the stairs, and access the console in there to deactivate the security and get the vault code. Follow Mancini down the hole.

ABANDONED BUILDINGS

There are a lot of unstable wooden floors and beams here,

so mind your step. The secondary objective is to retrieve the money from the terrorists. This is stashed in the skip by the wall - leap down from the top of the building to enter it. Afterwards, return to the roof and go down the hole at the far end to progress. Also, it's worth finding the valve in this section. This affects the construction zone - the next stage.



Take a running jump over this fence to find the secret valve.

CONSTRUCTION ZONE

Find the foreman in the workman's hut to receive the blueprints and complete the secondary objective. Go outside and mess about with the

wrecking crane. This knocks over some stuff which allows you to work your way through to the old subway.



The foreman passes on important evidence.

ABANDONED SUBWAY

Pick up all the money lying around and avoid shooting the tramps to complete your secondary objective. The subway is an easy section, really, just a straightforward chase to the end, where you finally get to pump the now-mutated Mancini full of lead.

EPISODE 2

SINTEK CHEMICAL LABORATORY

Looks tricky this one, but it's a piece of cake if you know the route. Stroll into reception and immediately punch out the receptionist so she doesn't raise the alarm. Sneak up the main corridor, ducking under the first window and taking the second corridor on your left. Note the elevator. Continue down this route, ducking under the next set of windows and take a left at the end. Go through the door on your left. Kill the guy in the locker room for the elevator key. Sneak back to the elevator. Primary and secondary objectives complete.

SINTEK CHEMICAL PLANT

Security is an issue here. The chances are you'll be spotted at some point, but it doesn't matter as you can temporarily disable the alarms from the computer consoles. Basically, you just need to keep exploring until you find some 'U4' and then take it to a bioscanner. This gives JC the information he needs. You can now escape with all your objectives intact.



The password for this terminal is the key to disabling the security.

SINTEK WAREHOUSE PT1

No problems. Use the consoles to deactivate the alarms and searchlights, and open the doors. Shoot some crates for extra goodies. Easy.



There's a right and a wrong way to do something. This is the wrong way.

SINTEK WAREHOUSE PT2

One of the more tricky aspects of this section is destroying all the

U4 crates to complete the secondary objective. The only advice here is to just search hard and shoot all the crates you see. You might come across some kind of mutant creature, but it's easily avoided and easily killed, so don't be frightened. En route there's a terminal allowing you to switch a SinTEK weapons order for a cleaning supplies order. JC finds this highly amusing. The twat. Kill the foreman and install the remote modem at the netlink console.



The foreman's not happy.



Install your modem here and JC does the rest.

BIOMECH SECURITY

Run riot with your chain gun and everything should be fine. The security grid can be deactivated by blowing up the compressed air tanks on the floor. The rest of the security can be switched off from the console near the end of this section. Oh, watch out for wall-mounted chain guns. A bit of bobbing and weaving and dead-eye shooting should help.

EPISODE 2 BIOMECH SECURITY



Render the remaining alarms useless from this console.



➡ Blow up the compressed air canisters to neutralise the security grid.

BIOMECH FACTORY

At the sign, head left into the computer room to access the database. Now head towards the matrix core and upload a virus into the terminal. Go through to the FAB area and shut down the three machines. Now for Elexis' mutant beasts... they're pretty sluggish, so keep moving and firing with the chain gun. Grab the pass in the room where Elexis gave her little speech and head for the helipad. Jump through the window into the control room to open the doors and let your chopper pull you out.



➡ Talk to the remaining scientist in the computer room and he will access the database...



➡ ...revealing a map and SimTEK's plans to steal nuclear weapons.

EPISODE 3 MISSILE SILO

Once you get the rocket launcher and keypass from the grunts outside, you're ready to kick ass. Destroy the generator using the

rocket launcher and then head through to the flooded section. Plummet into the pipe, wade along the tunnel, turn right, and keep going. Take the severed arm and use it to access silo #1. Enter the control room and unlock silos #2 and #3. Go into silo #2 and lock down the missile. Redirect the missile in silo #3. Unfortunately, Seattle is nuked as a result. This can't be helped: if you try to disarm it you die horribly... Rather several million innocent people than a man named Blade, huh?



➡ The helicopter does little to help, but it's the thought that counts.

EPISODE 4 FREEPORT CITY DAM



The pass is on a table in the room with these two jokers.

EPISODE 4 FREEPORT SEWERS PT 1

The primary and secondary objectives are difficult to fail unless you deliberately want to shoot the tramps near the start – and it is tempting.

Shoot the pipe to escape, and then blow up the machinery. Go down the pipe and ride the tubes to the security room. Shoot the window, unlock the doors from the terminal and head to safety.



➡ Shatter the window on the right to escape drowning.

FREEPORT SEWERS PT 2

There are two exits here. The first is the whirlpool, which takes you to the aqueducts via a very rough ride. This is ultimately the wrong route, but the second, proper route fulfils all objectives and takes you to the dam. Basically, just follow the route along and stay on the platforms.

FREEPORT CITY DAM

The secondary objective can be tricky in so far as it's difficult to find all the chemical drums – it is possible, you just need to search thoroughly. Watch out for snipers; they appear on the dam roof and are a damn pain in the arse. You can shoot down the chopper here, too.



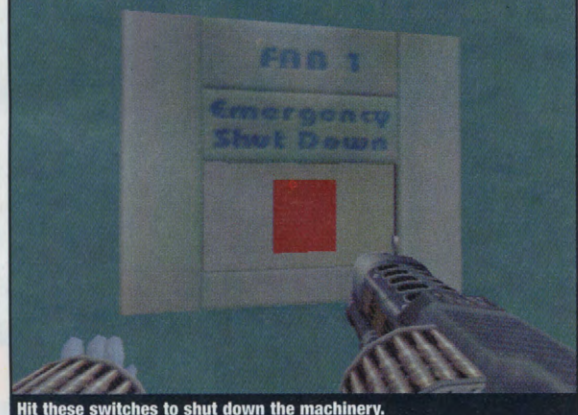
➡ What's that secret you're keeping behind the Green Door?

Go into the room with the two cowering scientists and take the pass. Go through to the terminal and activate the tram system to access the waterworks. Alternatively, you can climb down ➡

FREEPORT AQUEDUCTS

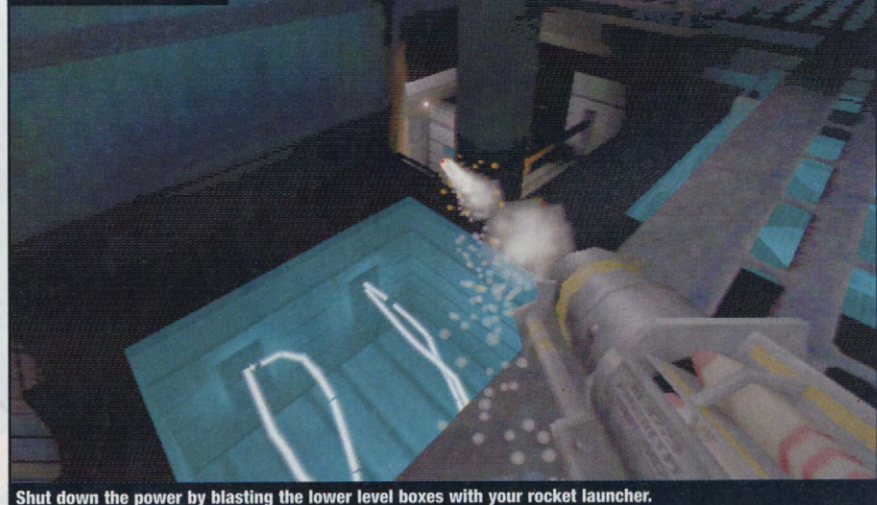
If you're unlucky enough to get sucked into this area, never fear.

EPISODE 2 BIOMECH FACTORY



Hit these switches to shut down the machinery.

EPISODE 3 MISSILE SILO



Shut down the power by blasting the lower level boxes with your rocket launcher.

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EPISODE 4 FREEPORT WATERWORKS PART 1



The first thing to do is power down the clarifiers.

← the side of the dam (where the helicopter appeared) and carefully work your way onto the ledge where the two guards are playing cards. Grab the keycard from the table and eventually shut down the turbines. Doing this means you leapfrog two whole sections and end up on the SinTEK oil rig.

FREEPORT WATERWORKS PT 1

Find the key to the sewage intake in the building on your right. Go through, and turn off and drain the clarifiers. Drain the filter tanks. Finally, shut down the sewage pumps and close the valves.



① Make sure you turn off the drain clarifiers after you've shut down the pumps.



① The chain gun destroys rockets and inflicts heavy damage on the chopper...

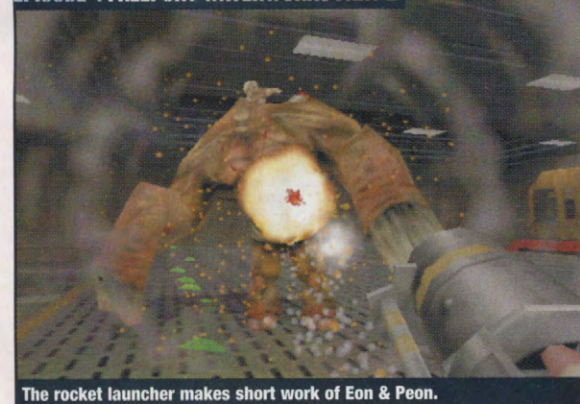


① ...down she goes to howls of sheer delight.

FREEPORT WATERWORKS PT 2

Stop the yellow, red and blue contamination by turning both valves on each pipe. A mutant called Eon & Peon appears; the rocket launcher should pacify this demonic spawning.

EPISODE 4 FREEPORT WATERWORKS PART 2

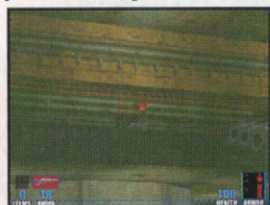


The rocket launcher makes short work of Eon & Peon.

EPISODE 5

SINTEK OIL RIG

Pop the workers on the lower deck of the rig with the sniper rifle (brilliant fun) and then work your way through the rig. Eventually you reach a lift; go down.



① Zoom in on your target by pressing '0' again.

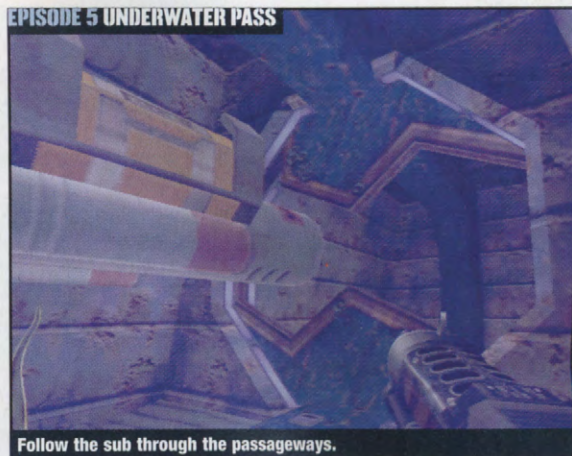
UNDERWATER PASS

Start the machinery. Go into the adjoining room and open the two pipes. Dive into the pool and plunge down the vent. Swim through and you should make it to a room with a suit and a key. Take these and go through the door back to the start. Head into the pool again and follow the sub through the doors. Use the bubbles on the way to help you breathe. To complete the secondary objective you must shoot the silver air tanks to destroy the machinery and air ducts. Pretty tough this one, so be patient.



① Suck in a few bubbles to survive longer underwater.

EPISODE 5 UNDERWATER PASS



Follow the sub through the passageways.

UNDERWATER PASS 2

This is a complete nightmare, not because it's full of enemies, but because it's just so difficult to find the correct route. Basically, keep swimming until you find a sub to follow through the doors to reach the hidden docks.



① If you can make it this far, you'll soon be out.



① One of the natives is coming to have a look at my new spear gun.



① Handy submarines lead you into the hidden docks.

SUBMARINE CARGO STATION

All the primary objectives are straightforward, apart from the navigation computer, which must be obliterated with something heavy. There are two exits to choose from: the standard one using the red pass, and another, which can be found by diving down in the water towards the rear section of the station.



① Going through here leads to a deadly jungle safari.

EPISODE 6 HIDDEN DOCKS

Be quick here. Deactivate the gun cams so you can run through to find the scientist with the blue pass. Sprint back and go through the security door – but that's too easy! For a tougher ride, swim underwater to find a lone sniper and a secret area to the geothermal plant.

GEO THERMAL PLANT 1

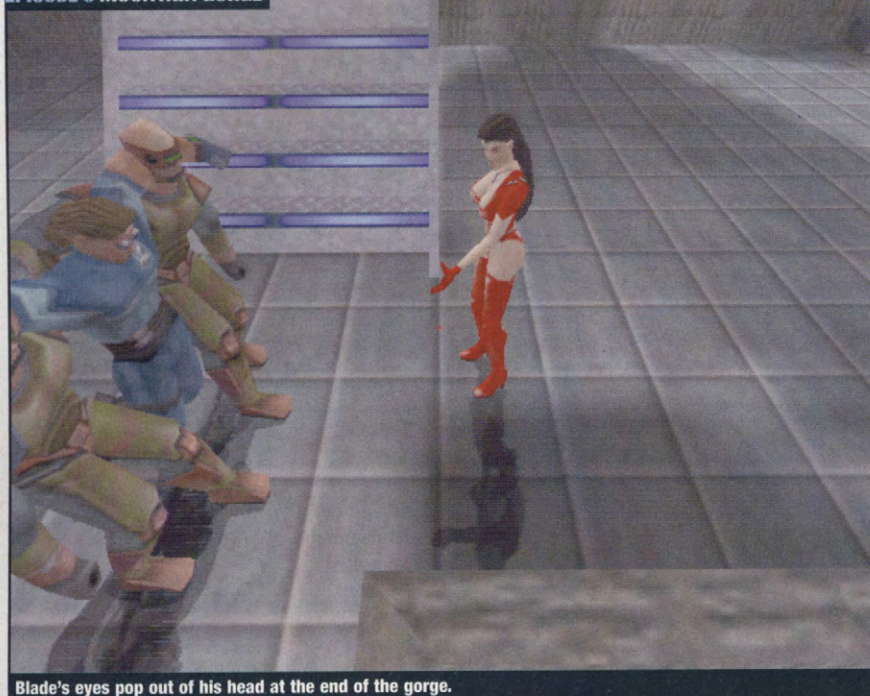
Create as much damage as you can. This whole area affects what happens in the jungle later. Return the way you came, or find the secret exit which leads to the second half of the plant.

EPISODE 6 GEO THERMAL PLANT 1



The geothermal plant is basically a big shooting gallery. Have fun.

EPISODE 6 MOUNTAIN GORGE



Blade's eyes pop out of his head at the end of the gorge.

← GEOTHERMAL PLANT 2

Destroy the furnace at the beginning to cause severe havoc in the jungle and an optional return to the earlier geothermal section. Also smash up the three ciphons (huge pistons) to cause a leak which affects the pool in Darwin chamber #2 in Area 57. If you traipse through the remaining level you eventually end up behind the yellow pass door in geothermal plant 1.

JUNGLE PASS

If you took the secret exit from the submarine cargo station you will arrive beneath the valve room (normal starting place). Turn the valve to wreck the platform, and head into the jungle. A secret exit to jungle pass 2 is found underwater at the bottom of the chasm. If there's lava (from blowing the furnace in geo 2) instead of water in the chasm, the exit's inaccessible. A standard exit at guard station beta takes you to the gorge instead.

JUNGLE PASS 2

You really don't want to be in here; your only objective is to escape ASAP. Push the banana tree over to cross the lake, and go through the tunnel, killing the large-fisted monsters with the plasma cannon. Sprint down the hill after the bear trap to avoid a rock fall. Pass the lava pit, go up the ladder, cross the walkway, and go through the doors. After the helicopter there's a few tricky jumps, a rope climb, a

short gung-ho frenzy and a stroll to the end. You finally reappear at the end of jungle pass 1. A complete nightmare!



Prepare to defend yourself after crossing the makeshift bridge.

MOUNTAIN GORGE

This section is totally linear. First take the quad bike and squish as many guards as you can, then go into the building for a bit of a shock.

CONTAINMENT AREA 57

A weird but relatively simple level. Complete the three tests in the Darwin chambers, then turn yourself back into a human. Tool up and head out. Weird.



Best do what he wants. Disobedience will not be tolerated.

BIOMASS

To reach this elusive level you must first go to the geothermal plant and smash the three pistons. Then, as you traverse through the tests in Area 57, go

through the drain at the bottom of Darwin chamber #2. This takes you to where there's a whole lot of pointless shooting before returning to Area 57 to continue your tests.

XENOMORPHIC LABORATORIES AND STUDIES

Adrenaline can be found in a secret passage under the stairs near the start. After that it's pretty much straight through the various sick sections. Make sure you get your hands on the quantum destabiliser – that should sort out the bigger mutants, and those big bastards with the tazers.

EPISODE 6 XENOMORPHIC LABORATORIES AND STUDIES



Breeze through these macabre sideshows and put the mutants out of their misery.

ESTATE SINCLAIRE

Climb through the secret passage by the palm tree to gain entrance to the mansion. Disable the first batch of security. Venture through into the second section. Move through the house and dive off the balcony into the lake below. Go through the door, then the next on your left to reach security console #2. Now head up to the bedroom.



Head over to the tree on the right and find a trapdoor in the undergrowth.



Hit this switch on the rail to reveal the hidden communications control.

MUNT PHOENIX

Exelis is giving a corker of a speech in the conference room. Find her. Go into the observation dome and some soldiers attack. One of them has a pass. Go to the balcony and surprise Exelis. She does a runner. Go to the control room. Now it's FIGHT time...



Exelis beckons the highly dense Blade into yet another trap.

THRALL (Final enemy)

After being thrown into the pit, jump in the lift, re-arm, and go outside to meet Thrall. Your best chance against this huge horror is the quantum destabiliser. Run backwards and keep firing. Whatever you do, avoid his saw. If you can manage that and knock out a few dimension-ripping blasts, he should bite the dust fairly quickly. On to the end sequence... [E]

EPISODE 6 THRALL



Avoid that saw and use your quantum destabiliser at full power.

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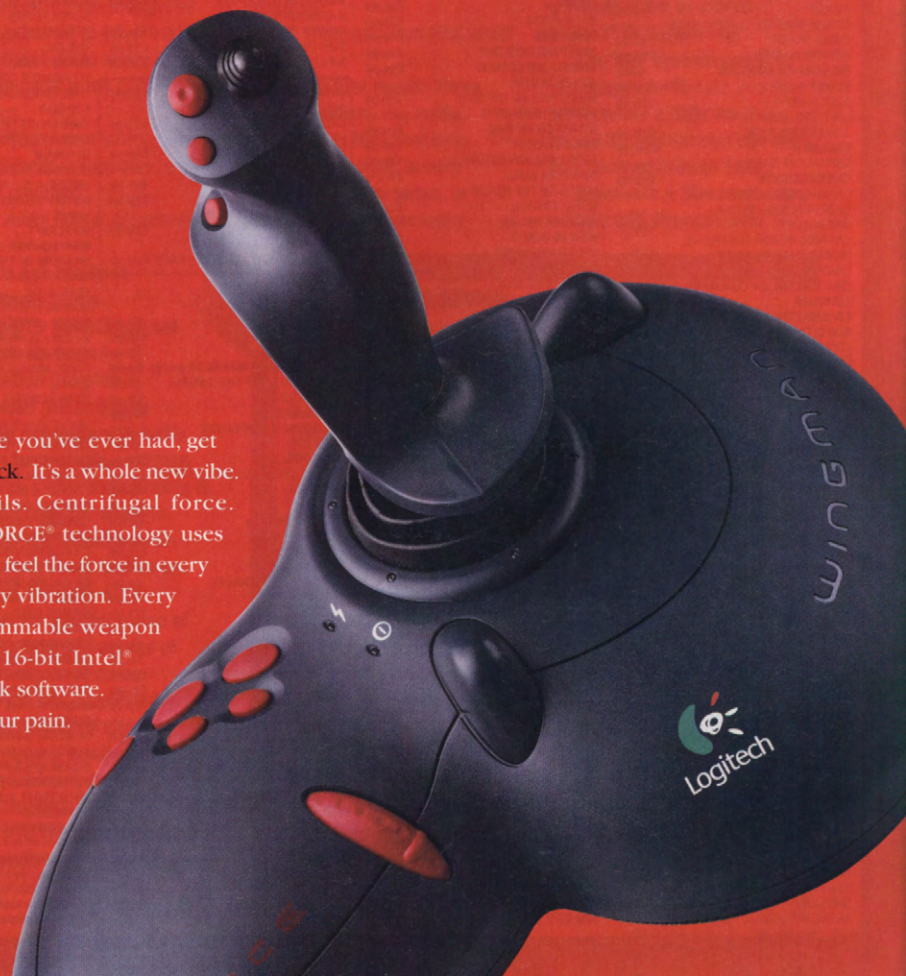
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WE'VE FORGOTTEN

Q All my games tend to run a bit slow. I only have 16Mb and am thinking of upgrading my memory, but I'm a little confused (and I'm sure that others are too) with all the different types – EDO SIMMs and SDRAM DIMMs, matched pairs and ones on their own, and so on – can you help? I have a PowerVR Apocalypse 3D accelerated Pentium 150MHz with 16Mb memory and no idea what to buy.

Secondly, I've been having trouble playing *Quake II* with my PowerVR card. I know you've released thousands of patches for *Quake II* on your cover CDs but I don't know if any of them have patches for PowerVR. If any of them do, please, please tell me what it is called and where I can find it.

David Clatworthy, email

A Judging by your machine's specification, we'd guess that you can probably add a single 16Mb SIMM with no hassle but, without full details of your motherboard, we can't give you any specific advice.

A few years back, buying and adding system memory was a relatively straightforward task. These days, as you've found, there's a huge number of different types available – far too many to cover here, we're afraid, although we may cover the issue in a feature at some time in the future.

Your best bet is to call a dealer, armed with as much information as you can find out about the memory currently installed in your PC. At the very least, have your system or motherboard manual to hand.

We wouldn't want to endorse one specific company, but any of the following should be able to help you: Insight (0800 073 0730), Memory Express (0870 900 9500), Roldec (01902 833 555), Simply Computers (0181 498 2100), SMC (01753 550

333), or Software Warehouse (01675 466467).

As for *Quake II*, your problems may well be caused by the fact that, if our memory (pun intended) serves us correctly, you need at least 32Mb of RAM to play the game

“All my games tend to run a bit slow. I only have 16Mb and am thinking of upgrading my memory, but I'm a little confused with all the different types – EDO SIMMs and SDRAM DIMMs, matched pairs and ones on their own, and so on...”

DAVID CLATWORTHY

with a PowerVR accelerator. Mind you, VideoLogic's Apocalypse 3D card also needs a decent PC to drive it, so don't expect great performance from your P150.

DIRECT X-PECTATIONS

Q When I bought my PC a year ago it had DirectX 3.0 installed on it. Even though I've since updated it to 4.0, 5.0 and now 6.0, I've yet to notice any improvements in my games' graphics.

Can you please tell me what boost DirectX is supposed to give to your graphics?

Adam Corkill, Manchester

A It's not, really. In simple terms, Microsoft's DirectX is a set of Windows-based application program interfaces (APIs) which enables developers to write games for a single, common platform, rather than having to produce code for specific video cards, sound boards, game controllers and so on.

Later versions offer support for a wider range of devices, take advantage of more features of some hardware and, supposedly, provide improved speed performance. Really, though, this should only be of concern to developers.

All you, the gamer, need to do is make sure you have the

very latest version installed on your PC – not exactly tricky, considering that it's provided with every Windows-based game you'll buy.

If you're really desperate for more information, you'll find everything you (n)ever

wanted to know about DirectX at www.microsoft.com/directx/default.asp.

LAN DISCOVERY

Q This is the first email I've ever sent, so I hope it gets through. I'm having a problem understanding your techie talk: I've no idea what a LAN is. Can you help?

Jaspal Singh Viridi, email

A Your first email? We're honoured. No, really. LAN stands for Local Area Network – which, in very simple terms, is two or more

computers linked together by cables so that hardware resources (such as a printer) can be shared and data can quickly and easily be transferred between machines. Or, in the context of PC ZONE, so you can play multiplayer games.

Sincere apologies if we confuse anyone with jargon used on these pages – we do try our hardest to keep it to a minimum.

MAZDA OR METRO?

Q Do you think it's worth replacing my P166 MMX system with 16Mb of RAM with a 300MHz Pentium II with 64Mb of RAM, or should I simply buy a 3D graphics card? If I do the latter, I'm worried that my system will be too out of date to support a 3D card anyway. Please help.

Adam Corkill, Manchester

A You again? This is a bit like asking: "Should I buy a Mazda MX-5 or a Mini Metro?" Or something.

The 'full' system upgrade you suggest will cost you over £250, while a 3Dfx Voodoo-based 3D accelerator will set you back as little as £50.

Even with a 3D accelerator, a P166 will struggle with



SOUND ADVICE

Q Here are a few tips for the fantastic thing that is *Final Fantasy VII*. Soundblaster AWE 32/64 owners – go to the directory d:\sfman\setup.exe (where d:\ is the letter that designates your CD-ROM drive) and run the program. This will install the Creative SoundFont manager stuff. Then reboot and go to the *FFVII* configuration program. Select the MIDI tab, and in the second drop-down menu, select SoundFont MIDI AWE 32/64.

Now, when you run the game, you hear *real* instruments – Cosmo Canyon sounds way cool. If you have a Soundblaster card, *do not* install that shit-bollocks Yamaha Synthetic-o-sizer thing – it's a complete pile of poo! Also, you can control Fort Condor's mini game with a mouse by pressing F12 at the start. Not that it's very good or anything.

Ryan Stephenson, email

A We're sure that many Soundblaster AWE owners already know all this, but we're also pretty sure that there will be many who don't. Nice work – £50 is on its way.





Half-Life - a bit of an uphill struggle for a P166.

← recent games such as - oh, I dunno - *Half-Life* and *Madden NFL 99* (let alone future releases), and so, rather obviously, the former is definitely the option to go for. Preferably with a 3D accelerator as well. Hey, no one said keeping

up with the PC gaming scene was cheap...

WHICH 3D CARD?

Q Just emailing you to ask you which 3D card you think I should get. I've got a P100 with 24Mb RAM, but I was told by some idiot that a 3D card

wouldn't do me much good as I need more RAM. I wanted a 12Mb Diamond Monster with a Voodoo2 chipset. Is this a load of crap or is he telling the truth?

Chris, Windsor

A We've been dodging "which 3D board?" type

questions for a few months now, so we're happy to refer you to the next issue of *PC ZONE*, on sale 15 January, where you should find everything you need to know.

Incidentally, your mate is right - you do need more than 24Mb RAM to run recent releases (memory is dead cheap to buy these days).

The real bad news, though, is that you probably want something a little more powerful than a P100 processor too. Doh!

ZIP IT, MISTER

Q I have a problem with *Grand Theft Auto*. I recently downloaded some new cars from the Internet and want to put them in the game, but I haven't got a clue how to do it.

Someone suggested that I 'unzip' them but, as I haven't got *WinZip* and have just bought my first PC, I haven't got a Scooby.

Mark Pickett, Scotland

subject in a couple of months. As always, there's 50 notes up for grabs to the best contributor. Cheers!

WIREFLAY-ED OUT

Q I've been a subscriber to *PC ZONE* for a year and think it's the best magazine I've ever read. (Yeah yeah, get on with it - Ed.)

I'm having great difficulty playing *Quake II* over Wireplay because my ping rate is very high. I've continuously rung up Wireplay and the best they could come up with was that the length of my modem cable was too long, or that changing console commands in the game would help.

Maybe it's because I've got Windows 95 version A. Would it help if I upgraded to version B, or even Windows 98? I'm pissed off with Wireplay and I was wondering if you could help. Please email me if you have any ideas.

J Flaherty, email

TWEAK TWEAK

More advice for people who like twiddling about with their modems

Q Being a *Quake* clan member and also working at a help desk for an Internet service provider, I feel that I can throw some more light on tweaking modems which may be of benefit to a lot of other readers. What TgH.raZ has already offered (p151, November issue, *PCZ* #69) can help but it won't solve everyone's problem...

First of all, the modem string can be quite important. I don't know what the X3 string does for him but for Rockwell-

AT+MS=56,1,33600,56000.

This generic string will set the negotiation to 56K mode preferable and allow for floating. If you want to add it as an addition to your existing string, lose the 'AT'. In a lot of cases the correct modem string can improve performance even on a 33.6K modem.

It is very important to make sure that you have the original modem driver set up under Control Panel/Modems and not one that Windows 95 has put there. If it doesn't say '56' in the

number - not all will support 56K; some will be set to 33.6 or X2. If your ISP supports V90, try flash-upgrading the modem. Also bear in mind that download speeds of 56K are impossible over copper phone lines; you can expect something between 42K and 48K.

The ping time on *Quake* servers is also dependent on the location of the server: on the server of your own ISP you should expect ping times between 110ms and 140ms but the further away, the slower the connection. Before connecting to a remote server, do a DOS ping to the domain and see if it is worth it. If the reply is over 250ms, forget it - you will experience lag.

For good UK servers other than Wireplay, try these:
quake.demon.co.uk
quake.globalnet.co.uk
quake.dircon.co.uk
quake.clara.net
quakeworld.games.demon.net
Alternatively, download GameSpy and sort the servers by ping response.

JazzmaN, email

“The ping time on *Quake* servers depends on the location of the server: on the server of your own ISP you should expect ping times between 110ms and 140ms but the further away, the slower the connection”

JAZZMAN

based modems it disables Dial Tone detection and will have no impact on the connection speed. 'AT&F' restores a factory preset and does a hardware reset of the modem. This can work in a lot of cases but for most it will not be enough. Note that with some internal modems - especially Winmodems - this might prevent your modem from dialling at all. Alternatively, try AT&F1 or ATZ. For K56 Flex modems the best way to set the speed is with a string like this:

modem name, chances are it is not the original. In a lot of cases a custom string, specific to the model of your modem, is needed. Look for these at the website of the maker or contact your ISP and ask for advice.

If all drivers are up to date, the strings correct and download speeds still poor, the chances are there is something wrong with your telecom provider - ask them to check and increase the gain on the phone line. Also make sure that you have the correct access

A Thanks for yet more advice on the black art of modem configuration. Anyone want to add to or contradict any of this? Then please write to... someone else. We are so sick of hearing about modems. No, really.

A Scooby? Ah, Scooby Doo - as in clue. We like it. You'll find many files on the Internet are stored using the Zip format - it's pretty much the standard for compressed data... which is exactly why we put a shareware copy of the ever-popular Zip compressor/decompressor program *WinZip* (currently version 7.0) on our cover CD every month. Sorted.

X-STREAM CLOSE-UP

Q I've noticed you talk a lot about ISPs (Internet service providers), always advocating that we find the best value one possible (obviously!).

About three months ago I came across an ISP which is completely free (no monthly charges, just the normal phone bill). It's called The X-Stream Network (www.x-stream.co.uk) and it's... (Snip - Ed)

Tom Toulson, email

A Yes, we know - we've mentioned X-Stream and various other similar free services several times now.

This is, however, a good opportunity to remind readers that we want to hear your comments - good or bad - on any Internet service providers you've used yourselves, particularly with regard to online gaming, so please write to the usual address.

We'll be printing a selection of letters on the

A First of all, a reminder that if we deem a reader's problem to be of interest to others we'll print it on these pages with a suitable reply (and if we don't know the answer ourselves, we'll happily throw it open to other readers for help). But, as much as we'd like to, we simply do not have the time to reply to individual techie queries. In other words, please don't expect a personal reply by email.

As for Wireplay, well, while there are undoubtedly thousands of you who use the online gaming service with no problems at all, we get quite a few queries like this.

It's difficult to know what to suggest, really - after all, Wireplay know their own system better than anyone else and, as a commercial concern, it's in their own interest to assist you as much as they can.

We suggest that you call them again, clearly explaining that you're currently finding the service unusable and won't be using it again unless they can help you out. If you're really peeved at the service you're getting (or not getting), then write to our Watchdog section (see page 152) with as many details as possible.

A reminder that the Wireplay help desk number is 0845 757 7577 ...although we guess some of you know it off the top of your head by now. [E]

full.monty@demon

it's time we revealed all we've got to offer:
unlimited email addresses , dfax , 15 mb of
free web space , LineOne™ content , games
website , games servers , 24-hour helpline
plus a quarterly magazine , all for a tiny
tenner a month . perhaps this explains why
we're the uk's number one internet service
provider . so for your free 30-day trial ,
just call 0800 458 9666 or scribble your
name and address anywhere on this ad ,
tear it out and send it to us at freepost
demon (yes , that's all you have to write) .
and get your kit off us .



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0800 458 9666

www.demon.net email : sales@demon.net

WATCHDOG

Anger. Fury. Rage. Not the kind of reactions a publisher wants when they release a game – as Codemasters have discovered

★ ANSWERED BY Adam Phillips

DOH!
We're here to help. If you've got a consumer issue that needs addressing then drop us a line. But please remember that technical issues are not covered by Watchdog – if you've got a techie problem, write to Dear Wazza (page 173).

WRITE TO Watchdog, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ.

EMAIL us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with the subject heading 'Watchdog'.

GAME OFF

Q I recently bought a SoundBlaster PCI128 from the Game shop in Southampton. I'd had my eye on the SoundBlaster Live Value but thought it too hi-spec for my needs. Thinking that the 128 would be a 'lite' version of the Live, I chose that instead, only to find that the MIDI quality of my AWE32, with only 512k soundbanks, was much better.

I phoned Game and told them I was unhappy with the card as it offered no improvement over my AWE32. I inquired about a refund, but said I would be happy to accept a credit note or gift voucher until the SoundBlaster Live Value was released. They told me they couldn't take the card back as it had been installed in my machine, albeit only for about two hours. They also said it was impossible to take the card back unless I bought something

else, such as the £150 full SB Live. If they can't take back used goods unless they are faulty, how could they offer me the chance to return it if I bought the more expensive card? Either way, they were still left with a used card.

I've now reboxed the card and am attempting to sell it privately at as small a loss as possible. I am really annoyed that they couldn't offer a regular customer – or any customer, for that matter – the opportunity to return unsuitable goods. I will buy the SB Live Value, but it certainly will not be from Game.

Peter Pipkin

A Watchdog contacted Grant Hughes, Game's marketing co-ordinator, who, after a lengthy delay, got back to us and asked for your phone number so the problem could be resolved. "We do not wish for Mr Pipkin to be out of pocket," he explained, "and will do our best to assist him."

He apologised about the delay in getting back to us and said that "this is the first time we have received a customer complaint 'indirectly' from another source. The normal procedure is for customers to contact us directly, a procedure which is always dealt with very quickly and sympathetically".

Unfortunately, by the time this news was relayed to Peter, he'd flogged his card privately at a loss and has now bought a SoundBlaster Live Value – not from a high street hardware emporium, but from the USA.

DUNE DEAD END

Q In October I bought *Dune 2000* and decided to play it online. It crashed and I had to re-install it. Unfortunately, the game won't install any more and crashes while registering.

I phoned technical support the following week and was told that Virgin Interactive weren't

handling tech support for any Westwood games. Instead I was given the Electronic Arts number, which was an automated technical support line with no mention of *Dune 2000* anywhere. Is there any reasoning behind this?

Philip McArdle

A "The Auto system is only there as a back-up system so customers can receive solutions for problems that happen with specific titles out of normal business hours," explained Simi Belo, marketing manager at Electronic Arts.

"For the first couple of weeks of a product's life, we only have limited information on what has caused/is causing customers' problems with a specific title, and therefore our customer service staff handle the calls."

Once the bods at EA have ascertained the problems with

Colin McRae Rally: a wee bit unpopular.



MAD AT MCRAE #1

Q To Codemasters: how dare you? How dare you release a product

that is so blatantly full of bugs that it's almost unplayable for some of us? Check out the PC ZONE chat area online and you'll see just how 'popular' your game [*Colin McRae Rally*] is. Personally, I can't access the Rally School past the first lesson. And after a while, when playing on the Rally or Championship options, the game reverts to jerk-o-vision, with screen updates so 'jiggery' it's impossible to control the car. Please release a patch to sort these things out or, better still, in the future don't ruin a game by releasing a half-finished version – get it right the first time.

Martin Lewis

MAD AT MCRAE #2

Q I purchased *Colin McRae Rally* last week, only to discover that it crashed my computer, as well as a number of other friends' computers. So I tried Codemasters' helpline – which was non-existent, as was their email helpline.

Fortunately, my friends' copies are now working after finding out that the visual basic runtime dll was essential on certain systems, particularly for Voodoo1 users. Unfortunately, I still can't get mine to work on a Cyrix P150+.

More interestingly, someone discovered a hacked copy of the game on the Net which appeared before the official

release and is more reliable. It's ridiculous that hackers can put out a better product before the publishers who are charging 35 quid and providing no support!

Dr Noel Carter

MAD AT MCRAE #3

Q My email to Codemasters: I am trying to control my anger at having just wasted 25 quid on a game [*Colin McRae Rally*] which does not work. Having loaded the game up, I thought I'd try the Rally School. The Novice first option involves moving the car. It starts, and I drive the car. I hit the brakes and stop. Then the game goes into auto and parks the car. The game then hangs, and whenever I touch the keyboard it terminates the programme and returns me to Windows.

Add that there is no tech support on a Wednesday and I am extremely pissed off. And your website is atrocious. I've seen three-year-olds do better.

Jason Wakeling

MAD AT MCRAE #4

Q Well, I never thought I'd see the day when a game was incompatible with a CD-ROM drive. Enter *Colin McRae Rally*. After the intro sequence, I got a message telling me that the game would only run from an original disc – odd, considering I had a brand new original disc.

I phoned the helpline and was told that Codemasters had developed some amazing copy protection code on the CD, which meant it had to be authenticated every time it was run.

So amazing is it that it's incompatible with several manufacturers' CD-ROM drives – they simply cannot read the data. I ended up part-exchanging my CD-ROM for another and it worked first time. I'm all for fighting software piracy, but surely if they've got the noggin to develop this code, they could fully play-test it.

So Samsung CD-ROM drive owners beware: you can't play *Colin McRae Rally* unless you add about another 40 quid to the cost of the game for a new CD-ROM drive.

Paul Mulroy

MAD AT MCRAE #5

Q I purchased *Colin McRae Rally* and discovered it would not run because my CD-ROM was not an "original copy". I telephoned Codemasters, and they knew about the CD-ROM problem – which included my Toshiba 32X SCSI CD-ROM drive. Any solution? Well, not at the moment.

The manager of my local Game store tells me that I am not alone, either.

Having paid £35 for the game, I am astounded that *Colin McRae Rally* was shipped in such a state.

Richard Pates

“Codemasters don't let imperfect code out the door. Not for anyone. Not even if a million punters are waving wads of cash at them”

Codemasters' Richard Eddy in last month's Watchdog

a particular title, they add the info to the automated service.

EA would also like to point out that "at no time has this service been created as a replacement to calls handled by our customer service staff - it's merely an extra service for our customers for when the phones are not manned."

Belo also recommends perusing the ever valuable readme.txt file featured on most of their game CDs to see if any last-minute alterations have been made:

Finally, the helpline number is 01753 546 465. You should land yourself a real person to talk to during office hours. Unless there's no one available, in which case you'll be flipped over to the automated system...

ILLOGICAL LOGIC?

In your November issue you reviewed a number of gamepads, including the Logic 3 PC Trident Pad. I bought one of these about ten months ago on the basis that it had both an analogue joystick, D-pad and, most importantly, nine buttons. It seems most games these days require more than four buttons to get the most out of them - *Quake II* and *Unreal*, for example - and I am not a fan of using either the mouse or keyboard for games.

After installing the gamepad (which does not come with its own driver software, but simply uses the existing Win95 software), I could only get four of the buttons to work.

On telephoning the manufacturer, I was informed that the Windows 95 software can only support up to four buttons, and Logic were not planning to release any driver software (as apparently the licences were too expensive).

Asking what could be done, I was told that at present, nothing, but not to worry because Windows 98 would be out soon (another six months) and this is rumoured to support eight buttons. They recommended I periodically check their website for any driver software, but so far none has been posted to the site.

I think it is appalling that a company can sell a product, advertising that it can do something when it clearly cannot, and that the after-sales service has been next to useless. I believe that other readers who want a gamepad should choose another make - preferably one manufactured by a company with the correct approach, ie Microsoft or Gravis.

Neal Pleasance

A Watchdog took your comments to Spectra Video, the makers of the

gamepad. "We have looked further into the complaint made by Neal Pleasance and would like to correct some inaccuracies that have been made in his comments," fired back a spokesperson. "First of all, Mr Pleasance was not told that the driver software was delayed due to the cost of licences - we do not need a licence to write our own drivers. Also, we would not have told him to check our website as we had no intention of releasing any driver software for the PC Trident pad. Secondly, we would not have told Mr Pleasance that the release of Windows 98 would provide him with a driver for the PC Trident pad."

Neal's comments on their advertising also raised Spectra Video's blood pressure: "Nowhere in the packaging for the PC Trident pad do we make any false claims regarding the abilities or functions of the PC Trident. The PC Trident pad is an extremely versatile product which has attained fantastic sales for the past 18 months. The very nature of the product means that it is almost infinitely compatible with games software requiring a joystick or pad."

Let us know your thoughts, Neal. ☐

THE OFFICIAL RESPONSE CD-ROM problems

"Due to a rather over-zealous new copy protection system that Codemasters has utilised on *Colin McRae Rally*," explained Codemasters' Richard Eddy, "some users with specific CD-ROM drives may experience difficulties. It should be pointed out that this is a rare occurrence."

Codemasters apologise for these difficulties, "but we employed the new copy protection system in all good faith. Codemasters is continually seeking ways to safeguard its software copyright in order to prevent illegal copies of games being produced. Piracy harms both developers and consumers".

All well and good in terms of fighting piracy, but still rather a piss-poor excuse, in our opinion. Using a new CD protection system in "good faith" and seemingly not fully testing it before unleashing it on the public is hardly proper protocol for such a hugely successful company.

In the meantime, Watchdog did ask Codemasters to produce a list of the affected CD-ROM drives, but they were unable to furnish us with one before going to press.

If you've bought the game and it doesn't work with your CD-ROM drive, either take it back to the shop and ask for a refund, or phone Codemasters, who are currently planning

replacement copies. Again, Codemasters were unable to give us a release date for the CD replacements at the time of going to press.

Because of the lack of info about both the affected CD-ROM drives and replacement CDs, perhaps punters would be best advised to steer clear of the game until Watchdog has been given the necessary information. We'll let you know as soon as we hear from them.

Tech support problems

As for the various complaints about Codemasters' tech support, Eddy offered the following glossy explanation: "Sorry, it's always manic in the first week of release (mainly with people asking for cheats, which aren't available on that number!)."

Bug problems

If you're experiencing 'technical difficulties' with *Colin McRae Rally*, a patch is available at www.codemasters.com and www.colinmcrac.com. You can also find it stashed on our cover disk.

To execute the patch, double-click on the exe file. This automatically updates the files in your *Colin McRae Rally* installation. Download the European Patch, unless the game was purchased in Italy, in which case download the Italian Patch instead.

PC ZONE

COMING NEXT ISSUE

CM3



The *Championship Manager* series has set the standard by which all other football management games are measured. *CM2* remains the game of choice for armchair football managers, and with *CM3* looming, the future looks ominous for any publisher planning to make inroads into this genre. Check out our exclusive review of the game that's set to move the goalposts yet again.

THE FINEST COVER CD DEMOS

If all goes according to plan we'll be bringing you exclusive demos of *Thief: The Dark Project*, *Alpha Centauri* and *Actua Soccer 3*. There will of course be lots more on the CD for your gaming pleasure.

HONEST REVIEWS

Looking at the games scheduled for release next month, it's clear there will be something in the review section to spark your interest whatever your preferred genre might be. Main contenders for next month are: *Top Gun 2*, *Oddworld: Abe's Exxodus*, *Moto Racer 2*, *NBA Live 99* and *Baldur's Gate*. All of them will come under the ZONE microscope, and you can count on us to give you our honest opinion as to what's worth shelling out your hard-earned cash for, and which titles should be avoided at all costs (there are always a few).

TIPS, CHEATS AND WALKTHROUGHS

Still struggling with *Populous II*? Fear not, we'll have part 2 of our guide to EA's fantastic game, and a comprehensive guide to *Grim Fandango*. And we'll be giving you expert advice and handy tips on how to design your own videogame. We'll also have more tips and cheats on the latest games than you can shake a very large stick at.

INSIGHTFUL PREVIEWS

We'll be taking an early look at *Descent 3* and *Hired Guns*, and talking to the team behind the highly anticipated *Rally Championship 99*. Can Europress produce yet another benchmark driving game? We'll ask them next month. Probable answer: yes.

ON SALE FRIDAY 15 JANUARY

* Note: this is a guide only, content may change due to circumstances beyond our control

TOP 100

Welcome to the **PC ZONE Top 100**. Here you'll find the games that in our expert opinion are the current top PC games in their field, as well as a few extras you might like to consider if you're a big fan of the genre

ACTION GAMES



QUAKE II

PCZ #59 • 97%

★ The sequel to 'the most important PC game ever' turns out to be more than worth the wait. Despite the odd bit of slowdown, single-player and deathmatch games are in a league of their own. As Macca concluded in his review: "Quake II is pretty much perfect." Buy it now.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



HALF-LIFE

PCZ #71 • 95%

NEWENTRY A whole year late but definitely worth the wait, this has to be the 3D shooter of the year thanks to a superb single-player game. We'll have to wait and see whether it will beat *Quake II* in the deathmatch arena.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 9209100



JEDI KNIGHT: DARK FORCES II

PCZ #55 • 94%

★ It's not *Quake*, but then it doesn't even try to be. But it is a compelling, technically superb blend of action and exploration neatly wrapped up in the *Star Wars* universe. Altogether most impressive.

PUBLISHER LucasArts/AVI • 0171 368 2255



FADE TO BLACK

PCZ #31 • 94%

★ The unofficial sequel to the excellent *Flashback*, this is a near-perfect blend of third-person exploration and combat action. The technical precursor to the fantastic *Tomb Raider*, it's a classic in its own right.

PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING

PCZ #44 • 94%

★ The ultimate mix of space combat, *Elite*-style trading and FMV action, *Privateer 2* was the first big budget release from Origin which used live action in a positive way. Absolutely packed with stars, this is pukka stuff.

PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



TOMB RAIDER II

PCZ #57 • 94%

★ The first game broke the mould, but the sequel even improves on the original. *Tomb Raider II* sports a curvier Lara, massive new levels to explore and a tidier control system. The game comes with native 3Dfx support and looks better than ever.

PUBLISHER Core/Eidos • 0181 636 3000



FORSAKEN

PCZ #63 • 94%

★ *Descent* is dead and *Forsaken* is now king of the tunnel-based shoot 'em ups. With huge, varied levels, heaps of graphical effects, weapons and a fantastic multiplayer LAN-based game, it's up there with the best of 'em.

PUBLISHER Acclaim • 0171 344 5000



WARGASM

PCZ #71 • 93%

NEWENTRY Famed for their flight sims, DID finally deliver an action game only they could produce. With helicopters, APCs, and hapless infantry running about, this is as fast-paced as a tank sim could be – and it's even better to share.

PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199



SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

PCZ #71 • 92%

NEWENTRY Half *Quake*, half *MechWarrior*, this 3D action game pumps fresh air into a stale genre.

Great graphical effects and an involving storyline.

PUBLISHER Microids • 00331 4601 5401

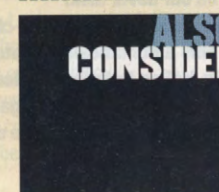


SIN

PCZ #70 • 91%

★ Until *Duke 4Ever* appears, *Sin* is the closest in feel to its ageing classic predecessor. Based on the *Quake II* engine, *Sin* offers a superb single-player game thanks to some ingenious level design. Highly recommended.

PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



ALSO CONSIDER

V2000 Grolier Interactive • PCZ #69 • 92%

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX Take 2 • PCZ #69 • 89%

UNREAL GT Interactive • PCZ #65 • 93%

QUAKE Activision • PCZ #43 • 96% **BUDGET**

SPEC OPS: RANGERS ASSAULT Take 2 • PCZ #65 • 88%

JEDI KNIGHT: MYSTERIES OF THE SITH LucasArts • PCZ #62 • 95%

MDK Interplay • PCZ #50 • 90%

LAST BRONX Sega • PCZ #62 • 87%

RACING GAMES



CARMAGEDDON II **PCZ #69 • 95%**
 ⚡ It's *that* game again, this time with full 3D pedestrians. More blood, more cars, more tracks – and now with added missions. If you liked the first one, you'll love this one. If you don't, you can just bog off.
PUBLISHER SCI • 0171 585 3308



FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 **PCZ #36 • 95%**
 ⚡ The amazing sequel to the greatest F1 driving sim ever. Updated brilliantly for the 94/95 season with all-new detailed circuits, cars and teams. The game will run on a 486DX2 but you'll need a Pentium to run the hi-res mode.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893



COLIN MCRAE RALLY **PCZ #68 • 93%**
 ⚡ Sporting an updated *TOCA* engine, *Colin McRae* has become the new benchmark in rally simulations. With car customisability and a heap of multiplayer accessibility, this game should be top of everyone's rally games heap.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



MONACO GRAND PRIX **PCZ #69 • 92%**
 ⚡ Essentially this is *F1 Racing Simulation 2*, and an F1 fan's wet dream come true. It looks beautiful, plays even better, and the AI is second to none. You need a hefty machine to have it looking its best though.
PUBLISHER Ubi Soft • 081 944 9000



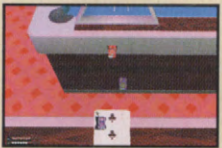
GRAND THEFT AUTO **PCZ #58 • 92%**
 ⚡ This is the game that took over from *Carmageddon* as the media's favourite pet hate. Steal cars, dodge police, mow down pedestrians and cause mayhem in city streets in one of the most addictive driving games ever. *Micro Machines* on acid.
PUBLISHER BMG • 0171 973 0011



NEED FOR SPEED III **PCZ #69 • 91%**
 ⚡ Some arcade racing games are fun, but if you like a bit more than just just racing around a few tracks then you should seriously consider *Need For Speed III*. Why? Because if avoiding the law isn't fun, what is?
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



MOTOCROSS MADNESS **PCZ #67 • 91%**
 ⚡ An astoundingly addictive game. Loads of game and race options and tremendous fun, especially when played with a Microsoft Freestyle Pro pad over a network. Soon available with the pad for around 50 quid. A must-buy.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



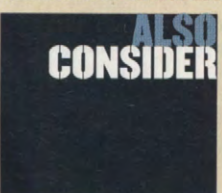
MICRO MACHINES 3 **PCZ #64 • 90%**
 ⚡ The manic miniature racing game gets the 3D treatment and loses nothing along the way. The new power-ups might not please the purist, but *Micro Machines 3* is still one of the finest two-player games around.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



MOTORHEAD **PCZ #63 • 90%**
 ⚡ With drop-dead graphics and a blistering frame rate, this is a ridiculously fast, fab-looking, intense racing experience. Add a great LAN-based option (Local Area Network) and *Motorhead* is the ace of arcade racers.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



GRAND PRIX LEGENDS **PCZ #69 • 90%**
 ⚡ Papyrus, the makers of *NASCAR* and *IndyCar*, have put the danger back into Formula 1. If you fancy a challenge and the chance to go back to the teams and drivers of 1967, then buy this. You'll need a steering wheel though.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



INDYCAR 2 Cendant • PCZ #34 • 90% **BUDGET**
SCREAMER 2 Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% **BUDGET**
DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 Psynosis • PCZ #46 • 86% **BUDGET**
INTERSTATE 76: NITRO RIDERS Activision • PCZ #63 • 87%
TOCA: TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP Europress • PCZ #59 • 86%
ULTIM@TE RACE PRO MicroProse • PCZ #62 • 88%

SPORTS GAMES



LINKS LS **PCZ #43 • 94%**
 ⚡ The classic golf sim gets an update, and unsurprisingly it's fab. There's more options, luscious graphics, a redesigned menu and a view selection system. There's even a built-in upgrader for all the old data disk courses you splashed out on.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR GOLF **PCZ #69 • 93%**
 ⚡ Beautifully presented, as always, and sporting a speedy enhanced graphics engine, this latest in the *PGA* series also gets star endorsement by young Tiger Woods. Without question, this is the best golf game yet.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



NHL 99 **PCZ #70 • 92%**
 ⚡ The problem with all ice hockey games is the confusion that ensues after each ruck. *NHL 99* is no different in that respect, but updated graphics, enhanced AI and spiffy presentation make this game a must for fans of the sport.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



PETE SAMPRAS TENNIS 97 **PCZ #53 • 92%**
 ⚡ This game doesn't quite better *Super Tennis* on the SNES, but it's as close as you'll get on the PC. The simple control system means it's instantly playable, but we may as well tell you now that the women's skirts still don't fly up when they serve.
PUBLISHER Codemasters • 01926 814132



FIFA 99 NEW ENTRY **PCZ #71 • 92%**
 ⚡ Another biannual release from EA Sports that, as per usual, is better than the last. You'll have to think long and hard before shelling out another £40, but if you love footie it's well worth it.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



SENSIBLE SOCCER EUROPEAN CLUB EDITION **PCZ #69 • 90%**
 ⚡ It's still top-down, and it's still simple, fast and fun. *World Cup '98* may be prettier, but it can only dream of being as instantly playable as *Sensible Soccer European Club Edition*.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



NBA LIVE 98 **PCZ #60 • 90%**
 ⚡ With even better graphics and commentary than before, it's one of the best-looking PC sports games. This version sports 'realistic' faces and players of different heights – it's by far the best basketball game available.
PUBLISHER EA Sports • 01753 549442



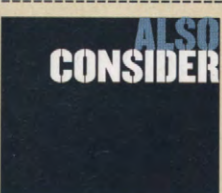
VIRTUAL POOL 2 **PCZ #58 • 90%**
 ⚡ Okay, so *Virtual Pool 2* scored one per cent less than its predecessor, but this follow-up beats it hands down. 3Dfx support goes some way to pushing the series further, and the inclusion of English Pub rules make it a more essential purchase than before.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



ACTUA SOCCER 2 **PCZ #59 • 90%**
 ⚡ Instantly accessible footie action in this latest instalment of Gremlin's high profile *Actua* series. Great graphics, easy control and a hidden Super Furry Animals team confirm *Actua 2*'s 'must have' status.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



THE GOLF PRO **PCZ #62 • 90%**
 ⚡ If you're bored with either *PGA* or *Links*, then this is the best of the 'mouse-swing' bunch. Good course design and some excellent tuition means there's loads of gameplay, though the putting lets it down a tad.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



⚡ There's always a swell of different sports game types depending on the current sporting season. These are worth having a look at...
JIMMY WHITE'S 2: CUEBALL Virgin Interactive • PCZ #68 • 88%
MADDEN NFL 99 EA Sports • PCZ #71 • 87%
TRIPLE PLAY 99 Electronic Arts • PCZ #64 • 90%
TROPHY BASS 2 Cendant • PCZ #50 • 84%

ADVENTURE GAMES



BUDGET **ALONE IN THE DARK 3** **PCZ #21 • 95%**
 ✪ Better than the previous *AITD* instalments, *Alone 3* is a tense, ambient tale of Navajo Indian magic and reincarnation that unfolds in the usual *AITD* manner. This is now available as part of a compilation budget pack.
PUBLISHER Infogrames • 0181 738 8199



BUDGET **BIOFORGE** **PCZ #25 • 95%**
 ✪ Futuristic *Alone In The Dark*-style game with impressive graphics, puzzles and soundtrack. Often preferred over *AITD* games as its unique blend of arcade combat is explosive. The only drag is EA's refusal to make a sequel for it.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



BUDGET **SYSTEM SHOCK** **PCZ #20 • 95%**
 ✪ This futuristic first-person cyberpunk adventure from the makers of *Ultima* was initially overlooked by many people. Now available on budget, this is a must-buy for those new to the genre. The graphics might be a little dated, but the atmosphere is still invigorating.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



BUDGET **DISC WORLD II** **PCZ #44 • 93%**
 ✪ Perfect Entertainment's immaculate sequel to *Discworld* follows would-be wizard Rincewind in his search for the Grim Reaper. Not as hard as the first game, but bigger and better looking. *Discworld II* is a universally appealing adventure game.
PUBLISHER Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000



BUDGET **INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS** **PCZ #37 • 93%**
 ✪ Follow a post-*Raiders* Indy in his search for the submerged metropolis. Three ways to play make for a high replayability factor, and the inter-character banter is brilliant.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255



BUDGET **LBA 2: TWINSEN'S ODYSSEY** **PCZ #54 • 93%**
 ✪ Twinsen is back – this time to thwart those pesky Esmers in this sumptuous sequel. The huge play area in *LBA 2*, coupled with seamlessly linked puzzles, creates a great-looking and hugely atmospheric adventure. A must for adventure fans.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



BUDGET **SAM & MAX** **PCZ #11 • 93%**
 ✪ The hilarious dog/rabbit duo's first and only PC outing, in which they need to solve a host of bizarre puzzles. An all-talkie adventure with a gag-laden script, this is an essential budget-priced purchase even if you're not a point-and-click fan.
PUBLISHER LucasArts/VIE • 0171 368 2255



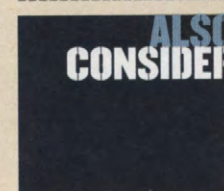
THE CURSE OF MONKEY ISLAND **PCZ #58 • 92%**
 ✪ The third game in LucasArts' classic *Monkey* saga delivers the goods big-time, much to the relief of adventure fans everywhere. *The Curse Of Monkey Island* is the new benchmark for point-and-click adventure games.
PUBLISHER VIE • 0171 368 2255



GRIM FANDANGO **PCZ #71 • 90%**
NEW ENTRY LucasArts not only do the best adventure games, but have also recently been doing the only adventure games worth buying. This latest has style written all over it, and hopefully signals a rosy future for fans of the genre.
PUBLISHER LucasArts • 0171 368 2255



KING'S QUEST VIII: MASK OF ETERNITY **PCZ #71 • 89%**
NEW ENTRY To mark the genre's transition from point-and-click to a full 3D interface, Sierra's eighth *King's Quest* adventure proves an engaging stopgap.
PUBLISHER Sierra • 0118 920 9100



FULL THROTTLE Virgin • PCZ #27 • 92% **BUDGET**
THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE Virgin • PCZ #43 • 92%
TOONSTRUCK Virgin • PCZ #45 • 93% **BUDGET**
GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN Candant • PCZ #36 • 88%
LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE Electronic Arts • PCZ #21 • 93% **BUDGET**

ROLE-PLAYING GAMES



BUDGET **ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS** **PCZ #1 • 94%**
 ✪ This improves on almost every aspect of its prequel, *The Stygian Abyss*. You explore a complex, ever-evolving dungeon; it has unsurpassed atmosphere and interaction.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



FINAL FANTASY VII **PCZ #66 • 93%**
 ✪ Fearsomely addictive gem of a game of truly epic proportions. Great graphics, plenty of hidden surprises and massive levels will keep you totally absorbed if you forgive the risible dialogue and turn-based combat.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



REALMS OF THE HAUNTING **PCZ #47 • 93%**
 ✪ Although overlooked by many fans of the genre, our Mallo gave it a whopping 93 per cent when he reviewed it back in issue 47. Still well worth a look if you happen to see it going cheap, *ROTH* is a well cool mix of adventure and RPG.
PUBLISHER Gremlin Interactive • 0114 273 8601



LANDS OF LORE: GUARDIANS OF DESTINY **PCZ #56 • 92%**
 ✪ Four long years in the making, Westwood Studios' mammoth new adventure proved more than worth the wait. Sumptuous visuals and a tremendous atmosphere combine to make it an instant classic.
PUBLISHER VIE • 0171 368 2255



ULTIMA VII **PCZ #3 • 89%**
 ✪ Arguably the best of all the *Ultima* games, *Ultima VII* blends character interaction and the exploration of the world of Britannia. The last *Ultima* series to give complete party control. Check out the *Ultima Collection* for a real treat.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



DIABLO **PCZ #48 • 88%**
 ✪ Standard hack 'n' slash fare, but pulled off with such style that it's addictive. A great storyline compensates for repetitive arcade combat and supremely detailed animation makes it a superb coffee-table game.
PUBLISHER Zlabac/Blizzard • 01626 332233



TERRIS **PCZ #44 • 88%**
 ✪ A MUD in the old-school style of text-based RPGs, but it's so addictive that we're still playing it. The various quests, puzzles and monsters will keep you going for days. The gameplay is excellent, if you can handle the 'texty-ness'.
PUBLISHER AOL • 0800 279 7444



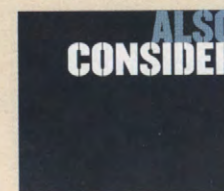
MERIDIAN 59 **PCZ #45 • 86%**
 ✪ This ground-breaking on-line RPG enables thousands of people to interact with each other in the same fantasy universe at the same time. Garish and horrible graphics aside, *Meridian 59* remains one of the best online multiplayer RPGs around.
PUBLISHER 3DO Company • 0181 296 1949



FALLOUT 2 **PCZ #71 • 86%**
NEW ENTRY Does exactly what it says on the tin; twice as big as the original, but with the exact same engine. If you like the first game, you'll love this – not twice as much, but certainly for twice as long. A real life-sapper.
PUBLISHER Interplay • 01628 423666



ULTIMA UNDERWORLD: THE STYGIAN ABYSS **PRE-PC ZONE**
 ✪ This took role-playing games away from first-person tile-based RPGs. Amazing architecture, witty characterisations, layers of storyline and the best ending of any game in history.
PUBLISHER Origin/EA • 01753 549442



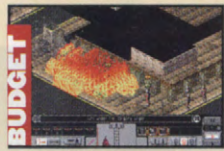
✪ These are the cream of the crop, largely because RPGs have taken a back seat to other game types over the last couple of years. However, also bear in mind...
DIABLO: HELLFIRE Candant • PCZ #59 • 82%
ULTIMA COLLECTION Electronic Arts • PCZ #62 • 90%
RAVENLOFT: STONE PROPHET Mindscape • PCZ #25 • 78%

STRATEGY GAMES



BUDGET

SYNDICATE WARS **PCZ #43 • 95%**
 One of the best strategy games of all time gets a sequel, and what a fabulous sequel it is too. *Syndicate Wars* houses a wealth of intricate levels, gorgeous graphics and enough gratuitous violence to keep anyone happy.
PUBLISHER EA/Bullfrog • 01753 549442



BUDGET

X-COM 3: APOCALYPSE **PCZ #52 • 95%**
 A revamped engine and a healthy helping of real-time combat have brought the fantastically addictive *X-COM* series bang up to date. If you like your strategy games deep and meaningful, you should buy *X-COM 3* immediately. It'll keep you busy for weeks.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893



AGE OF EMPIRES **PCZ #54 • 94%**
 Imagine *Civilization*'s great empire-building gameplay improved with some excellent graphical touches and comprehensive multi and single-player options (all in real time). That's *Age Of Empires* in a nutshell.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING **PCZ #70 • 92%**
 The original *Populous* was the game that put Bullfrog into orbit and made Peter Molyneux one of the biggest names in the industry. Now Peterless, the new Bullfrog team show that they can do just as well without him.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



MAGIC & MAYHEM **PCZ #70 • 92%**
 Based on the old Spectrum game *Chaos*, *X-COM* creators Mythos deliver a diverse and original fantasy strategy game. A strong single-player element and a manic multiplayer game make this a well-deserving classic.
PUBLISHER Virgin • 0171 368 2255



BUDGET

TOTAL ANNIHILATION **PCZ #56 • 92%**
 With a ridiculous number of units and its fast-paced action, *TA* is without doubt one of the best real-time strategy games ever. The polygon units are smooth, and multiplayer games are awesome. Pisses on *Red Alert*.
PUBLISHER GT Interactive • 0171 258 3791



SIMCITY 2000 **PCZ #13 • 92%**
 A classic that deserves its reputation as one of the all-time greats in the strategy world. Build and maintain the city of your dreams and cope with all the problems a real-life Mayor would come up against. It's a lot more fun than it sounds, trust us.
PUBLISHER Maxis • 0171 505 1500



THE SENTINEL RETURNS **PCZ #66 • 90%**
 Twelve years on, the sequel to the 'classic' Amstrad and BBC Micro strategy-fest makes a welcome return. Some may find the gameplay a tad too repetitive, but it's compelling and runs happily on a P133.
PUBLISHER Psygnosis • 0151 282 3000



CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 97/98 **PCZ #57 • 90%**
 The best football management game ever gets its seasonal update and a few added extras – you can now play a number of leagues simultaneously, and edit the existing stats.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



BUDGET

CIVILIZATION II **PCZ #36 • 90%**
 Explore the world, conquer territories and research new technologies in one of the most successful strategy games ever. It's not that different to the first one, but it merits a '90s update and a place here.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893

ALSO CONSIDER

- WARLORDS III: DARKLORDS RISING** Broderbund • PCZ #67 • 90%
- OPERATIONAL ART OF WAR VOL 1** Empire • PCZ #68 • 92%
- COMMANDOS** Eidos Interactive • PCZ #66 • 87%
- DUNGEON KEEPER** Electronic Arts • PCZ #53 • 96% **BUDGET**
- MASTER OF ORION 2** MicroProse • PCZ #45 • 92% **BUDGET**
- COMMAND & CONQUER: RED ALERT** EA • PCZ #47 • 94%
- CAESAR III** Sierra • PCZ #70 • 92%
- M1 TANK PLATOON II** MicroProse • PCZ #63 • 90%

FLIGHT SIMULATION GAMES



F-22 TOTAL AIR WAR **PCZ #68 • 95%**
 This full-price new version of DID's masterpiece is perhaps a bit of a rip-off for anyone who already owns *F-22 ADF*, but those of you looking to buy one of the greatest combat sims of recent years should seriously consider this one.
PUBLISHER Ocean/DID • 0161 832 6633



FLIGHT SIM 98 **PCZ #55 • 94%**
 Another year, and yet another flight sim to come from the mighty Microsoft. However, this time, with two new aircraft, a helicopter, hundreds of new airports and hugely impressive 3D acceleration, it's really worth having.
PUBLISHER Microsoft • 0345 002000



TEAM APACHE **PCZ #65 • 93%**
 A highly accessible and detailed chopper combat sim that lets you get on with the fun stuff rather than struggling with systems and an over-complex flight model. A bit vacuous for die-hard prop-heads, but as flight sims go this is one of the most fun to play.
PUBLISHER Mindscape • 01444 246333



LONGBOW 2 **PCZ #59 • 92%**
 "Longbow 2 is challenging, beautiful, exciting and fun – if you're 3Dfx'd up," we said in our review. If you don't have any extra graphics hardware, there's only one thing to do – think 'upgrade', 'upgrade' and 'upgrade'. It'll be worth the investment.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



JANE'S F-15 **PCZ #64 • 92%**
 A hard-core propeller-head's sim that can stand alongside the awesome *Longbow 2* as one of the most realistic flight sims available. Newbies to the genre might find it a bit overwhelming, but it's worth persevering with.
PUBLISHER Electronic Arts • 01753 549442



FLYING CORPS GOLD **PCZ #59 • 92%**
 Action-packed WWI flight simulation with neato graphics. Some of you may recall *Red Baron* as one of the greatest WWI flight sims ever – this improves on the old classic to become the best PC WWI sim currently available.
PUBLISHER Empire Interactive • 0181 343 7337



JETFIGHTER III **PCZ #47 • 91%**
 The follow-up to one of the most popular sims ever. Fly over three and a half million square miles of accurately-mapped terrain of South America. It really is just like being there. Oh yeah, you get to shoot things too, but sadly there's no duty free option.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000



BUDGET

A-10 CUBA! **PCZ #59 • 90%**
 Functional graphics for a game that really does capture the imagination, mainly because the plane is an absolute joy to fly. Although it's slightly limited due to a lack of a fully-fledged campaign it's still great fun, as well as being pretty speedy on a modest Pentium.
PUBLISHER Activision • 01895 456700



EUROPEAN AIR WAR **PCZ #71 • 87%**
NEW ENTRY Looking at what's around the corner, *EAW*'s stay in the Top 100 could be a short one. For the moment though, this is the best WWII flight sim you can find. And the dynamic campaign structure is a winner.
PUBLISHER MicroProse • 01454 893893



FLIGHT UNLIMITED II **PCZ #60 • 84%**
 It can't really compete with the behemoth that is *Flight Sim 98*, and as a result is somewhat limited and claustrophobic. However, it does score highly for being more detailed in its smaller area, and much more fun.
PUBLISHER Eidos Interactive • 0181 636 3000

ALSO CONSIDER

- ✦ If a flight sim is good, you can bet it'll stay on the shelves for a long time – hence our recommendation for *Jetfighter III*. Some of the more recent releases worth considering include...
- AIR WARRIOR III** Interactive Magic • PCZ #62 • 80%
- F-16 AGGRESSOR** Virgin • PCZ #70 • 92%
- COMANCHE GOLD** NovaLogic • PCZ #65 • 87%
- F/A-18 KOREA** Empire Interactive • PCZ #61 • 90%

ON THE CD

Don't sit there gawking at it, chuck the bloody thing in your CD drive and come back here when you get lost

★ WORDS Richie Shoemaker DISKMEISTER Daniel Emery

HELP!

CD trouble? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out, pronto!

CD-ROM HELP Phone ABT on 01708 250250 or email pczone@abt-net.demon.co.uk Any weekday between 9:30am and 5pm, and Saturday from 10am to 2pm. (Please do not phone the PC ZONE office as we're too busy putting the mag together to answer your calls.)

BEFORE YOU DIAL... If you are calling either helpline, then please take note of the following points:

- ★ If possible, have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- ★ If this is not possible, note down all relevant information – ie system type, sound card, RAM etc – plus the nature of the fault.
- ★ Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.



DEMOS + SHAREWARE

MINIMUM SPECIFICATION

- ★ You'll need at least a Pentium 133 with 16Mb RAM to run the software on this month's CD-ROM.
- ★ Many of the programs on our cover CD-ROM are designed to run under Windows 95 and, as a result, some of them may require a Pentium 166 with 32Mb RAM to run satisfactorily. Please note that some games also require a 3D accelerator card to run.
- ★ Use the browser and menu system to see which demos are Windows 95, DOS and 3D accelerator only.



ANNO 1602
Infogrames

This game has been selling out all over Germany. But don't worry, it's not shit. It is in fact rather good, which is exactly why it received a highly commendable 80 per cent in our December issue. Play the tutorial and one full mission form the full version.

Controls: Mouse



ODDORLD: ABE'S EXODDUS
GT Interactive

The new features in this sequel may be small, but the difference in gameplay is massive. Abe now has more gamespeak, and his farts are now visible. This massive demo will definitely have you gagging for more.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

- SPACE Jump
 - DOWN Crouch
 - UP Jump
 - LEFT/RIGHT Walk/roll from crouch
 - SHIFT Run
 - ALT Sneak
 - Z Throw
 - CONTROL Action
 - X Trump/fart/float an air biscuit/drop a bum egg
- Gamespeak: 1 Hello; 2 Follow me; 3 Wait; 4 Work; 5 - Anger/slap; 6 All 'ya; 7 Sympathy; 8 Stop it; 0 Chant



STAR WARS DROIDWORKS
LucasArts

We can't get enough of *Star Wars* around here. We've downloaded the trailer for *A Phantom Menace*, recoiled in disgust at seeing a small child

flying a starfighter, and then gone back to playing *Jedi Knight*. Now we can all build droids dressed as a Jawa. Hoorah!

- Controls: Keyboard/mouse
- UP Run forward (double power consumed)
- DOWN Walk backwards
- SHIFT + UP Walk forwards
- SHIFT + DOWN Walk backwards slowly
- LEFT/RIGHT ARROW Rotate left/right
- ALT + LEFT/RIGHT Step left/right (multiplied only)
- R/S Use right arm to grab, push, etc
- L/A Use left arm to grab, push, etc
- X Jump (multiplied only)
- H Turn special head attribute on/off
- SPACE Talk to other characters
- PG UP/DOWN Look up/down
- HOME/D Look straight ahead
- V + Mouse Look around (hold down V and move mouse)
- +/- Adjust screen size
- ESC Skip a movie or dialog
- PAUSE Pause game during a mission



KLINGON: HONOUR GUARD

MicroProse

At last, the *Unreal*-powered *Klingon* demo finally arrives. No doubt you've all bought the game already, but for those who haven't here's something that might just send you down the shops in double-quick time – especially if you're a *Trek* fan.

- Controls: Keyboard/mouse
- CURSORS Forward/back, turn left/right
- CONTROL Fire
- ALT Alt fire
- </> Strafe left/right
- Z Strafe
- SPACE Jump/up
- C Crouch
- M Mouse look
- ENTER Activate item
- [J] Next/previous item
- SHIFT Walk
- / Next weapon
- 1-9 Select weapon



HERETIC II
Activision

And we all thought *Hexen* was *Heretic II*. Obviously not. Raven have taken the *Quake II* engine and come up with an action-packed *Tomb Raider* clone. Although it can't boast the same assets as *Lara*, it more than holds its own in other departments.

- Controls: Mouse/keyboard/gamepad
- UP/DOWN Walk forward/back
- LEFT/RIGHT Turn left/right

SHIFT UP/DOWN Run
 / Jump (with
UP/DOWN to flip,
LEFT/RIGHT to
 sidestep)
M Crouch (with
 UP/DOWN to roll)
ENTER Defend
 </> Sidestep
CONTROL Attack
DEL/PG DOWN Look up/down
END Centre view
L Mouse lock
Numpad INSERT Keyboard lock
TAB Look around
K/J Next/previous
 weapon
 [I] Next/previous
 defence
 @ Creep
SHIFT Run
ALT Sidestep

B Chase view
 / Mouse aim
X Crosshair toggle
END Centre view
V Vehicle mode toggle
I Show inventory
 +/- Increase/decrease
 screen size



GRAND TOURING CARS

Empire Interactive

Anyone remember *Airwolf* on the Spectrum? You may remember the developers Elite. Their last PC game was *Virtuoso*, a dire *Doom* clone with heavy metal soundtrack. Now, after years in purgatory, they're back with an arcade racer. Shame they didn't decide on an *Airwolf* sequel.

Controls: Keyboard/gamepad

CURSORS Accelerate/brake/
 steer left/right
S Handbrake
Q/A Gear up/down
C Camera views
ESC Pause
F10 Overlays on/off



VR BASEBALL 2000

VR Sports

It's not often that a demo comes along that only requires one key. The idea here is just to slug the ball as far as you can. The longer you hold down the key, the higher the ball goes.

Controls: Keyboard



BLOOD II: THE CHOSEN

GT Interactive

Two levels from Monolith's sequel to one of the most enjoyable 3D shooters of last year. The *Blood II* demo features just a taster of many of the full game's features. Turn to page 74 for the full review.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

CURSORS Forward/back/
 turn left/right

Left ALT Strafe
 </> Strafe left/right

Left SHIFT Run

CAPS LOCK Run lock

A/Z Jump/duck

BACKSPACE Turn around

Left CONTROL Fire

X Alt fire

/; Next/previous
 weapon

DEL Drop weapon

SPACE Open

[I] Inventory left/right

RETURN Use inventory

G Grab

PG UP/DOWN Look up/down

U Mouse aim toggle

I Crosshair toggle

-/+ Screen size
 decrease/increase

1-9 Select weapon



SHOGO: MOBILE ARMOUR DIVISION

Microids
 Using the exact same engine as *Blood II*, *Shogo* is one of the most imposing 3D shooters we've seen this year. This two-level demo features a regular *Quake*-type level and a Mech-based MCA level. Most impressive, we're sure you'll agree.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

CURSORS Forward/back/, left/right

F1 Mission log

1-0 Weapons 1-10

C Duck

SPACE Jump

ALT Sidestep

</> Sidestep left/right

CONTROL Fire

PG UP/PG DOWN Look up/down

CAPS LOCK Run lock

BACKSPACE Turn around

Z Double jump (MCA only)

[I] Previous/next weapon



EXTENDED PLAY

Get more out of the games you already own (also see the spookily similarly titled *Extended Play* on page 164)

FLIGHT SIM '98

It's one of the most adored flight sims ever, and judging by the number of scenery disks available it looks like its popularity is going to run on forever. Now you can try out a load of new planes as well. Don'tcha just love us?

DARK REIGN

Last month we gave you a ton of new units for *TA*. This month it's *Dark Reign*'s turn, with more than a handful of multiplayer maps with which you can try out your tactical prowess against the world's finest.

NBA '98

Who needs the latest version when you can edit this year-old classic? Add afros, the latest players, or just tinker around and alter the laws of physics. How about zero-G basketball? Now there's a novel idea.





MICHAEL OWEN'S WORLD LEAGUE SOCCER '99

Eidos Interactive

On the field he can do no wrong. Off it, he's not doing too badly either, what with Eidos paying him untold amounts of money to lend his name to their game. Luckily for you lot, it's bloody good too – as you're about to find out.

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Controls: Keyboard/gamepad | 9 Shot/volley | RETURN Pause menu |
| CURSORS Movement | 4 Through ball/chest | 2 Scanner |
| 7 Kick/header | 0 Extend | 1 Top camera |
| 8 Pass: 1 2/tackle | 5 Sprint | |



PLAYER MANAGER - SEASON 98/99

Anco

New version of Anco's football management sim where you don't have to just manage Liverpool. Choose any premier-ship side and see if you can stop Villa where others have failed (*Chelsea haven't - Ed*).

Controls: Mouse



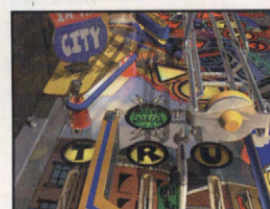
TRESPASSER

Electronic Arts

Jurassic Park 3 by any other name, *Trespasser* is a 3D shoot 'em up that's worth trying for

two reasons. One is the novel way in which weapons are carried, the other is the health meter which is tattooed across your mammary glands – you could stare at it for hours.

- Controls: Mouse/keyboard
- MOUSE** Look
- LMB** Rotate wrist
- RMB** Grab/drop
- X/W** Walk/run forwards
- S** Walk back
- Q/E** Sidestep left/right
- SPACE** Jump
- C** Crouch
- RETURN** Rotate arm
- F** Throw
- CONTROL** Use/fire
- T** Move hand
- Y** Stove weapon
- R** Replay voice-over



PRO PINBALL: BIG RACE USA

Empire Interactive

The *Pro Pinball* series always seems to come up trumps, with balanced tables and a range of features, and this one is no different. Full of New York speech and with some suitable music, it looks like Empire have done it again.

- Controls: Keyboard
- Left/right SHIFT** Flippers
- F1/S** Start
- RETURN** Launch
- Left/right ALT** Nudge left/right
- SPACE** Nudge up



DISPOSABLE HEROES

www.thecoven.com

These two demo TCs for *Quake I* and *II* are for deathmatch only, but the full version features a whole host of extra new features that look set to extend the life of everyone's favourite 3D shoot 'em ups, including new single-player levels, weapons and baddies. You do of course need the full version of either game to run them, as well as the latest patches. Check out the corresponding readme file for full instructions.

Controls: Mouse/keyboard

ON THE CD ADDED EXTRAS

Here's a glimpse at some of the other added extras we've got for you on this month's free ZONE CD

3Dfx Glide 3D Drivers 2.43

Glide run-time library for Voodoo Graphics and Voodoo Rush cards.

Cheat 'O Matic

Automatic cheat program for any DOS- or Windows-based game.

DirectX 6.0 for Windows 95/98

Essential drivers for the most Windows 95/98 games.

EZDesk 1.8

Saves the position of your desktop shortcuts and folders.

FileView v2.1

Hex/ASCII viewer for binary files.

Game Wizard 32

Enables you to enhance the features of the game as well as the speed.

GameHack

Modify properties of your favourite games.

HyperSnap-DX 3.21.00

Screen-capture utility, even in DirectX/Direct3D or 3Dfx Glide modes.

Quick View Plus 4.5

Instantly view files and attachments.

SciTech Display Doctor v6.0

The latest release of the universal graphics card utility.

UHS Reader for Windows 95

Provides an alternative way of getting help if you get stuck in a game.

Universal Game Editor

A program specifically designed for editing saved game files.

MS Common Control Library 4.72

For the customisable toolbar features of WinZip v7.0 if IE4 is not installed.

WinZip 7.0

Windows 95 and NT version of WinZip.

Ameol v2.12

Brand new software for the excellent online service that is CIX.

Kali95

Useful client software for playing games over the Internet.

TimeOnline v1.10e

Simple and effective utility to track your Net time.

GetRight 3.2

Salvage broken downloads and more.

mIRC 5.4

Latest version of the Internet Relay Chat software.

TIPS & SOLUTIONS

Solutions to every game we've ever run a walkthrough for, including cheats and hacks for the latest and greatest.

MAX PAYNE VIDEO

If you thought this year was a good one for 3D shooters, just look at what's around the corner. From the creators of *Duke Nukem* comes his well-dressed cousin, *Max Payne*.

CREATURES 2 ADD-ON

As promised last issue, we have a ton of extra files that enhance *Creatures 2*. Included in the extra objects is a copy of *PC ZONE* that your norns can read through, though whether they'll understand our gutteral sense of humour remains to be seen.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 UPDATE

And still we wait for *CM3*. Until then, keep the old version up to date with this data file that

includes all the latest transfers and statistics.

COMPETITION

Eh? What's this all about? Well it's a bit of a boob. It's actually meant for next issue. The reason for this template will become apparent next month when we'll be running the competition of a lifetime.

CRUSHER

Doh! Another mistake. We will be running that feature on 3D cards next issue. Although in preparation you could find out whether your 3D card is up to scratch with this benchmark *Quake II* demo. You need a full copy of *Quake II* to run it (check the readme file), but once you've found your card's vital statistics you can compare them with what the latest cards can do.

WIREPLAY

All the classics on Wireplay: *backgammon*, *Fox & Geese*, *draughts*, *chess*, *Black Maria*, *cribbage* and *M.U.D. 2*, plus the latest version of the Client software, of course.

www.tripod.co.uk

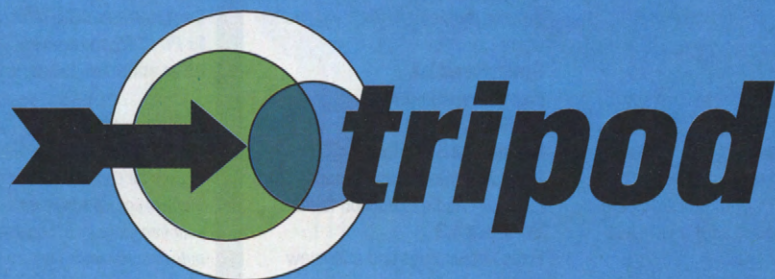
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WARZONE 2100
Eidos Interactive
3D real-time strategy games have been rather hit-and-miss affairs thus far. Eidos hope to change that with this graphically impressive futuristic wargame. Take on the Scavenger forces in this one-level demo from the first campaign.

Controls: Keyboard/mouse
Command console:
INSERT Open command console

- S Short range
 - L Long range
 - D Default range
 - < Retreat at medium damage
 - > Retreat at heavy damage
 - / Never retreat
 - F Fire at will
 - E Engage - return fire
 - C Cease fire
 - G Guard position
 - P Pursue
 - Q Patrol
 - H Go home - command centre/LZ
 - R Go for repair
 - CTRL+R Recycle
- Group Assignment:**
(# = numeric key)
- CTRL+# Assign selected group
 - # Select assigned group

- ## Centre on selected group
- Unit Selection keys:**
- CTRL+S Select all units on screen
 - CTRL+Z Select all units of this selected type
 - CTRL+V Select all VTOLs
 - CTRL+H Select all hovers
 - CTRL+W Select all wheels
 - CTRL+T Select all tracks
 - CTRL+F Select all half-tracks
 - CTRL+A Select all combat units
 - B Centre view on command center
- Display controls:**
- ESC In-game menu
 - F1 Manufacture
 - F2 Research
 - F3 Build
 - F4 Design
 - F5 Intelligence

- F6 Commanders
 - F7 Radar on/off
 - F8 Message console on/off
 - F9 Unit health bars on/off
 - 6 Rotate right
 - 8 Tilt view up
 - + Zoom view
 - Unzoom view
- Map controls:**
- CURSORS Scroll view
- Numeric keypad:**
- 2 Tilt view down
 - 4 Rotate left
 - 5 Restore default pitch
- Other Keys**
- ESC Quit game
 - BACKSPACE Restore screen view to north
 - TAB Toggle menu displays
 - SPACEBAR Engage track mode

ON THE CD PATCHES

We've raided the Net and harangued the publishers in order to bring you all the latest and finest patches

- 101st Airborne in Normandy v1.2.3**
Addresses weapon faults found in the game.
- 688(I) Hunter Killer v1.05**
Fixes towed array, torpedo loading times, dive rate and RIVA sound.
- Air Warrior III 3.10**
Fixed plane view, zoom in, text buffering and rudder deadband modification.
- Axis & Allies 1.2**
Addresses some AI bugs found in the game. Non-UK versions only.
- Burnout Championship Drag Racing Players Choice Edition 2.02 (3Dfx version)**
Fixes a problem found with mplayer.com.
- Carmageddon II (alien patch)**
Turns everything into an alien.
- Carmageddon II (blood patch)**
Turns everything into blood.
- Carmageddon II (zombie patch)**
Turns everything into a zombie.
- Colin McRae Rally (European release fix)**
Addresses some graphics problems found with a small number of PCs.
- Descent Freespace 1.05**
Fixes missing pilot callsigns, and minor problem with the Silent Threat mission and URL.
- Dune 2000 1.03**
A large number of network and multiplayer fixes.
- Final Fantasy VII (Cyrix fix)**
Fix for PCs using Cyrix chipsets.

- Final Fantasy VII (Riva TNT fix)**
Fix for Riva 128 and Riva TNT 3D accelerator cards.
- Final Fantasy VII (Riva ZX chipsets fix)**
Fix for Riva 128ZX cards.
- Gun Metal 1.0 to 1.35**
Fixes Voodoo2 and AI bugs.
- International Cricket Captain 1.34**
Adjusts some minor faults found in the game.
- I-War 1.21**
Addresses some joystick problems found with force feedback generics.
- Knights And Merchants v1.32**
Fixes TCP/IP fault, CD Seek error, text errors and Serf transport bug.
- Quake II 3.20 (beta!)**
See text file for full details on update changes.
- Unreal 2.19 (beta!)**
Fixes Editor crash and a few aspects of network play. See text file for info.
- Lode Runner 2 1.1**
Bug and graphics glitch fix.
- Madden NFL 99 (roster upgrader)**
Updated player roster for EA's footie hit.
- Mayday 1.1**
Updated version for Mayday.
- Need For Speed III (Voodoo Banshee fix 1.0)**
Addresses problems found by some users with Banshee card.
- Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee Golf 1.06**
Fixes TCP/IP problem.

- Rage Of Mages 1.1**
Some graphics and sound fixes.
- Red Baron 3D (multiplayer server)**
Enables Red Baron to be played multiplayer.
- Red Baron II (Red Baron 3D upgrade)**
Gives full 3D support to the game.
- Redline Racer (fix for OEM release)**
Fix for users running on the Chromatic Research Mpac card.
- Roland Garros Tennis 98 (fix for non-3D version)**
Update for the tennis game which fixes some AI.
- Roland Garros Tennis 98 (Voodoo2 patch for 3Dfx version)**
Additional fix to the above with some graphic improvements.
- Seven Kingdoms Ancient Adversaries 2.12**
Speeds up multiplayer gameplay over both LAN and modem.
- Shogo 1.1 (alpha!)**
This is unsupported alpha!
- Sierra's Pro Pilot 1.2 to 1.3a**
Upgrade for 1.2 to version 1.3.
- Sierra's Pro Pilot 1.3a**
Full upgrade from v1.0 fixes graphic problems found by some users.
- Spearhead 1.1**
Fixes several in-game text problems.
- Ultim@te Race Pro 1.40**
Fixes DirectSound and Creative Labs EAX Audio Extension faults.
- Vangers 1.3**
Fixes known bugs and adds new features.

FREE COMPUSERVE CD

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FREE GIFT

Once you have signed up to CompuServe you are entitled to claim the following free gift: World Cup 98.

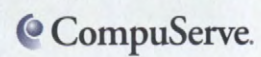
For 90 minutes every four years, the entire planet stops. Billions of people around the globe come together to share the same experience - the World Cup Final. It's the ultimate sporting spectacle. Authentic France 98 tournament - all the players, teams, groups and stadiums, with the chance to go for glory in the World Cup Final. Choose from a number of strategies and styles of play to suit your own team's tactics, from playing on the break to employing different formations. You select and organise your team. Or you can take control of some of the greatest teams of the past and recreate the greatest ever finals in World Cup history, test your football knowledge with World Cup Trivia, and much more! Gary Lineker and Chris Waddle join John Motson and Des Lynam to form the comprehensive commentary team. Get your name into the history books of World Cup football.

HOW TO CLAIM YOUR FREE GIFT - WORD CUP 98 ONLINE

Sign up to CompuServe using the CD-ROM on the front cover of this issue of PC ZONE, simply click on the GO button on the top of the toolbar and type WORLDCUP.

Follow the online instructions and fill in your details including the offer code, which is located on the back of the CompuServe CD wallet, and your member ID. This offer applies to PC ZONE readers resident in the UK or Northern Ireland. Offer ends 1st January 1999.

* The free online time is available during the first month after registration only, subject to our Fair Use Policy (GO UKFAIRUSE). You must be 18 or over to register for CompuServe membership. Premium Services (these are clearly marked) carry a surcharge and are excluded from the free online time. After your free trial your membership will continue and payments will be charged automatically when they are due, unless you decide to cancel your membership.



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Wireplay
The games network from BT

EXTENDED PLAY



More planes for *Flight Simulator 98*, more terrain for *Dark Reign*, and some questionable new hairstyles for *NBA Live*. Can you dig it?

★ WORDS Phil Wand

TRY IT YOURSELF

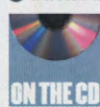


On this month's cover CD we've got all the official patches, bug fixes, utilities and map editors we could find, including all the ones mentioned in these pages. To track them down, use the CD browser to go to the Patches section. All the patches are listed with a brief description and any relevant documentation. Make sure you read any associated README files for information on how to install individual patches. For further help, turn to our CD pages.

“I can't resist baseball games. Or *NASCAR* demos. And *Grand Theft Auto* reminded us all that some forms of colonial recreation can be enjoyed by everyone”

NBA LIVE 98

★ Basketball bolt-ons



Next to stepping in dog turds and the 3am dry heaves, watching American sport is my least favourite activity. Because although they're billed as being spectator (ie me) oriented, most are as stimulating as a mug of sleeping draught. Which is strange, because when you get to play them, they're actually not half bad. For some unfathomable reason, I can't resist baseball games. Or *NASCAR* demos. And, of course, *Grand Theft Auto* reminded us all that some forms of colonial recreation can be enjoyed by everyone.

★ **AFRO PATCH** (*afro.zip*) adds new CyberFaces and afros to Chris Webber, Joe Smith and Latrell Sprewell. To install, skip along to your *NBA Live* subdirectory and right-click on the ART\INGAME\PLAYERS\PLRDATA.VIV file. Make sure the 'Read Only' option isn't checked, and press OK to close the dialog. Next, simply extract the contents of the archive to your main directory and then double-click on AFRO.BAT. Uninstall information is included in the documentation.

★ **BITMAP32 MAKER** (*bmpmak01.zip*) allows you to convert existing 8-bit (256 colour) and 24-bit (16.7m colour) bitmap images to a 32-bit image. Why

would you want to do this? Because although *NBA Live* lets you use your own bitmaps for in-game images such as portraits and logos, they must be 32-bit for the software to correctly use transparency.

★ **MICHAEL JORDAN PATCH** (*mjpatch.zip*) contains Mr Jordan's action picture, portrait and CyberFace. To install, first check you have all the portrait files on your hard disk – if you're not sure, reinstall and choose Custom Installation. Next, extract the archive contents to your *NBA* main directory, and double-click on MJPATCH.BAT. And you're done.

★ **NBA LIVE 98 TOOLKIT** (*nba98t04.exe*) allows you to view and edit pretty much any of the *NBA Live* data files. This means you can frig around with player, team and user information, as well as moving players between different slots. You can also import statistics for both players and teams, and a whole lot more besides. Check the accompanying documentation for full details.

★ **NBA LIVE 98 ROSTER PATCH** (*p98v307.zip*) is an unofficial patch to include new players and update the trade, free agent, injury, position, ratings, team performance, jersey number and team info rosters. To install, just extract the contents of the archive to your main *NBA* directory and then double-click on INSTALL.BAT.

THIS MONTH'S WEBSITE HOTPOT

As ever, we present only the very finest URLs for your delectation. Do with them as you will.

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98 STUFF <http://wacky.org/captainslug>

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98 HOME PAGE www.eu.microsoft.com/games/fsim

NBA LIVE 98 www.tassoft.com/nbalive

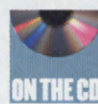
EA SPORTS www.easports.com

DARK REIGN MAPS www.drchronicles.com/construction_rig/maps2.html

ACTIVISION HOME PAGE www.activision.com

DARK REIGN

★ **Nineteen homebrew maps for Activision's real-time strategy thing**



While the forthcoming *Dark Reign II* grabs headlines for its yummy graphics and revolutionary 3D view of the game arena, we thought it was about time we gave some space to the first instalment. While it lacks the looks and personality of its rivals (chiefly *Red Alert* and *Total Annihilation*), *Dark Reign* is a notable detour for two main reasons: it offers variable intelligence, so you can instruct units to alter their behaviour based on predefined criteria; and it gives users one-click access to important routines, so you can get your troops to do things without having to shadow them every step of the way.

★ **HIGHLAND** (*highland.zip*) is a four-player area of harsh terrain with bugged-all space to build on. It's all about governing the abundant resources and gaining control of the cramped middle island with its water and four bridges.

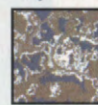
★ **GAHENA** (*gahena.zip*) features two large areas separated by a strip of no man's land – a strip just wide enough for the opposite bank to be beyond the prying eye of a camera. Arse. Advantage swaps back and forth throughout each game and provides a hugely enjoyable four-player team arena. Recommended.



★ 8JMP1

(*8jmp1.zip*) tells the story of the Imperium and

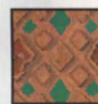
Freedom Guard battling for the valley of Mito. The valley has a wide range of terrain and many hills, valleys, forests and rivers. An uneven, watery landscape provides a tactical challenge for both sides. For up to eight players – if you have that many friends.



★ 04SNOW

(*04snow.zip*) is mainly water and trees and is also

for up to eight players. Resources are spread between the trails, so hover technology should be researched by Imperium players at the earliest opportunity.



★ DIAMOND4

(*diamond4.zip*) features a panorama of

diamond-shaped hills and troughs, with each of the four main bases accessible through a few paths. Imperium players should watch for Freedom Guard movements across the hills; Freedom Guard players should be wary of Imperium bastards in their fancy hovercraft.

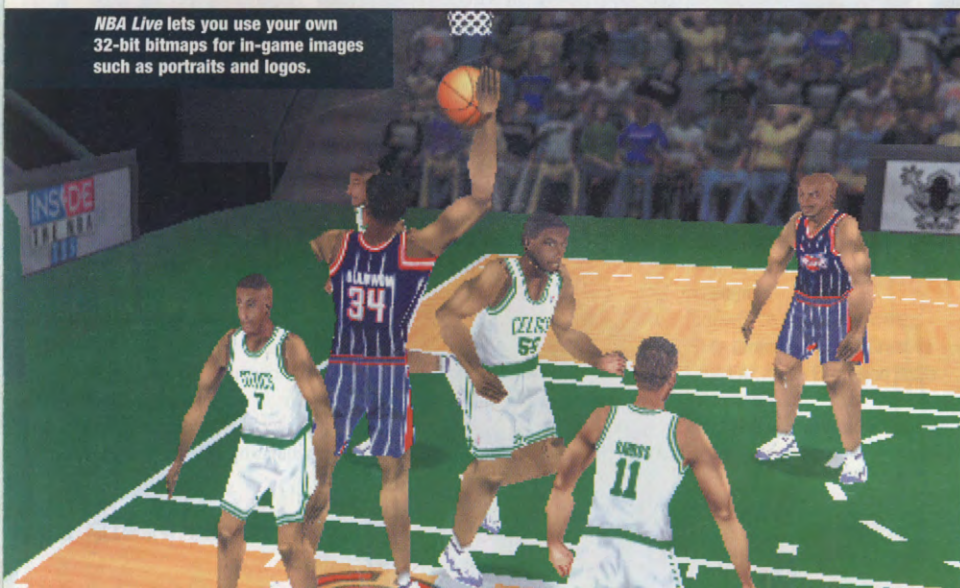


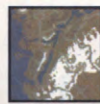
★ CRATERS

(*craters.zip*) shows the importance of

Dark Reign's line-of-sight system. In other words, players in craters won't be able to see out, and players on the outside won't be able to see in. The only way forward is to construct cameras around the rims and keep an eye open for activity. Suitable for up to four players.

NBA Live lets you use your own 32-bit bitmaps for in-game images such as portraits and logos.





02JAKE (*02jake.zip*) is a great deathmatch arena for two players. Both forces start off separated by a vast expanse of treacherous terrain, with several small tracks meandering across from one side to the other. Resources are low in the snow, so finding and controlling the main resource centres ain't easy. Watch for Imperium hover attacks.



4MYWORLD (*4myworld.zip*) sees two players starting as a team, with two further players isolated from one another by a large fort. Much of the scenery consists of trees and water, making progress difficult unless you stick to the small number of pathways. Resources are scattered widely, making control of the pathways your number one priority.

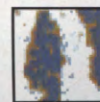


2V2AUSIE (*2v2aus.zip*) uses a well-known archipelago as the central theme for two vs two team play. The central island features an outbackish territory accessed by two civilian bridges. Imperium forces should pay special attention to the smaller waterways at the top and bottom of the area, where only hovercraft may travel. Control the patches of

high area of dense forest. There are paths that lead down the sides, so you'll need to set up camera points and stay alert. The only water is smack bang in the middle and other resources are rare, so try to gain control of it as quickly as you can.



2QUICK2 (*2quick2.zip*) features a fairly open area of rocks and trees, with several water holes scattered around for good measure. Excellent for quick games with two players, although beginners might find the lack of defensive terrain a little too daunting.



ICESTORM (*icestorm.zip*) is again for two players, and features a tight band of snowy terrain. Resources lie towards the central regions, although some can be found near the players' start points. Because of the density of trees on the higher ground, it's almost impossible to organise large-scale attacks.



4TLC (*4tlc.zip*) reminded me of a hugely entertaining *Red Alert* map called *Ore Garden* that was particularly good for a lengthy multiplayer war. Players start in the four corners and must

“You can get your troops to do things without having to shadow them”

Taelon in the four corners and you've effectively won the game.



HARDTIME (*hardtime.zip*) involves two land masses and two players separated by a single river. There are two bridges stretching from each side to the middle island, where the map's highest concentration of resources can be found. Another bridge connects the central area to a further zone, which contains even more resources.



2COLONY (*2colony.zip*) is a thin strip of hills with only a few small plots to build on. Watch out for the rather imposing fort in the central area, and the two bridges that connect it to the player bases. Resources are rather scarce and you'll need to control them all to win through.



2BCANYON (*2bcanyon.zip*) is a monster gorge surrounded by a

make their way to the central island, where the majority of the resources lie.



ARENA (*arena.zip*) is a four-player map split into two opposing sides. The top and bottom are tree-lined and feature four avenues across to the other side. The central area contains the largest concentration of resources and should thus be your first target. Get those cameras up to watch for movement along the paths.



BARREN02 (*barren02.zip*) may sound fairly uninteresting, but it's enjoyable for two reasons: one, it's straightforward; two, it relies heavily on tactics, rather than out-and-out firepower. Also, resources are cut down to a bare minimum and any civilians you come across insist on taking pot shots at you. One can only assume that they're Americans. [E]

FLIGHT SIMULATOR 98

★ **Planes galore for all you Brian Trubshaw wannabes**



Lift up your flaps, pull out your undercarriage and get ready to spoooge – we've got a total of 33 new propeller planes, jet planes, helicopters, sky divers and a flying pig on this month's coverdisc. They all plug straight into *Flight Simulator 98* (with a little help from *Flight Shop Converter 98*), and should keep you entertained while you figure out what the hell to do with your life. Extract the files to your Aircraft subdirectory and away you go.



Flying Pig (pig.zip)



- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 
A-10 ThunderBolt II
(a10.zip) | 
Bucker Bu-133 Jungmeister
(bu133.zip) | 
Guimbal G2 Cabri
(guimbal.zip) | 
Rockwell OV-10 Bronco
(bronco.zip) |
| 
Airwave Xtreme Hang-Glider
(hanglider.zip) | 
Cessna Cardinal RG II
(cardinal.zip) | 
Hawker Harrier
(harrier.zip) | 
Rockwell X-31 EFMD
(efmd.zip) |
| 
Ammunition Pack
(ammo.zip) | 
CMC Leopard
(cmc.zip) | 
Lake LA-250 Renegade
(la250.zip) | 
Shorts 330 Sherpa
(sherpa.zip) |
| 
Arado Ar 234
(ar234.zip) | 
EAPL Eagle X-TS
(eagle.zip) | 
me163 Komet
(me163.zip) | 
SkyDiver
(skydiver.zip) |
| 
Beechcraft Duchess
(duchess.zip) | 
Edgley Optica
(optica.zip) | 
Mooney Ranger M20F
(mooney.zip) | 
Soko J-1 Jastreb
(soko.zip) |
| 
Beechcraft Skipper
(skipper.zip) | 
Zlin Z50L
(zlin.zip) | 
Northrop B2 Spirit
(b2.zip) | 
Sukhoi S-21
(s21.zip) |
| 
Bell Boeing 609 Tilt Rotor
(boeing609.zip) | 
Glstar Tail-dragger
(glstar.zip) | 
Piaggio P180 Avanti
(avanti.zip) | 
Ultra Light
(ultralight.zip) |
| 
Bucker Bu-131 JungMann
(bu131.zip) | 
Grob GF 200
(grob.zip) | 
Robinson R-22
(r22.zip) | 
XH-44 Hiller-Copter
(xh44.zip) |



Wireplay
The games network from BT

NEWSWIRE

This month's hottest news on Wireplay, the UK's number one online gaming network

★ TIRED Warren Christmas

IN THE CLUB: POKER

This month's spotlight falls on the club for one of Wireplay's most popular games

CLUB: Poker
CLUB CAPTAIN: Siefly (real name Simon Price)
CAPTAIN'S EMAIL ADDRESS: simon.price@btinternet.com
CLUB WEBSITE: www.btinternet.com/~SIMON.PRICE
CLUB HISTORY: Siefly started a club for Poker around five months ago and it's proved extremely popular. He's helped by a number of other volunteers - Satchy, Kudos, Dirty Den, Funny Bone, Smok3y and Zuckuss.
TOURNAMENT STRUCTURE: There are two leagues - one for Draw Poker, one for 2's Wild Poker. There are three tournaments every month, each with a £10 HMV voucher for the winner.

The leagues are knock-out based, with points gained for each round won. The leagues are restarting after Christmas, so now is a great time to sign up and get on the Poker ladder (only



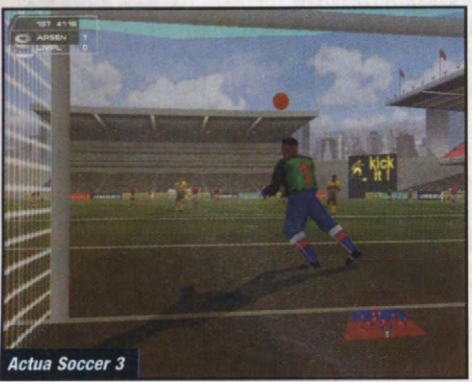
The perfect hand in 2's Wild Poker.

the top 35 on the ladder can enter the prize tournaments).
TOURNAMENT TIMES: Draw Poker on Tuesdays at 8.30pm on the Rapid Channel, 2's Wild Poker on Sundays at 8.30pm. Help for new players is available on Fridays at 8pm in the Rapid Channel chat room.
CLUB RULES: All games are one-on-one except the finals. Lose all your money and you're out of the game. There's a 20-minute time limit, after which the player with the most hands wins.
BEST POKER PLAYERS ON WIREPLAY: Siefly (although he doesn't get to play much himself), Joe Miller, Zuckuss and Funny Bone.

TOP POKER TIPS FROM SIEFLY

- ★ If you are new to Poker, then bet small - don't be tempted to go high too soon.
 - ★ Bet low and aim to win the hands (not necessarily money) - remember that the player with the most hands after 20 minutes wins the tournament.
 - ★ Master the art of bluffing - you can win even if you have a bad hand.
 - ★ Learn your opponents' tactics.
 - ★ Never, ever bet all in - you'll most likely regret it.
- Poker (1.2Mb) can be downloaded for free from www.wireplay.co.uk/downloads/mindgames/wpoker.exe, but you'll probably want to install it from the cover disc.

WHAT'S NEW ON WIREPLAY



Actua Soccer 3



Age Of Empires: Rise Of Rome (inc demo)



Colin McRae Rally



Legal Crime



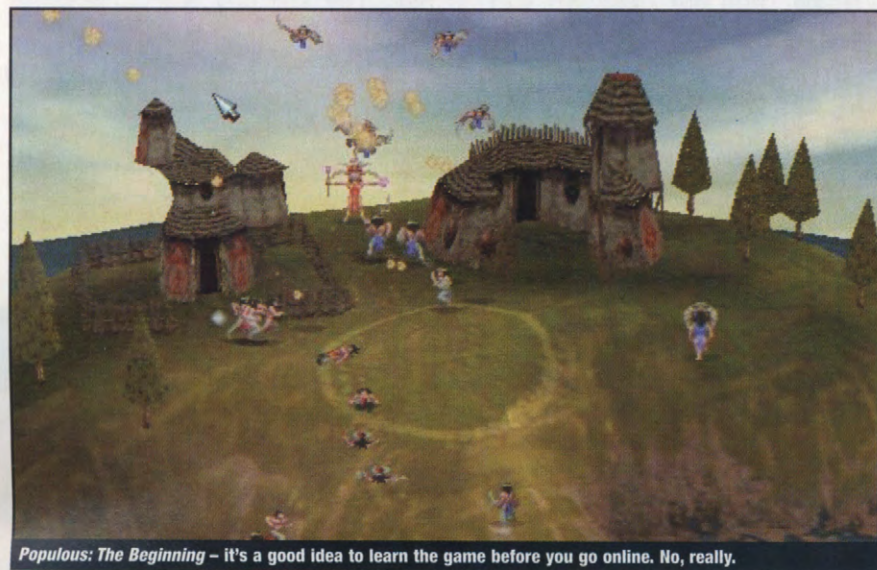
Settlers III



Wargasm (inc demo)

ZONE ON WIREPLAY

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING, 23 NOVEMBER 1998



Populous: The Beginning – it's a good idea to learn the game before you go online. No, really.

Warren tries Bullfrog's real-time strategy game online for the first time... and loses. Badly

It's easy to forget that, online charges aside (see What Is Wireplay? panel below), you can try Wireplay for nothing. That is, you don't need to actually buy any games, as the service supports a number of totally free titles (including various card and board games, popular flight sim *Air Attack*, and special editions of *EF2000* and *Big Red Racing*), plus a number of freely available demos.

One such demo recently added to the Wireplay roster is Bullfrog's fab real-time strategy game *Populous: The Beginning* (PCZ#70, 92%). Less than ten minutes after deciding to give it a whirl online for the first time, your correspondent had the game installed from the cover CD on *PC ZONE*'s Xmas issue (PCZ#71) and found himself playing against Daveyoi – aka Dave Andrews, a 22-year-old Internet support technician.

There was a ten-minute stand-off at the beginning of the game (something which will be familiar to anyone who has played the likes of *Command & Conquer* or *WarCraft II* in multiplayer mode), as we both set about building up bases and reasonably sized armies of warriors. But things changed as soon as I used the land bridge spell to cross the water near David's base.

Daveyoi attacked almost instantly, wading in with a barrage of spells (earthquake and swamp spells, apparently – not that I really knew what the hell was going on at the time), and within minutes my settlement flattened and my followers wiped out. Yep, I had my ass well and truly whipped. Lesson of the day: before seeking world domination via a modem, it's a good idea to know the game you're playing inside out. No, really.

I was familiar with the fundamentals of the game, as some weeks earlier I'd played through several levels of the full release. But, as I soon discovered, playing *Populous: The Beginning* against a human competitor requires not only the ability to multi-task – as you breed braves, create buildings, train warriors, worship monuments, keep an eye on your opponent and so on – but also lightning-fast reflexes to navigate the fully 3D world effectively, and, perhaps most importantly of all with this game, a very good understanding of the spells.

Initial impressions suggest that there's perhaps too much emphasis on the spells, but it will take weeks, as players fine-tune their tactics and counter-tactics, before we know whether *Populous: The Beginning* truly stands up as an online title.

Want to be the ultimate ShamanFragMeister? Then get online and start practicing now. But not before you've kicked plenty of butt in single-player.

FROM THE WIRES

Subscribers to BT Internet's Plan Unlimited package (£11.75 per month, £129.95 a year) now have the benefit of free monthly subscription to Wireplay with online costs charged as local rates at all times. "This new deal offers unbeatable value to the UK online consumer," says Colin Duffy, Head of BT's Internet and Multimedia Services Mass Market division. But then he would, wouldn't he? More information from www.btinternet.com.

BT Interactive are looking for 900 London-based customers to road-test their new ADSL (asynchronous digital subscriber line). The technology apparently offers "Internet access speeds up to 60 times faster than with a 33.6K modem" and "instant 24-hour Internet access with local caching of popular Web pages" for £30 a month. Interested? Then visit www.btinteractive.com/wireplay.html as soon as possible.

Rocky and Badboy, organisers of the Wireplay *ACTUA SOCCER 2* club, have recently scrapped their Thursday night two-versus-two tournaments, blaming excessive lag and a lack of interest in mid-week competitions. The Sunday night *ACTUA SOCCER* events, held each week at 6pm, will continue, alternating between one-versus-one and two-versus-two tournaments. Anyone interested in playing should contact Badboy (badboy@abz.globalnet.co.uk) for more information.

The Wireplay Capture the Flag *QUAKE* (WPCTF) league is to start very soon. Interested in joining? Then email Widowmaker (widowmaker@virgin.net) or Slayer (lewis.h@virgin.net). But hurry! Also being discussed is the possibility of an Action *QUAKE II* league. Check out the *Quake II* message board on www.wireplay.com for the latest news.

WIREPLAY CHARTS



LATE NOVEMBER 1998

Quake II over-took its predecessor as the most popular game on the Game World channel – and, indeed, Wireplay as a whole – in July and there's seemingly no going back. In fact there are no changes at all from last month's chart on either the Game Worlds or Rapid Play channels. Meanwhile, Draughts and Backgammon 'storm' the Mind Games chart, pushing Cribbage and Reversi into oblivion. Blimey.

GAME WORLDS CHANNEL

- 1 *Quake II*
- 2 *Quake*
- 3 *Air Attack*
- 4 *MUD II*
- 5 *Unreal*

RAPID PLAY CHANNEL

- 1 *MUD II*
- 2 *Age Of Empires*
- 3 *Duke Nukem 3D*
- 4 *C&C: Red Alert*
- 5 *Total Annihilation*

MIND GAMES CHANNEL

- 1 *Bridge*
- 2 *Poker*
- 3 *Draughts*
- 4 *Chess*
- 5 *Backgammon*

WHAT IS WIREPLAY?



IT'S A GAMES NETWORK

Wireplay is a multiplayer games network from BT which enables you to meet and compete with other gamers from all over the UK. All the software you need to start up is available on a free CD which you can get by calling freephone 0800 800918. Alternatively you can download the files direct from www.wireplay.com/uk/downloads.

2 WAYS 2 PAY

There are two ways of paying for your time using the service. The Pay-As-You-Play option costs 2.5p a minute off-peak and 6p a minute during peak hours. Frequent users can use the Subscription service. This costs £9.95 a month or £99.50 a year but local call rate charges apply at all times.

WIREPLAY GAMES

Wireplay currently supports over 90 different games and variations, the best of which we've listed below. Loads have been added (or were about to be as we went to press) including *Actua Soccer 3*, *Age Of Empires: Rise Of Rome*, *Rise Of Rome*, *Colin McRae Rally*, *Motocross Madness*, *Settlers III* and *Wargasm*. As always, keep an eye on www.wireplay.co.uk for up-to-the-minute news.

- ★ *Actua Golf 2*
- ★ *Actua Soccer 3* – NEW!!!
- ★ *Age Of Empires* (inc trial version)
- ★ *Age Of Empires: Rise Of Rome* (inc demo) – NEW!!!
- ★ *Air Attack*
- ★ *Armored Fist 2*
- ★ *Big Red Racing* (inc Wireplay Edition)
- ★ *Colin McRae Rally* – NEW!!!
- ★ *Comanche 3*
- ★ *Command & Conquer*
- ★ *Descent 2*
- ★ *Doom* (v 1.9)/*Doom II*/*Ultimate Doom*
- ★ *Duke Nukem 3D*
- ★ *EF2000: Wireplay Edition*
- ★ *Extreme Assault*
- ★ *F-22 ADF*
- ★ *F-22 Total Air War*
- ★ *F/A-18 Korea*
- ★ *Final Liberation*
- ★ *Flight Sim 98*
- ★ *Formula Karts*
- ★ *Forsaken* (inc demo)
- ★ *Fragile Allegiance*
- ★ *G-Name*
- ★ *Incubation*
- ★ *Jedi Knight* (inc MOTS)
- ★ *Legal Crime* – NEW!!!
- ★ *Monster Truck Madness 2*
- ★ *Motocross Madness* (inc trial) – NEW!!!
- ★ *MUD II*
- ★ *NASCAR Racing 2*
- ★ *Netmech* (*MechWarrior II*)
- ★ *Plane Crazy*
- ★ *Populous: The Beginning* demo – NEW!!!
- ★ *Quake/Quake II*
- ★ *Red Alert* (inc *Counterstrike/Aftermath*)
- ★ *Settlers III* – NEW!!!
- ★ *Shadow Warrior* (inc shareware)
- ★ *Sid Meier's Gettysburg*
- ★ *Star Wars Supremacy*
- ★ *Terminal Velocity*
- ★ *Total Annihilation*
- ★ *Unreal*
- ★ *Uprising*
- ★ Various card and board games
- ★ *Virtual Pool 2*
- ★ *Virtual Snooker*
- ★ *WarCraft 2* (inc demo)
- ★ *Wargasm* (inc demo) – NEW!!!



Wireplay
The games network from BT

THE LIONHEAD DIARIES



Footie-playing villagers and beasts with eating disorders are just two of the challenges faced this month by the developers of *Black And White*

WORDS Steve Jackson

BUG-BUSTING

As I described in the last couple of Diaries, Lionhead's artists and engine programmers are responsible for creating the look and 3D feel of *Black And White*. To use *Quake* as an analogy, the artists' and engineers' work would allow you to navigate the 3D rooms and corridors, but the guards you pass wouldn't attack. And your BFG (super-weapon) wouldn't fire. It's the game programmers' job to breathe life into the 3D world the artists and engineers have created.

Peter Molyneux, Mark Webley, Jonty Barnes and Richard Evans form the Lionhead game programming team. Peter is in charge of the overall design and has been programming the artificial intelligence of the villagers who inhabit the *Black And White* world. These little people will work, have parties, shop, fish, dance, maybe even get married - everything that real villagers might do.

I arrived at the office one Monday morning to find Peter sitting at his desk, beaming proudly. "You'll like this, Steve," he enthused. "Look - I'm going to give a ball to one of my tribes as a gift." He mouse-clicked on a field. "There! A couple of people are running after it. They're playing with it. Look - now some more have joined in! They're inventing a game." I watched, fascinated, as gradually, more and more little people were attracted to the ball and played with it. Some time later they had 'invented' football. There were 22 little villagers playing soccer on a field between two goal posts. Peter had spent the entire weekend programming this little feature into the game.

Mark Webley programmed the creature AI on the testbed version of *Black And White* but has since taken over as project manager. He now works with the game and engine programmers, making sure every routine that will be

required by the game has been specified and scheduled into someone's 'To Do' list. It's an enormous task of co-ordination. At Bullfrog, Mark was responsible for project managing 30 different game ports (from PC to console and so on) within a three-year period. But *Black And White*, he says, is a hundred times more difficult.

Richard Evans is currently working out how the game will judge whether each of a player's actions is to be rated as good or evil. Remember, the landscape in each player's territory will change to reflect whether he is playing as a Gandalf or a Sauron (they are good and evil wizards from the book *Lord Of The Rings*). With a First in philosophy from Cambridge University, Richard is the perfect man for the job. He also seems to be very highly qualified in one other department as well, judging by his remarkable success with women.

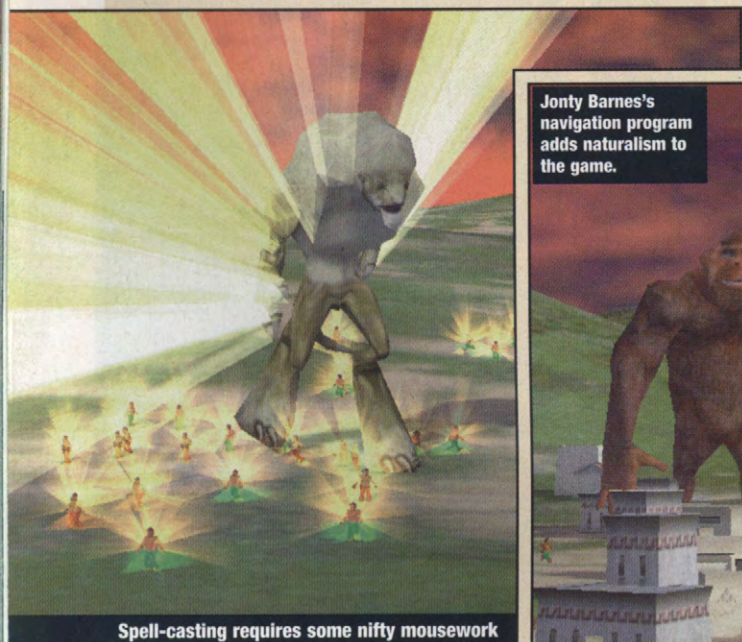
Jonty Barnes' work has already been described in this column. His navigation program sends living creatures from one place to another by the most direct route, avoiding obstacles. His 'flocking' routines make animals (birds, sheep) move in groups naturally, rather than with geometric precision. More recently, he has been working on the magic spell effects and the new 'gesture recognition' system that will be used to cast spells. To create a Ring of Fire spell, for example, it will be necessary to swoop the mouse round in a circle. This is a skill-based feature, so the better you are at gesturing

your spells, the more powerful they become.

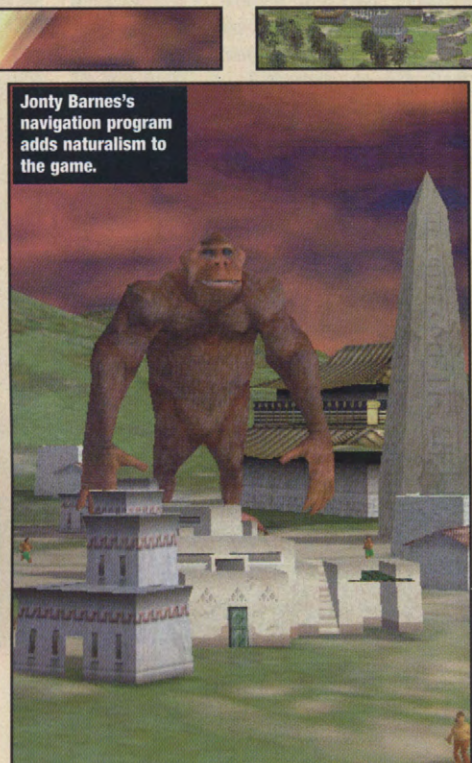
I asked him how he felt the work on *Black And White* was progressing. "*Black And White* is now at the stage where most of the foundation code is coming together," he explained. "The systems that everybody has been happily programming away at now have to sit together in harmony in the game. This is some task!

“Andy has a smug grin as he confronts programmers with their bugs. He loves his job”

JONTY BARNES, PROGRAMMER



Spell-casting requires some nifty mousework



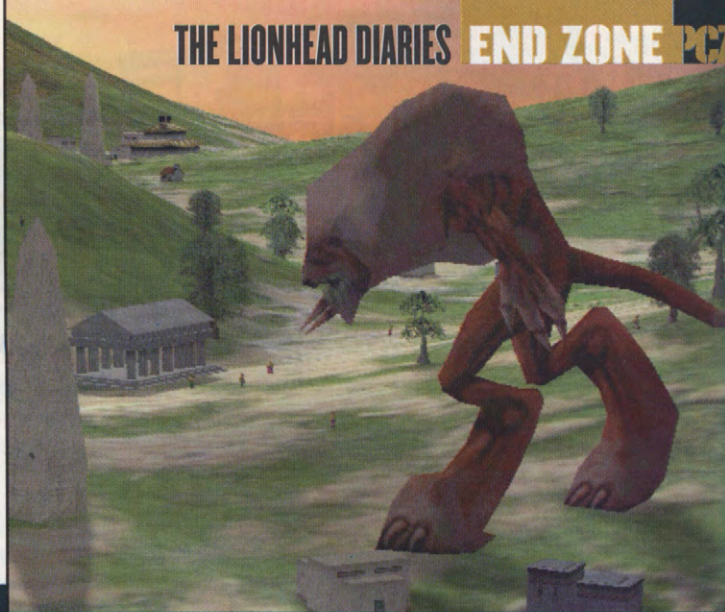
Jonty Barnes's navigation program adds naturalism to the game.



The landscape depends on whether you are good or evil.



Black And White will have been played thousands of times before it's released.



Sadly, in the finished game, critters won't be seen snacking on themselves.

"Strange problems pop up. Last week, Richard placed his creature into the game. With its mouth wide open, it started waving its arms around. Apparently it was starving and was looking for food. And the nearest food it had found was... itself. So now it was trying to eat itself! This bug was quickly fixed with a line of code eliminating a creature as its own food source.


"Programming the game logic using a 'testbed' version (a trial version of the game with minimal graphics) has enabled us to play *Black And White* from very early on. We've been able to test the design and implementation of new features throughout development. *Black And White* will have been played thousands of times to get things right before it's released. But a testbed is only useful for so long and, now the basic framework of the game is complete, it's important for it to be played in its true environment, using the 3D engine.

"Playtesting bugs are reported back to the programmers by our testing manager, Andy Robson, as his team of testers uncovers them. Andy always has a smug grin on his face as he confronts programmers with their bugs. He loves his job. Each month he keeps a league chart of 'whose code has the worst bugs'. Us programmers are a stubborn lot and continually toss the blame around - especially Peter, who insists his code is bug-free. In fact, most bugs come from Peter's code, which he explains away as being down to having to fit his coding in between PR work (press interviews and so on) and meetings. It's a poor excuse. And Andy won't take excuses. He just slams more bug sheets and Post-It notes all over Peter's desk.

"Lionhead's website (www.lionhead.co.uk) has a programmers' discussion board, where visitors can find out about our work on a more technical level.

I monitor this site and try my best to find the time to answer questions.

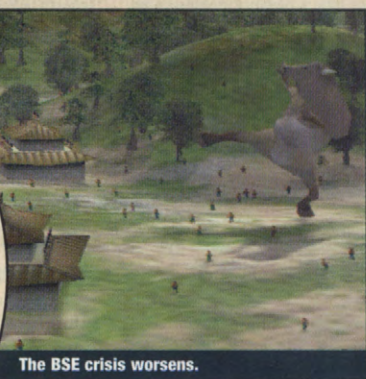
"Admittedly, programming is pretty much a male-dominated field; female programmers are a rarity. But one recent candidate for a games programmer vacancy was a woman. She looked completely cool - even Mark Healey sat up and took notice. Everyone really liked her and she would have fitted in well with the team, but unfortunately she was too inexperienced for the job and we couldn't hire her. Some of us tried to argue a case for taking her on, but Steve put his foot down: 'We can't hire someone just on the strength that they've listed belly dancing as one of their hobbies!'

"Oh well..." 

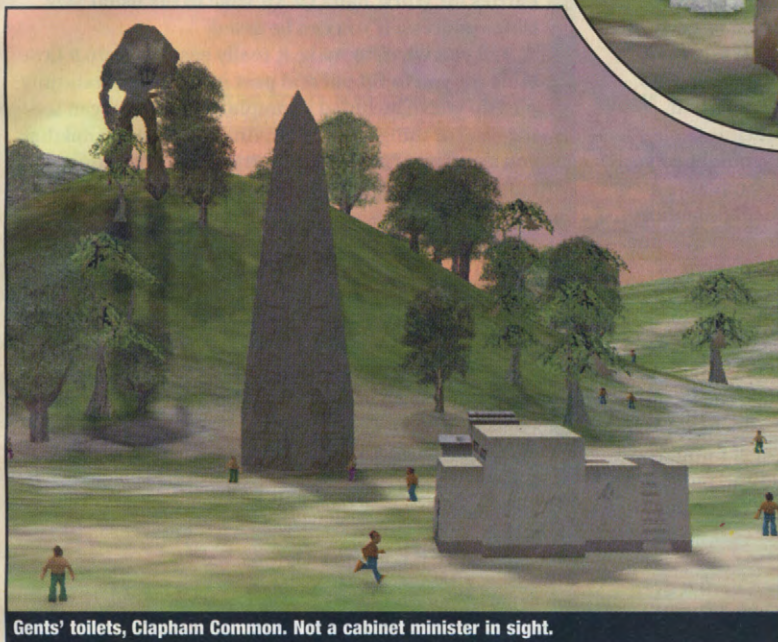
- ★ As well as being a director for start-up games developer Lionhead, Steve Jackson is co-founder of Games Workshop, author of Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks, and a columnist for The Daily Telegraph.
- ★ The next part follows in next month's issue, out Friday 15 January.



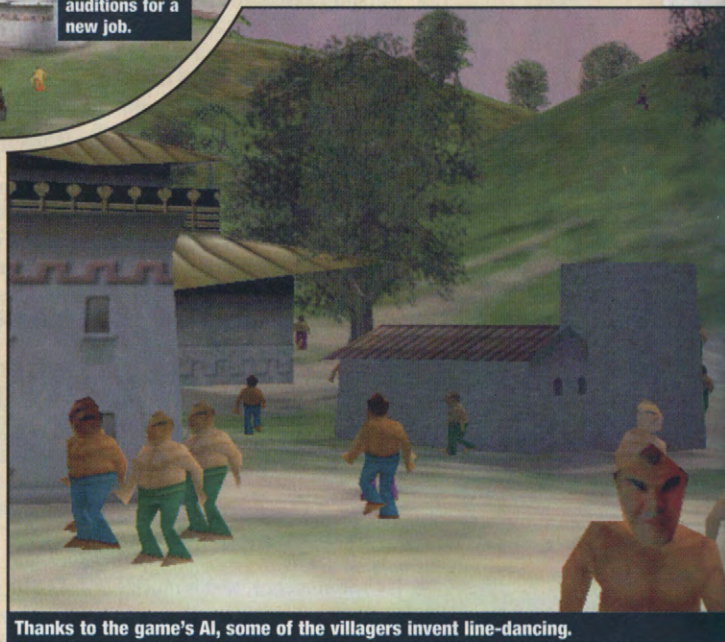
Sporty Spice auditions for a new job.



The BSE crisis worsens.



Gents' toilets, Clapham Common. Not a cabinet minister in sight.



Thanks to the game's AI, some of the villagers invent line-dancing.

SICKNOTES



In which *ZONE*'s resident Mr Nice Guy takes a sideways look at your missives... and ends up wanting to climb the roof and start sniping at strangers with an M-16

★ LINING UP THE CROSSHAIRS Charlie Brooker

SICK NOTES WANTS YOUR LETTERS

Sick Notes wants your letters! We want your suggestions on how best to ensnare and discomfort the UK's biggest fools (see last month). We want you to design a game (see the month before that). We want your suggestions for the world's worst bands (see Loser Of The Month over there on the right). And we want to know which are the biggest shithole towns in the country. And some athlete's foot powder.

WRITE TO Sick Notes, PC ZONE, Dennis Publishing, 19 Bolsover Street, London W1P 7HJ

EMAIL letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk

With the subject heading 'Sick Notes'

SHOP HORROR

Here's a great idea for a game. You start off in a DIY store. You have to kill the shop assistant and manager with the tools on the wall. When you get a certain amount of points you move on to a different shop, like Dixons or something, and you have to kill the assistant with computers, stereos and so on. You could call it *Mayhem In Miami Mall* or something.

'Phil9'

★ Clearly 'Phil9' has a bit of a thing about shops. Four days after we received this email, he sent another one outlining another game involving murder of shop assistants, this time with a final level in which "you kill the owner of an extremely expensive clothes store".

But there's the seed of a

“The girls cackle, cry, stagger around drunkenly and have joyless car-park sex with furrow-browed imbeciles”

good idea here. All you have to do is reverse the roles, so you play as the shop assistant and attack the customers. As anyone who's worked in a shop can tell you, 75 per cent of the public are self-important, pushy little shit pies. Any game in which you could stand behind the counter of HMV, tossing CDs into the eyes of mouthy rich kids, or stalk the aisles of a supermarket, elbowing stropky housewives in the throat, would be a must-have. So would a game where you batter Michael Portillo with a cricket bat.

PEOPLE RUIN EVERYTHING

You have stopped slagging off Banbury. Please recommence, as it is much worse than Norwich.

Mike West

★ I agree Banbury is worse, but it's a close call. Perhaps Banbury and Norwich should be twinned - after all, both are grey, soulless whirlpools of gnawing despair. Mind you, Reading isn't much better. Nor is Coventry. And most of London is terrible.

But you know what's even worse? Those poxy 'entertainment complexes' on the outskirts of towns. You know the kind of thing: a drive-thru burger joint, a ten-screen cinema, a bowling alley, a TGI Friday and a vile nightclub with a name like Sparkles or Copacabana, spelled out in gaudy pink 'handwritten' neon across the front of a square concrete building.

Come Saturday night, these places teem with swaggering, dimbooid lads and tiresome, squawking girls. The lads stand around outside the nightclub, fishing the pickles out of their rancid burgers and picking fights, while the girls cackle, cry, stagger around drunkenly and have joyless car-park sex with furrow-browed imbeciles. It's the apocalypse, I tell you, it's the apocalypse.

If you've had a bad experience in one of these idiots' playgrounds, or you just want to nominate a town worse than Banbury or Norwich, drop us a line.

Ooh, just thought of another one: Lowestoft. That's a shithole as well.

ROUTINE ABUSE

Brooker - no one likes you, everyone hates you. If I saw you in the street I would beat your guts out and put them in a pie and sell it to Oxfam.

'96SteerR'

★ The more I mull it over, the more surreal that threat becomes.

LOSER OF THE MONTH

You can be a loser and also a winner - of £50

THE DOPE SHOW

I have an idea for a game that would fit in with your inimitable editorial style - *PC Abuser*. It would be a game where you insult all those humourless bastards who make life on this planet so much less pleasurable than it could be. You fire round upon round of insults until their heads explode in messy *Scanners* fashion. Different levels would feature different cretins who have campaigned against such Y-front dampeners as *South Park*, *Carmageddon*, *Bad Taste* and Marilyn Manson. Whaddya think?

'Mat', Melbourne, Australia

★ I was rooting for you all the way there, right up until you soured it all with that Marilyn Manson reference. Anyone who campaigns against Marilyn Manson deserves our support, f crying out loud. How such a transparently fake bunch of shambling, atonal clowns have garnered a devoted following Stateside - and down under, presumably - is the single most baffling mystery of our age.

Attention, disaffected teenagers: if you really want to shock your parents, don't dye your hair or get your eyelids pierced, and certainly don't listen to Marilyn Manson records. No, go and get a job instead. Stand up straight and look people in the eye. Stop sulking. Visit your grandparents. And do some bloody work.

If anyone can think of a worse band than Marilyn Manson, drop us a line. We'll compile a league table and everything. Besides, it'll fill space. Send your entries for Worst Band Of All Time to the usual Sick Notes address. If you can be arsed.

Tell you what, to make it really easy, we'll do a little table for you to fill out and post in. Block capitals only, please. We've included a sample entry so you can see the kind of thing we're after. And if you're so anal that you don't want to slice up your copy of *ZONE*, just email us at the usual address.

SICK NOTES' WORST BAND OF ALL TIME VOTING FORM (SAMPLE)

Name of act: Shed Seven

Worst release: Going For Gold

They chew pole because: Their music combines all the vigour and soul of a polystyrene ceiling tile with the melodic touch of an adenoidal airport announcer. And the lead singer looks like a startled chimp and I hate them.

I'd like to see the following happen to them: Imprisoned inside an iron ball and fired at the sun.

SICK NOTES' WORST BAND OF ALL TIME VOTING FORM

Name of act:

Worst release:

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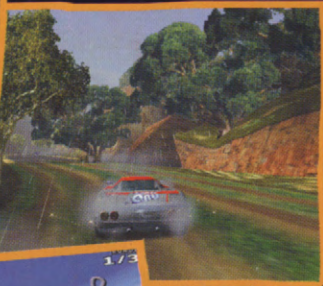
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