

interaction

HOLIDAY ISSUE 1998

M A G A Z I N E

KING'S QUEST: MASK OF ETERNITY

Roberta Williams
Returns with a
New Quest!

We Preview
20 Hot New
Titles!

Speed Demons
Sierra Unleashes
3 High-Octane
Racing Sims!

Holiday Gift Guide
Solutions for
Your Home



run, shoot, run, shoot

run, run, shoot, shoot

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shoot, shoot, shoot, shoot, shoot, shoot, yadda, yadda, yadda, blah, blah, blah

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and foremost
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title of the
season."

-PC Gamer

HALF

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Half-Life supports a
variety of 3D cards, but
one is not required



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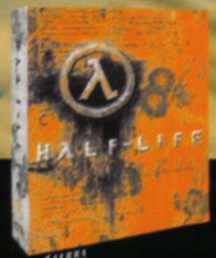


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games are the same...**

**THINK
AGAIN**

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MUMBO JUMBO

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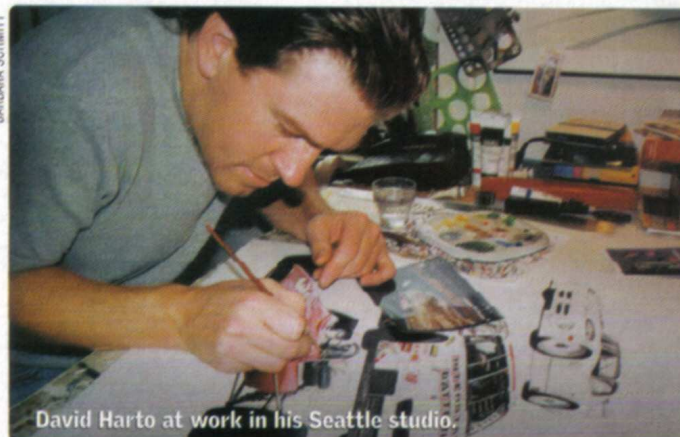
Holiday '98 issue-InterAction Magazine, Viper Racing, Grand Prix Legends, NASCAR Racing-1999 Edition, NASCAR Craftsman Trucks, won.net, Field & Stream Trophy Bass/Buck/Rivers, King's Quest: Mask of Eternity, Caesar III, Half-Life, DFG V, Return to Krondor, PGA Championship Golf, NFL Football Pro '99, Skiing 1999 Edition, Starsiege, TRIBES, Red Baron 3D, Pro Pilot '99, YOU DON'T KNOW JACK (The Ride & The Irreverent Collection), 3D Ultra NASCAR Pinball, 3D Ultra MiniGolf Deluxe, Generations Grande Suite, Fashion Trip, Web Studio, Print Artist, Craft Factory, MasterCook Series, Complete LandDesigner, CompleteHome, USA '99: Streets & Destinations-Copyright 1996-1998 Sierra On-Line, Inc. ® and/or ™ designate trademarks or registered trademarks of Sierra On-Line, Inc. its subsidiaries, licensors and/or advertisers. All rights reserved. Quest for Glory, King's Quest, Red Baron and Generations are registered trademarks, and Grand Prix Legends, won.net, Trophy Bass, Trophy Rivers, Mask of Eternity, Caesar, Half-Life, Return to Krondor, Starsiege, TRIBES, 3D Ultra, Print Artist, Craft Factory and MasterCook are trademarks of Sierra On-Line, Inc. LandDesigner is a registered trademark of Green Thumb Software, Inc. CompleteHome is a registered trademark of and is used under license from Candant Publishing, Inc. Fashion Trip is a trademark of ModaCAD, Inc. YOU DON'T KNOW JACK is a registered trademark of Jellyvision, Inc. NASCAR Racing-1999 Edition is officially licensed by NASCAR. The NASCAR and NASCAR Racing Online Series marks and logos are trademarks and service marks of the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, Inc. under sublicense to TENetwork, Inc., from Papynus Design Group, Inc. and Sierra On-Line, Inc. as licensees. All rights reserved. The right to use the name, image, mark and likeness of the respective tracks are granted under license with the various tracks. SODA is a registered trademark of the Short Course Off-Road Drivers Association. Viper Racing ©1998 Monster Games, Inc., published by Sierra On-Line, Inc. All rights reserved. Dodge and Viper are registered trademarks of Chrysler Corp., USA, and are used under license ©Chrysler Corp. PGA is a registered trademark owned by the Professional Golfers Association of America, Inc. Hoyle is a registered trademark of and is used under license from Brown & Bigelow, Inc. Field & Stream is a registered trademark of Times Mirror, Inc. NFL team names and logos are trademarks of the respective teams. All other NFL-related marks are trademarks of the National Football League. After Dark is a registered trademark of Berkeley Systems, Inc. Quake is a registered trademark of id Software, Inc. All rights reserved. Any other product and/or company names may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. ® designates trademarks registered in the USA which may be registered in other countries. All product and price information, product availability or existence, and policies subject to change without notice. Products available while supplies last. We reserve the right to limit quantities. Not responsible for typographical errors.

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EDITOR'S LETTER

Two Are Better Than One

BARBARA SCHMITT



David Harto at work in his Seattle studio.

ABOUT 14 WEEKS BEFORE YOU EVER SEE YOUR LATEST COPY OF *InterAction Magazine*, the staff is discussing one of the most important elements of the upcoming issue: the cover. What do we feature? It's not a lack of ideas we struggle with; it's the numerous titles vying for the cover.

Marketing folks pitch their favorites while developers call with reasons why their title should get the glory. For the holiday issue we narrowed it down to two possibilities: a Sierra Sports cover featuring their latest racing sims and a *King's Quest: Mask of Eternity* cover. We had but one choice: two covers.

So you might be reading *InterAction* with the racing cover while your neighbor has the magazine featuring *King's Quest: Mask of Eternity*. The contents are the same, they just have different covers.

These covers are both milestones. It was the first time we commissioned original art for an *InterAction* cover and it was the first time we used a 3D model as the basis of cover art.

We developed a rough layout of the racing cover with noted Seattle illustrator David Harto. He then created airbrush renderings featuring the three cars from each sim, each in dazzling detail. The

images you see—all the way down to the decals—are completely authentic.

The *King's Quest: Mask of Eternity* cover features the work of team artist Jason Piel. He created a 3D model of *Mask* hero Connor. This model can be digitally manipulated so it can be used repeatedly, but never the same way twice.

Two covers for a single issue make things a little tougher for us, but we think it will help *InterAction* get noticed by more gamers, and our goal is to create a magazine that is informative and entertaining for ALL our readers.



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Nancy B. King
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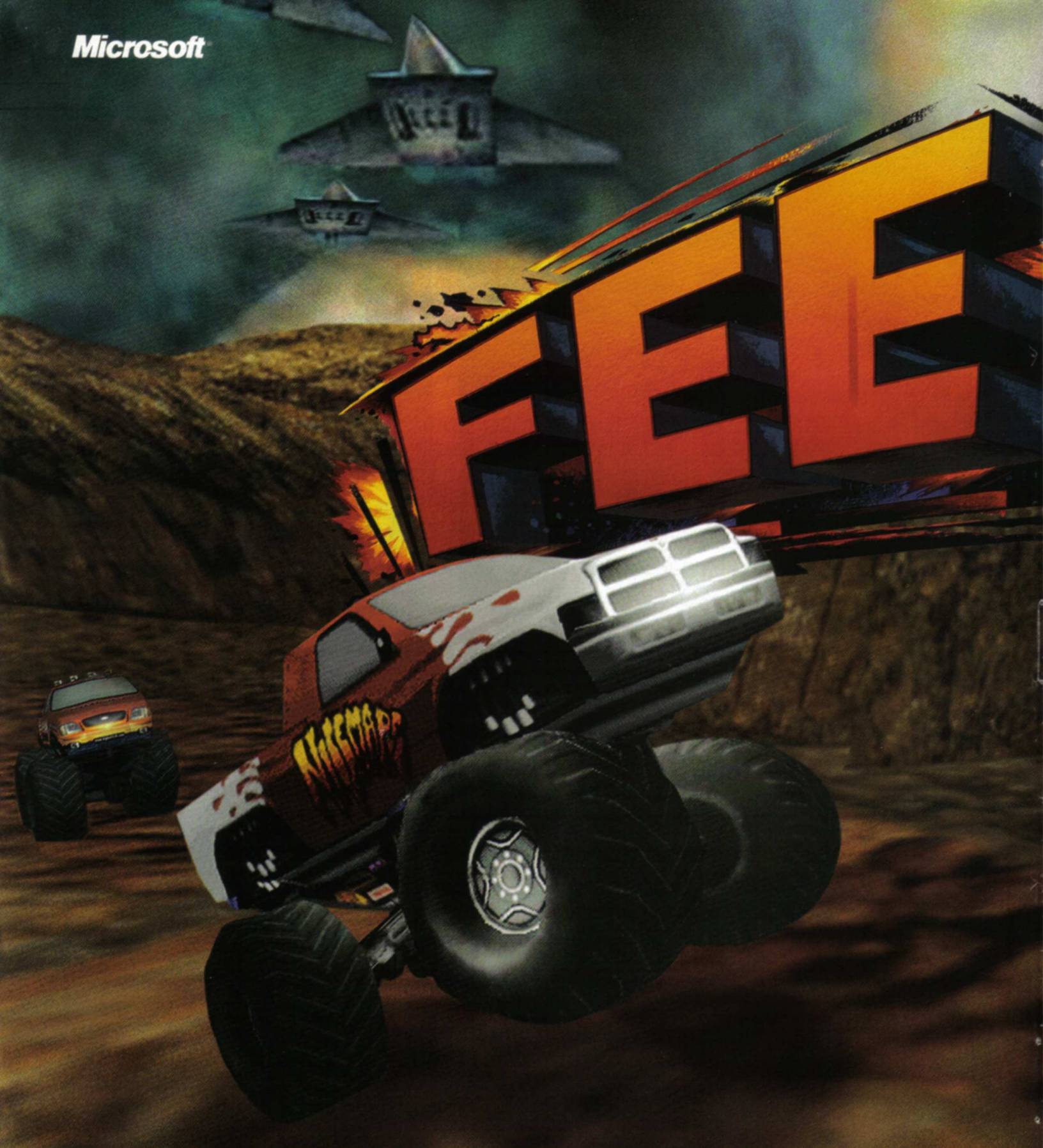
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MONSTER TIRES

...THE JOYSTICK SNAP WITH THE
IMPACT OF A ROCKET RIPPING
INTO YOUR TANK

...THE INTOXICATING POWER OF
BEING TOTALLY AND COMPLETELY
IMMERSED IN THE ACTION



Force Feedback Wheel



Force Feedback Pro Joystick

with the Wheel.

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Just got the Fall '98 issue of *InterAction*, and on page 13 I found something quite upsetting. Ever since I heard about *Middle-earth* coming out I haven't been able to wait, and on page 13, there appears to be two screen shots from *M-e*! BUT then when I got to page 47, I saw that one screen was not from *M-e* but from *Return to Krondor*. What is that all about? I think it is very misleading to gamers who are looking forward to this game.

Kurt Baxter
New York

Dear Kurt:

Oops. Even here at InterAction we're not perfect. In our excitement over the upcoming release of Return to Krondor, things may have gotten a little out of hand. The bottom screen, however, is certified Middle-earth. Good catch, Kurt. (You looking for a job?)

I fully understand that people at Sierra are very busy and have many entertaining projects to work on, but the continued delays of the release of what has already been declared one of the best games of 1998 are absolutely ridiculous. I am, of course, referring to *Half-Life*. Ever since I heard about the game last year, I have been salivating over every magazine article about it, including all the articles in *InterAction*. We have been waiting a year now for this game, and for serious game fans this is simply too long. In the future, it might be wise to keep such games a secret until a more realistic release date can be determined. What we don't know won't hurt us.

Caesar118
via email

Dear Caesar118:

Ah, but what you don't know won't hype you either.



Letter of the Issue

I am Mr. Taha M. Ahmed. This is the first letter I send to Sierra's magazine and I hope it will be a good beginning for dealings with you. I have such interests in this type of science—I mean the studying of computers—and I hope from your presence for help. Please send me some magazines and catalogs. All these things will be very important for me to have more information about this science. Finally, I hope for more progress now and in the future for you and your magazine to serve readers.

Yours faithfully,
Taha M. Ahmed
Mosul, Iraq

Thanks for the great letter, Mr. Ahmed! Just for saying all those nice things about us and writing the Letter of the Issue, we're going to send you a nifty InterAction T-shirt. And we'll bring an extra shirt for Saddam next time we're in Baghdad.

Hey, I was just wondering if Sierra is working on any DVD games.

E. Kromer
via email

Dear E.:

Questions, questions. Yours is a good one though, and unfortunately, we don't have any DVD games in the works. Until DVD is more widely used and Sierra needs more space on disks, our product certification department doesn't foresee it happening. Thanks and we'll keep you posted.

I have had my wife, kids, two dogs, the cat and myself sniffing at the Fall issue of *InterAction Magazine*. It would seem Mr. Hall needs to send his Hawaiian post office to the health lab since no one here is having trouble with your magazine. We think it's great. (Even the puppy wanted to eat it.)

Baz
via email

Editor's Note:

In the Fall '98 issue, Mr. Hall wrote saying his whole family (and dog) got sick from smelling IA. Mulder and Scully are still investigating.

Regarding the editor's letter in the Fall '98 issue, I myself have a 486 and can see what you're saying. But I have a Compaq Presario 833 and without a Pentium, my game choice is very limited. I'm not even close to getting 3D graphics and state of the art technology with it maxed out, and since I'm just a kid, there's no way I can get \$3,000 to buy a state-of-the-art computer. If I try to save up, the technology will be twice as good—so despite what I do with my computer, I can't win. What do I need to do with the computer I have now, and how can I make it better for a low cost?

Matt Dean
Florida

Dear Matt:

Check out Mark H. Walker's piece on inexpensive ways to upgrade your gaming system on page 112.

We just got the new issue of *InterAction* yesterday. I saw a box on page 15 which lists 10 products Sierra is giving away, but when I went to the address, I found only four of the 10 products. Is your list outdated? Is the website not current? Do the magazine staff and the web staff not communicate well?

Jeff Hughes
via email

Dear Jeff:

Ever since the web group and the staff of InterAction were given the multiplayer pre-beta of Starsiege TRIBES, we haven't been communicating at all. In the meantime, we've redesigned sierra.com to make it easier to find all of the goodies Sierra's giving away for free. Check out www.sierra.com/demos for a list of links to our Top Ten Downloads.

Questions? Concerns? Kudos? Write!

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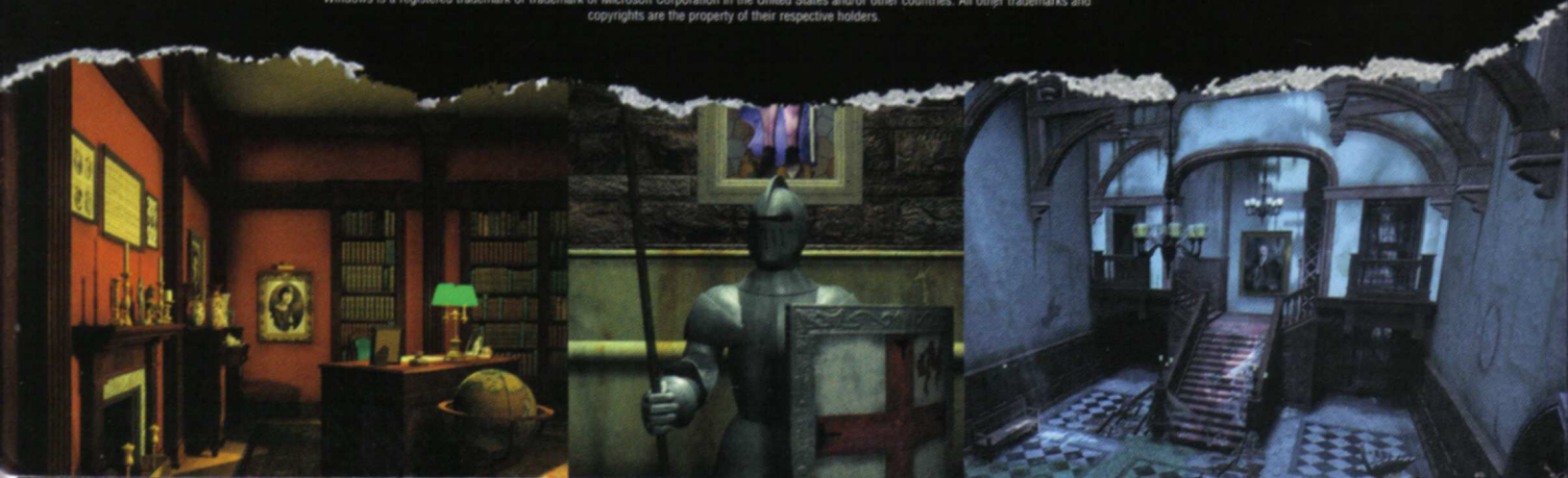
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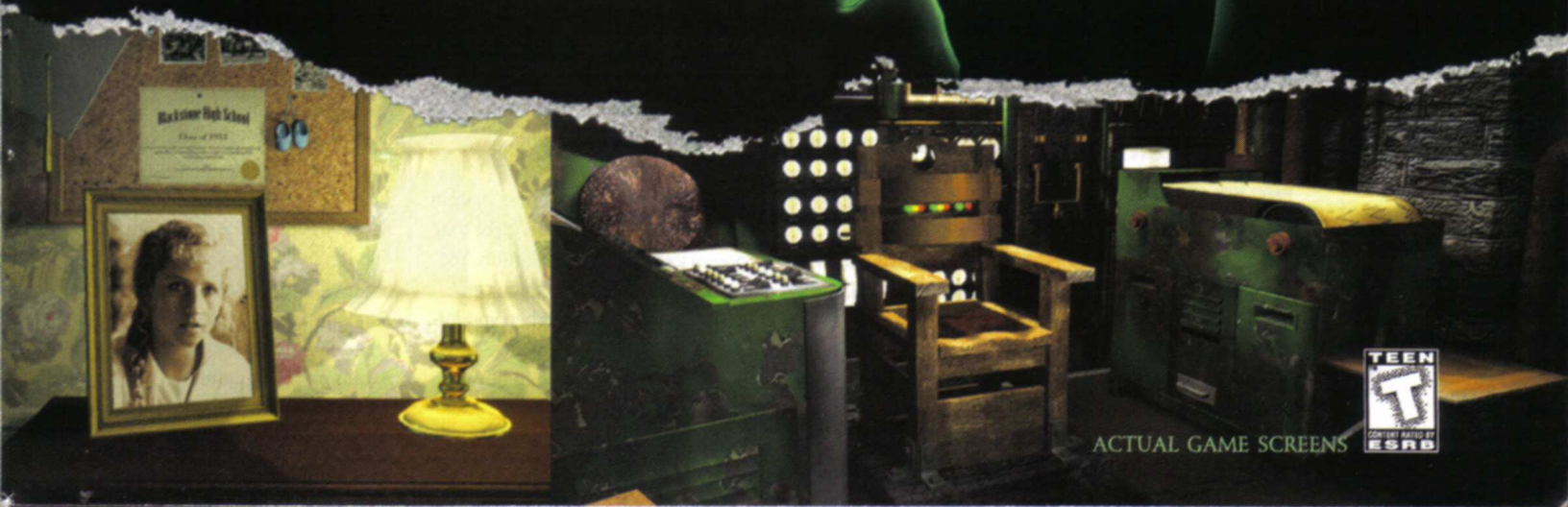


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DRESSING
FOR
DINNER?



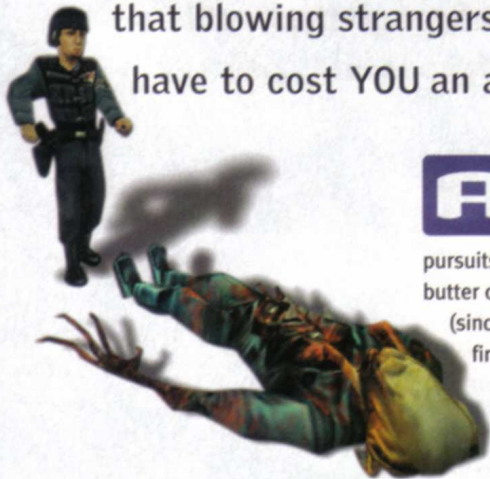
ACTUAL GAME SCREENS



DOING SHOOTERS:

Make New Friends and Pump 'Em Full of Lead

Paul McEnery rifles through the heap of online gaming sites out there and finds that blowing strangers to bits doesn't have to cost YOU an arm and a leg



ALTHOUGH LONG-DISTANCE gaming has its roots in such high-minded pursuits as chess, the bread and butter of online gaming these days (since *Doom*, really) is the 3D first-person shooter. Let's assume you don't have the social skills to land some cushy Silicon Valley job where you can play death matches on the LAN (local area network) all day. In that case, you're going to want to find a service that will hook you up with minimal pain, ping and payment. What's available? These days, plenty.

There are basically two types of service out there. There are aggregation sites, like TEN and Mpath, which are basically dating services for people who want to shoot each other. They set you up with gaming partners for *Quake*, *Unreal*, *Half-Life* or whatever, with a sideline in selling games in the store. Then there are services that pretend to do this but are actually proprietary services, like HEAT, which belongs

to Sega and is keeping them alive by the skin of their teeth until the new console comes out (which will coincidentally have an online connection and save you all the bother I'm about to outline). There are also services that are a bit of each, like the World Opponent Network (www.won.net), which has all the Sierra games, but includes a smattering of the other stuff.

Strangely, just going to the site isn't your best route to the games. There's an infinite number of screens and sell pages to go through, and sometimes it seems it would be easier to hook up with the Pope for a couple of beers. It's often best just to go out and buy the game you like—it may well include online software as part of the package. Congratulations, you have just shaved 120 seconds off your downloading time. You still have up to an hour and a half to go, because you will have to download some sort of interface doohickey.

At Mplayer, they have the honesty to call it a Gizmo. You will have to fill out some marketing profile to keep the advertisers happy, but this keeps the service free. Besides, you can always make up your personal profile. It's yours—why not have some fun?

One thing all the services have in common is the well-worn myth that online games are free. Nuh-uh. You can download *Scrabble*, you can download *Quake*, but when you follow the path of "free gaming," you'll still find you have to buy a

copy of *Unreal* at the end. Outside of *Quake*, TEN has a very pricey option of \$40 every three months—\$160 a year. This gains you access to all the games on the server, but you've got to have an awfully short attention span to make that worthwhile. Mpath is a more reasonable \$40 a year for the Mplus package, but you have to buy the games separately. HEAT membership is \$6 a month (or free on the Perimeter, which offers limited access) and is included in Sega game packages. You can also gain HEAT membership points by kicking butt in tournaments.

Putting this into human terms: TEN is cold, inhuman and overpriced; HEAT offers the most straightforward service, featuring exclusives and (strange, considering it's the most corporate site) the warmest welcome; Mpath is the cozy middle ground that's like playing in a mall arcade; and WON's free.

In terms of the whole experience, it comes down to two things: your phone lines and your Internet service provider. Mpath, for example, claims to have the best network, the fastest servers and the least latency (the reaction time between your shot and your enemy's sad demise), but that really doesn't make too much difference. Sorry, folks—the blame doesn't lie with El Niño, the price of lima beans on the Peruvian Stock Exchange, or whether or not you use a Mac. If your online gaming site isn't living up to its lofty backbone-and server-related promises, call your ISP.

There. Now you're ready to scurry down labyrinths and shoot seven shades of sunshine out of opponents who could be anywhere from down the hall to downtown Katmandu. Watch your back! Cyberspace can get ugly. **f**

Paul McEnery has edited the pop-tech culture zines Mondo 2000, Access and Dark Carnival.

One thing all the services have in common is the well-worn myth that online games are free. Nuh-uh.

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Children's Education, WC	
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THE TOP FIVE

Sierra Games
Fall 1998



1
SWAT 2



2
NASCAR®
RACING 2



3
YOU
DON'T
KNOW
JACK
HUGE



4
TROPHY
BASS 2
DELUXE



5
PRO PILOT

Frequent Flyer Bonus

WE KID AROUND A LOT AT *InterAction Magazine* but when it comes to money, we take a very different tack—so pay attention. Rebates are now available for Sierra's latest flight sims. If you own *Pro Pilot '98* or *Pro Pilot USA*, Sierra will give you a \$20 upgrade rebate on *Pro Pilot '99*. Details are in the Getting Started guide in the *Pro*



Pilot '99 retail box and, yes, you have to buy *PP '99* first. That's why it's called a rebate and not a cash prize.

For all you *Red Baron 2* fans, we went all the way. If you pick up *Red Baron 3D*, Sierra will fire back 100 percent of your purchase price. Details are on the *RB3D* box or you can check out the Sierra website at (www.sierra.com). These offers have a limited shelf life so you have to act now. Certain restrictions apply.

Skiing 1999 Edition Goes Downhill...

...AND AROUND TURNS, OVER JUMPS, through gates and, in the case of certain magazine writers, through trees,

light poles, cafeterias, hot tubs, etc. And this is why well-traveled snippet jockeys prefer to do their "shushing of the slopes" via keyboard. *Skiing 1999 Edition* is taking everything from *Ski Racing* and going to the extreme.

Design team inspiration Picabo Street is on hand, of course, with her pro video tips to keep your times low and your jumps high.

Along with world-class downhill racing on six meticulously modeled



international ski resort runs (including Whistler in British Columbia, Frances Val d'Isere and Germanys Garmisch) you can switch skis and also try freestyle or extreme skiing. When you have your fill of careening down the slopes at mach 3, a ballet awaits. Seven aerial moves give the expert hotdogger

free rein to wow the admiring crowd and woo the judges. Over 5,000 acres of manicured slopes on two mountains provide a vast variety of terrain for working on those sub-orbital acrobatics. Please note: It is not recommended that anyone short of having Grand Master Wizard Slope-Meister ability attempt the "Spinnin' Quinni" (a complicated

move that involves a twisting triple flip while doing the splits followed by a muffled prayer as you bury your head up to your knees in deep powder when attempting to exit the chair lift on the bunny slope). Bring a large bottle of Schnapps.





We Bagged a Big One

SIERRA SPORTS PROUDLY announced last month *Field & Stream™ Magazine* has agreed to an exclusive five-year licensing agreement with Sierra. Existing outdoor sports titles were renamed to reflect this new partnership. In addition to *Field & Stream Trophy Bass 2 Deluxe* and *Field & Stream Trophy Rivers*, two more fishing titles, *Field & Stream Trophy Bass 3D* and *Field & Stream Trophy Marlin*, are expected later next year. In the meantime, *Field & Stream Trophy Buck* will be on shelves just in time for Santa and his merry gang.



An advanced, full-feature hunting sim, *Field & Stream Trophy Buck* lets you hunt whitetail and mule deer year-round. Stalk your prey in eight detailed 3D world-class hunting areas—all in first-person perspective. Complete with an on-screen and in-the-field, in-depth how-to section and tips from the pros. Points are totaled using the official Boone and Crockett rating system. Score high enough and you'll earn your place in the hallowed Trophy Buck Hall of Fame.

Honey! I Shrank the HERC

IHATE IT WHEN THAT HAPPENS. OK, maybe not this time. The *Starsiege* Universe simultaneously has expanded and shrunk (a neat trick previously achieved only by expensive sweaters in the dryer). A tabletop version of the Dynamix mega-blockbuster *Starsiege* is available from Agents of Gaming. The creator of *Babylon 5 Wars*, AoG has modeled this new twist, titled *Starsiege: Rebellion*, on the *Starsiege* Universe using pewter instead of pixels.

Showcased at this year's GenCon in Milwaukee, the game features teeny little pewter figures designed in exquisite detail to match the original artists' drawings for the *Starsiege* HERCs and tanks. Best of all, *Starsiege: Rebellion* uses the most advanced computing system ever created. A system known for its easy interface, user-friendly applications and powerful logic capabilities: imagination.

Yes! You can play this during a power outage. A simple playing system makes for fast action as you maneuver your miniatures across whatever terrain you decide to build. Remember the days when you could actually touch and move your toys? This could be a good excuse to break out the Legos too.



Masked Winner!

TREASURE IS WHERE YOU FIND it, and Tricia Fredrickson

found the motherlode right here at Sierra. Tricia is the winner of the *King's Quest: Mask of Eternity* Internet Treasure Hunt contest Sierra recently ran through GameSpot. The rare double she won? Lunch with the creator of the *King's Quest* series and co-founder of Sierra On-Line, Roberta Williams! Tricia, a 15-year-old gamer, and her mother were whisked to Sierra via limousine where they had a grand tour of the facilities where *Mask of Eternity* is being created and met up with Roberta. Then they were all driven in extreme luxury to a local restaurant, Spazzo's (its real name), for a scrumptious midday meal and sparkling conversation. Tricia, a



huge *King's Quest* fan, has played through the series and was thrilled to meet Roberta. They chatted for hours about gaming, the Internet, school, *Mask of Eternity* and future games. Rumor has it Roberta and Tricia even collaborated on the next game in the series: *King's Quest: The Search For Dessert*. Congratulations Tricia!!

THE TOP FIVE Home Productivity Fall 1998



1
PRINT
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PLATINUM



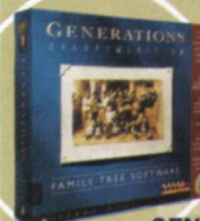
2
SIERRA
COMPLETE
LANDDESIGNER



3
SIERRA
COMPLETEHOME



4
COMPLETE
MASTERCOOK
SUITE



5
GENERATIONS
DELUXE

THE TOP TEN

Downloads
Fall 1998

www.sierra.com/free



3D Ultra Pinball 2

1. Johnny Castaway screen saver
2. Diving Adventure screen saver
3. Betrayal at Krondor (full game)
4. NASCAR Racing 2 demo
5. 3D MiniGolf demo
6. SWAT 2 demo
7. Red Baron I (full game)
8. 3D Ultra Pinball: Creep Night demo
9. 3D Ultra Pinball demo
10. Realm demo

What Games Do YOU Play After Dark?

THE DEBATE HAS RAGED BACK and forth for years. Heated discussions have yet to determine the truth. Will the world ever decide the penultimate question: Is *After Dark* just a screen saver or the greatest collection of attention-grabbing production-killing games ever to lurk on your PC?

Now Berkeley has thrown a vote toward the other side with *After Dark Games*. By popular demand, all the favorite *After Dark* characters and icons are back in 11 outrageous games so addicting you'll need a 12-step program to reboot. Challenge your preponderance for prose with *Bad Dog 911*. Puzzle until your puzzler is sore in *Roof Rats*. Of course, what would *After Dark Games* be without the world's favorite cyber kitchen appliance? Smash several vital keys in *Toaster Run*, the arcade game that only Berkeley could come up with. Trivia, word games, arcade, puzzles, and, oh yeah, this thing that keeps your monitor from burning out.

And you thought you were actually going to get some work done.



And the Winner Is...



CHECK OUT *PC GAMER'S* TOP 50 games of all time. That's right, not some flash-in-the-pan games, but the ones that stand the test of time. Lodged solidly in the DNA of computer game evolution are *Red Baron*, *Gabriel Knight 2: The Beast Within* (correctly spelled in THIS fine publication), *Betrayal at Krondor*, *Front Page Sports: Football Pro* and, last but not least, *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK HUGE*.

More kudos are flying our way from *Computer Gaming World's* top 100+ hot new games list. Making the cut: *Half-Life*, *King's Quest: Mask of Eternity*, *Caesar III*, *NASCAR Racing 1999 Edition*, *Return to Krondor*, *Starsiege TRIBES*, the latest gridiron installment—*NFL Football Pro '99*, *Gabriel Knight III*, *Homeworld*, *Basketball Pro '99*, *Don't Touch That Dial*, *HeadRush*, and *Middle-earth*.

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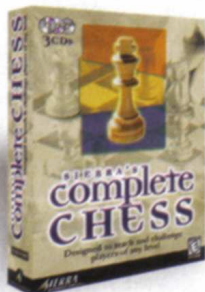
Games Supported

Adventure of Willy Beamish
Betrayal at Krondor
Betrayal in Antara
Birthright
Caesar II, III
Castle of Dr. Brain
Code Name: Iceman
The Colonel's Bequest
Conquest of Camelot
Conquest of the Longbow
Cyberstorm 2
Dagger of Amn Ra
EcoQuest I
Freddie Pharkas Frontier Pharmacist
Football
Gabriel Knight 1, 2
Goblins I, II, III
Gold Rush
Half-Life
Inca Gold
Incredible Machine
King's Quest I through VII
King's Quest: Mask of Eternity
Leisure Suit Larry 1, 2, 3, 5
Lighthouse
Lords of Magic, SE
Lords of the Realm I, II
Lost in Time
Manhunter: New York
Manhunter: San Francisco
Outpost
Phantasmagoria 2
Pepper's Adventure in Time
Police Quest 1, 2, 3, 4
Police Quest: SWAT, SWAT 2
Quest for Glory I through V
Rama
Red Baron I, Red Baron 3D
Return to Krondor
Rise of the Dragon
Space Quest I through VI
Shivers I, II
Woodruff and the Schnibble

It's Your Move

SIERRA'S *COMPLETE CHESS* IS three, full-version chess titles bundled in one package. *Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess*, *Power Chess* and *Extreme Chess* offer novice, intermediate and advanced players a chance to learn, improve or finesse their games.

Novice players will quickly pick up the basics with help from *Maurice Ashley Teaches Chess*. Hundreds of tutorials, practice



exercises, puzzles and multimedia introduce the fundamentals in a fun and easy-to-learn format.

Intermediate players will appreciate the competitive challenges *Power Chess* brings to the table. It's an adaptable computer component that plays and reacts like a human opponent. The King is a formidable opponent but the Queen is definitely willing to work with you. She acts as your personal



coach, analyzing your game, highlighting the good and offering suggestions on how to improve your game.

Extreme Chess is self-explanatory. Advanced players can utilize the power of Fritz (the same engine that beat IBM's Deep Blue) to analyze their own chess games. Instant reports on tactical ability and helpful recommendations on future moves are always available. You can even access the 50,000 famous-game database to watch move-by-move, famous matches between such International Grand Masters as Garry Kasparov and Bobby Fischer.

Interactive tutorials, intuitive interface and tight graphics enhance the artificial intelligence in all three titles. So whether you're just learning or trying to improve your game, Sierra's *Complete Chess* has something to offer everyone. So what are you waiting for? It's your move.

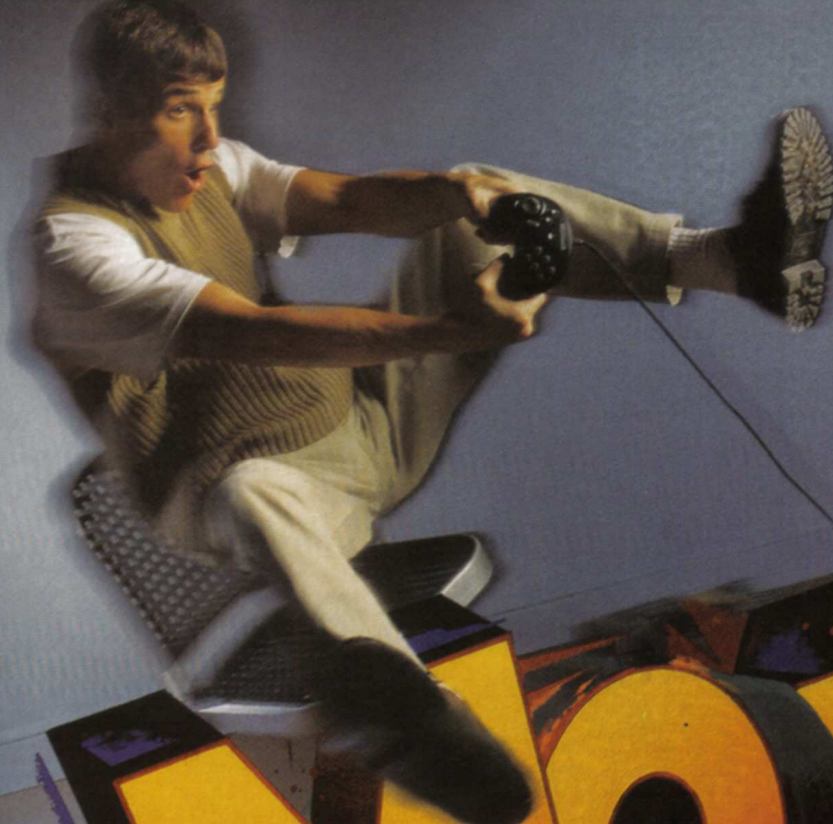
So What's the Big Idea?!

FIND OUT WHEN YOU LOG ON TO the Bezerk website—a free online entertainment network. Just launched, *What's the Big Idea?* is the newest multiplayer question-and-answer game on the Internet. Fun, fast-paced and offering unpredictable gameplay, up to 100 players at a time face a series of thought-provoking questions with no right



or wrong answers. To advance up the pyramid, you choose the answer chosen by the majority of your fellow players. Great minds think alike, and the more you think like your fellow players, the faster you'll advance. But nothing is ever that easy; there are storms and surprises on the way to the top. You'll need some insurance and a bit of luck to make it to the top. That's *What's the Big Idea?* Go ahead—we dare you.





M O V E

...THE CONTROLLER HARD RIGHT AND YOUR BIKE MOVES HARD RIGHT TO AVOID A PILE-UP

...THE CONTROLLER HARD LEFT AND USE MUSCLES YOU NEVER KNEW YOU HAD AS YOU DIVE INTO A LOOP-TO-LOOP

...THE CONTROLLER HARDLY AT ALL AND COMMAND THE GAME WITH EVER SO SUBTLE MOVEMENTS THAT'LL LEAVE YOUR OPPONENT IN TEARS



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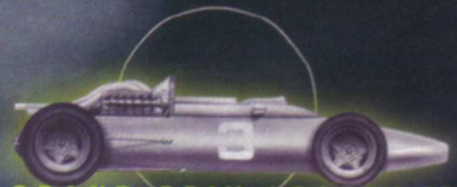
BUILT FOR SPEED



VIPER® RACING



NASCAR® RACING -
1999 EDITION



GRAND PRIX LEGENDS™

By Jeff Kitts

Sierra Sports jumps on the throttle, spins the tires and laps the competition with its lineup of hyper-realistic racing simulations—a virtual timeline of racing's past, present, and future

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THE GAMERS HERE ON THE *INTERACTION* Magazine staff (and that's everybody) were grateful if we could get behind the wheel of one solid, new racing sim a year. Just imagine how worked up we've been lately when we managed to get hold of—and start driving—not one or two, but four new racing games from the gearheads at Papyrus and MGI. Lately we've been logging laps on everything



from the historical open-wheel action of legendary Grand Prix cars to the slick, street legal Dodge® Viper® GTS. ▶ The classic 1967 Grand Prix season is the foundation of the new *Grand Prix Legends*. It puts gamers behind the wheel of some of the most unpredictable and exotic cars ever to hit the tracks. *NASCAR® Racing - 1999 Edition* updates the highly acclaimed simulation of America's most popular motor sport, while *NASCAR® Craftsman Truck Racing* leaps from



the drawing board to the motherboard. Finally, there's *Viper Racing*. Two years in the making, it's being unleashed this season by MGI, the latest racing team to join Sierra Sports. ▶ It's just our collective opinion, but we think these titles are ready for the tracks and born to run. So we asked our racing game "gun-for-hire," Jeff Kitts to take a look at all four and give us a little history and background from the PC racing timeline. Here's what he found. >>>



A Grand Spectacle

RACING SIMULATIONS HAVE ALWAYS been rooted in either the modern era or, in some cases, the future. As any racing fan knows, auto racing would not exist in its current state without having its history behind it—and it is this history, rich in excitement, personality, and immense danger, that Papyrus has chosen to embrace with the upcoming *Grand Prix Legends*.



"We've gone to painstaking lengths to make sure the cars are as authentic as possible...the BRM car actually has its stick shift on the left side of the cockpit instead of the right..."

—RICH YASI

Based on the 1967 Grand Prix season, *Grand Prix Legends* puts gamers in the cockpit of the authentic 1967 cars as they race around authentically re-created tracks competing against top drivers from that era. It's a game that successfully re-creates all aspects of the 1967 Grand Prix season, right down to the somewhat ill-handling car physics, thrilling high-speed tracks, and international culture.

Asked why his team chose the 1967 Grand Prix season, *GPL* co-designer Rich Yasi replies, "We just found it to be a really interesting season in the history of racing. It was the last year before aerodynamic aids—like wings that added downforce—were added to the cars. 1967 was also the last year before

big corporate sponsorship became involved in the series. You could also say that 1967 was the last year drivers didn't receive considerable 'help' from technology when it came to going fast."

Compared to their modern-day counterparts, which feature protective cockpits, reinforced chassis, and break-away fiberglass exteriors designed to absorb impact away from the driver, cars from the 1967 Grand Prix season were dangerous machines that resulted, on average, in one to two driver deaths per year.

"They were basically these big metal tubs with wheels," says Yasi. "Even the slightest impact at any appreciable speed would not only cause tremendous damage to the car, but potentially also to the driver. It was a much more dangerous profession than it is today."

Vintage Tracks

The 11 tracks on the 1967 Grand Prix circuit also posed their share of threats to the drivers. "There are some tracks that are no longer in use today because they were very dangerous," explains Yasi, who conducted massive amounts of research on both the tracks and drivers in order to make *GPL* as authentic as possible. "In particular, the old Nurburgring track in Germany, which was 14 miles

long and had 174 turns. There were not enough safety personnel stationed around the track as well as the added danger of there not being enough guardrails around the track. There were many places where you were hurtling through the countryside at ungodly speeds only a few feet away from trees—one false move, and that was the end. The old Spa track was also extremely dangerous because it was so big, which meant that the weather would change at different parts of the track—it could be sunny in one area and raining in another. And radio communication just didn't exist at the level it does today, so for the drivers it was often a journey into the unknown."

In order to reproduce the tracks in *GPL* to the exact specifications of their real-life models, the design team conducted extensive research,



ATTENTION TO DETAIL: The *GPL* design team did extensive research in studying the intricacies of each replicated course.



LEARNING CURVE: Master downshifting, rev matching and double clutching to avoid career-ending crashes.

studying the intricacies of each course while being careful to keep everything in the context of 1967.

"We wanted to get as much archival material as possible," says Yasi. "We had videotape footage from some of the races that year, and I was able to obtain this tremendous Grand Prix historical archive, which had essentially everything you ever wanted to know about Grand Prix racing. Once we identified the specific tracks that were run in 1967, we sent artists to photograph and measure them. But it was tough because a lot of these places don't have blueprints for the tracks. In several cases the tracks either don't exist anymore or they still do exist but in vastly different configurations. So it involved a lot of detective work on our part to get everything right."

Grand Prix Legends features 11 tracks (every race run during the 1967 season, including Spa, Kyalami, Nurburgring, and Zandvoort), 19 drivers such as Jim Clark and Jack Brabham, and five cars from that season (as well as two fantasy car models), including officially licensed vehicles from Ferrari, Lotus, and BRM.

"We've gone to painstaking lengths to make sure the cars are as authentic as possible," says Yasi. "For example, the BRM car actually has its stick shift on the left side of the cockpit instead of on the right—and that's reflected in the game. The cars were very different back then, and they performed very differently. We felt it was important to us to make those differences apparent to the user."

No Instant Winners

Gamers who fire up *Grand Prix Legends* for the first time expecting to take the checkered flag in their first few races are in for a rather rude awakening. The cars in *GPL* reflect actual 1967 Grand Prix cars in that they can be somewhat unwieldy as they barrel around the tracks at high speeds.

"People who are used to modern sims will find these cars more difficult to drive, but that's because they really were more difficult to drive," insists Yasi. "You're talking about cars without aerodynamic aids, tires that don't grip, and slippery tracks—and it's a significant learning curve. But at the same time, it's so satisfying when you do get the hang of it. When that happens, the car is so responsive and it's just a pleasure to drive—but it does take time to get to that point."

"That's why we felt it was necessary to have the optional driving aids (automatic shifting, braking help, and throttle help) and the two training cars in order to bring people up to speed gradually. The last thing we want is for someone with little or no sim-racing experience to

hop into the GP-level Lotus with no driving aids enabled and expect to trounce the field right away—it's just not going to happen. However, between the driving aids and the training cars, we're confident that a user of any ability will be able to get into the game quickly and come out of it with a satisfying gaming experience. In the end, *GPL* is all about driving."

It's obvious the *GPL* programmers have all the bases covered in bringing the realism of the 1967 Grand Prix season to your desktop—right down to the garage area and starting rows of two, three, and sometimes even four cars—but how does the game look? Dazzling. In fact, *GPL* is a technological breakthrough, boasting an entirely new graphics engine with native 3Dfx and Rendition graphic accelerator support.

"They were basically these big metal tubs with wheels.... It was a much more dangerous profession than it is today."

—RICH YASI





NASCAR® Excitement

SINCE ITS RELEASE IN 1994, Papyrus' *NASCAR Racing* series has reigned supreme as the ultimate American stock car simulation, replete with all the great tracks and drivers that make NASCAR's Winston Cup Series and NASCAR's Busch Grand National Series among the hottest attractions in all of sports. Now, Papyrus is preparing to up the ante again

with the release of

and NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series regulars Jack Sprague and Mike Wallace. There are 35 tracks in all, including Talladega Superspeedway, and Darlington Raceway; NASCAR Grand National Busch Series tracks like Nashville Speedway USA and Myrtle Beach Speedway; plus a host of new NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series circuits like Memphis Motorsport Park, and Pikes Peak International Raceway.

NASCAR season, which means all the drivers, teams, car models, and tracks are accurate as per the current season. Those tracks that have recently undergone modifications—such as Atlanta Motor Speedway, and Sears Point Raceway—will be seen in their current configurations in *NASCAR Racing - 1999 Edition*. Most races will also carry their real-life event sponsor—like the Die Hard 500 at Talladega Superspeedway and the Food City 500 at Bristol Motor Speedway—and hundreds of authentic sponsor billboards will line the perimeters of each race course.

Ahead of the Pack

NASCAR Racing - 1999 Edition is fully updated to reflect the 1998



We're talking 66 real NASCAR drivers from all three racing series, including such NASCAR Winston Cup Series stars as Rusty Wallace, Mark Martin, and Bobby Labonte...

NASCAR Racing - 1999 Edition—the most complete version of the famed racing series to date.

This jam-packed collection of unbridled NASCAR racing excitement contains the updated racing action from the 1998 NASCAR Winston Cup Series and NASCAR Busch Grand National Series, plus an all-new segment based on the 1998 NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series—something never before available! We're talking 66 real NASCAR drivers from all three racing series, including NASCAR Winston Cup Series stars Rusty Wallace, Mark Martin, and Bobby Labonte; NASCAR Busch Grand National Series young guns Matt Kenseth and Dale Earnhardt Jr.;



SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE: In *NASCAR Racing - 1999 Edition*, life is even more realistic and terrifying than before.



SQUEEZE PLAY: There it is—your chance to take the lead. Decide in less than a millisecond to go for it or you've lost the opportunity to win.

"For one thing, all the interface screens are updated and improved and we've made graphical improvements," says Dave Matson, project director for *NASCAR Racing - 1999 Edition*, which offers 3Dfx support in Windows 95 and Rendition support in DOS. "The cockpit has also been updated, as it has the center roll bar in the middle of the windshield, something that wasn't used in previous years. The new tracks also look incredible, as do some of the older tracks. Believe me, when you see Bristol Motor Speedway under the lights, it's just gorgeous. It's worlds apart from the Bristol track in *NASCAR 2*."

Upon its release, *NASCAR Racing - 1999 Edition* is sure to redefine the standards by which all other stock car racing simulations are measured.

The Fans Demanded It

Longtime fans of the *NASCAR Racing* series have been crying

out for years for Papyrus to release a game based on the *NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series*. Well, their cries have been heard and answered with *NASCAR Craftsman Truck Racing*. It's the first racing game to feature all the high-speed, door-to-door truck racing excitement of the 1998 *NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series*. An integral part of *NASCAR Racing - 1999 Edition*, this game is also available as a stand-alone title.

"The truck series is still young and building its fan base, so it made perfect sense to include the trucks as part of *NASCAR Racing - 1999 Edition*," explains Matson. "It really makes this product the most complete NASCAR racing experience available. It's the Big Three series in all their glory."

With classic truck-style bodies, the vehicles in the *NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series* differ greatly from their more aerodynamic counterparts in the *NASCAR*

Winston Cup Series and the *NASCAR Busch Grand National Series*. This required Matson and his team to conduct extensive research in determining all the characteristics of a racing truck so the trucks would not only look different from the stock cars in the game, but feel different to the user.

"They definitely feel different," concludes Matson. "The aerodynamics are different, the balance of the truck is different and there's less downforce and more drag—and a little less horsepower compared to the cars. We initially guessed that the trucks might be a bit looser than the cars due to their significantly reduced rear downforce, but as it turns out, the increased drag and the aerodynamics of the nose give the trucks a tendency to push, compared to cars."

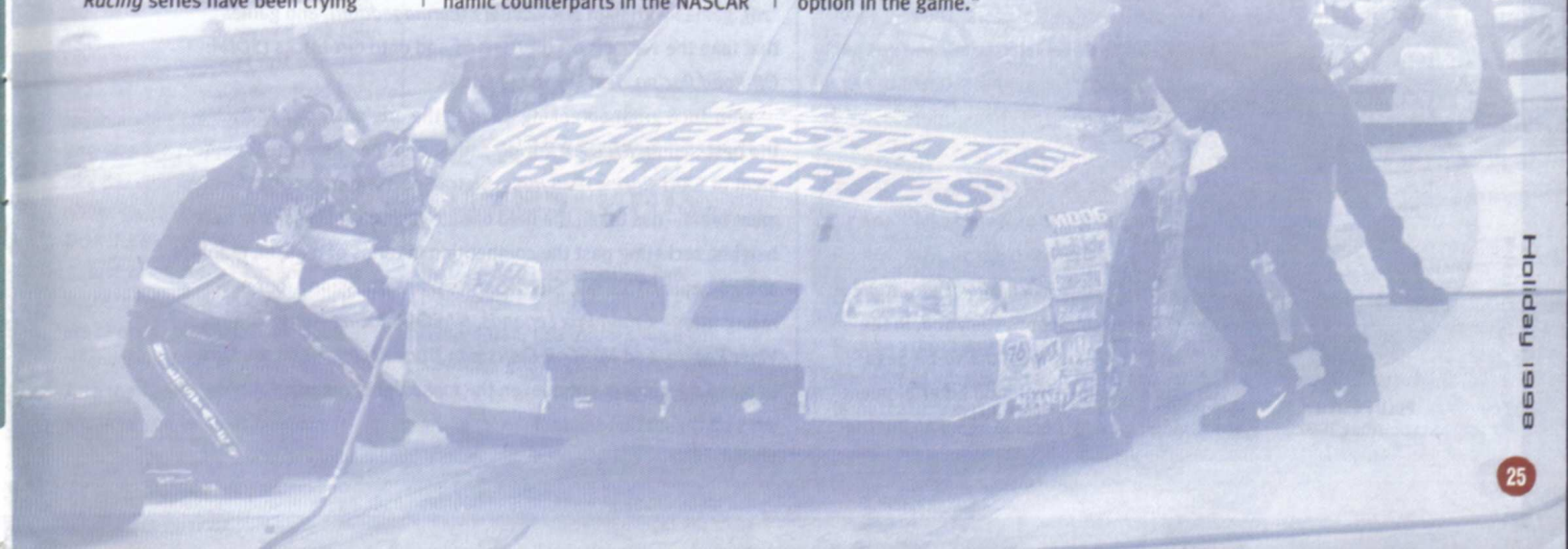
The *NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series* also features slightly different rules from the *NASCAR Winston Cup Series* or the *NASCAR Busch Grand National Series*—all of which will be reflected in the truck series.

"There will be an option that lets you decide if you want to use the five-minute halftime break," explains Matson, "because some of the bigger tracks on the circuit are no longer using that system anymore. They're still using it at some of the smaller tracks, mainly because they don't have enough pit stalls to allow everyone to do real-time pit stops, but they're moving away from it at some of the bigger tracks. So it'll be the user's option in the game."

[NASCAR 1999] contains...an all-new segment based on the 1998 NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series—something never before available!



LANDSCAPERS NEED NOT APPLY: The only thing these trucks haul is ass.



Racing Sims: You've Come a Long Way, Baby!

Racing sims debuted 20 years ago, launching one of the most popular gaming genres to date. And the rest is history...

FOR THOSE OLD ENOUGH TO REMEMBER, THINK BACK TO WHAT QUALIFIED as a "racing simulation" in the early days of video gaming. On the home front in the late '70s, there was *Night Driver* for the Atari 2600; a simple yet visually hypnotic affair consisting of a lone vehicle set against a pitch-black screen and little white lines scrolling downward ever faster, marking the outer edges of the endless, winding road. But as captivating as a round of *Night Driver* could be, sitting

cross-legged on the living room floor with an Atari paddle controller in your hands was hardly

enough to make you feel like Mario Andretti. If you wanted to be in the driver's seat of an authentic auto racing game—or at least as much as technology would allow back then—you had no other choice but to pack your pockets with quarters and head to the nearest arcade; for somewhere amid the "wocka-wocka"

of *Pac-Man* and the droning, dim-witted hum of *Space Invaders* sat *Pole Position*. Issued in 1982, *Pole Position* was one of the first games to attempt to re-create the high-speed fury of open-wheel Indy car racing; for its time, it boasted quasi-realistic graphics and topnotch driving physics. The big, easy-grip steering wheel, shift lever, and gas pedal on the floor further heightened the experience over the competition.

The Next Generation

The mid '80s were a bit of down time for video games. But with the 1986 introduction of the Nintendo Entertainment System and, in the late '80s/early '90s, the 16-bit Sega Genesis and Super Nintendo Entertainment System, video gaming became again an interna-

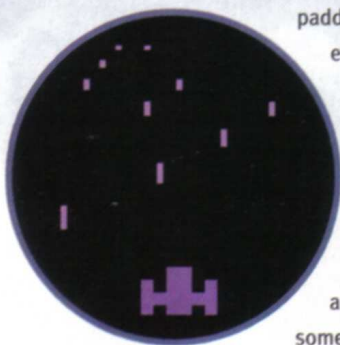
tional obsession—and, with it, ushered in a whole new generation of racing games.

Though various racing games did appear on the 16-bit systems, the technological limitations of those systems prevented the racing simulation from making a real dent on the home gaming front. Until 1993, that is, which is when the 32-bit, next-generation 3DO console system debuted. While the platform itself was ultimately a huge commercial failure, its first wave of games were most impressive, particularly the original *The Need for Speed* driving simulation. *The Need for Speed* can be credited with being one of the first home racing games to offer stunning, realistic graphics, authentic vehicle physics, and cars that flipped, rolled, and sustained damage. Today, those are the key elements to constructing a first-rate racing game.

Papyrus Grabs the Lead

In the time since *The Need for Speed* opened game programmers' eyes to the proper way to make a racing sim, the driving game market has been flooded with titles—making the genre one of the most popular in video gaming. There are games that capture the essence of professional auto racing (*NASCAR Racing* and *Cart Racing* by Papyrus), games that feature high-tech weaponry and vehicular destruction (*Twisted Metal*, *Destruction Derby*), games that thrust players into fantasy racing arenas (*San Francisco Rush*, *Interstate '76*), games with high body counts (*Carmageddon*), and games that take the vehicles off the asphalt and onto dirt tracks (*SODA: Off-Road Racing*, *Test Drive: Off Road*).

With such groundbreaking titles as the original *Indy Car Racing*, the best-selling *NASCAR Racing* series, and the open-wheel excitement of *CART Racing*, Papyrus—Sierra Sports' motorsports development team—has taken the field of auto racing simulations to new heights, rocketing past the competition in terms of realism, graphics, and gameplay. This fall, Sierra Sports plans on issuing four new racing titles—*Grand Prix Legends*, *NASCAR Racing - 1999 Edition*, *Viper Racing*, and *NASCAR Craftsman Truck Racing*—that are sure to make mincemeat out of even the most highly regarded driving sims on the market today.



NIGHT DRIVER:
Atari, 1977



POLE POSITION:
Atari, 1982



INDY CAR RACING:
Papyrus, 1993



A Monster on Four Wheels

THE DODGE® VIPER® GTS IS THE fastest American production car on the market—and, at \$73,000 a pop, one of the most expensive. Who wouldn't want to drive this dream machine? Well, now you can, thanks to *Viper Racing*, new from Sierra Sports and MGI. Boasting true 3D physics, this hyper-realistic racing game—the first product from the Minnesota-based MGI development team—is a new benchmark in the field of sports car simulations.

Viper Racing puts you behind the wheel of a Dodge Viper GTS—the best in its class—and lets you



compete on eight challenging courses against an assortment of computer-controlled Vipers. You can race on any track at any time or, for those with more long-term goals, experience the game's unique career mode, which requires you to earn money to upgrade your vehicles and progress through three different *Viper Racing* classes to the championships.

Viper Racing has been over two years in the making, since Richard Garcia—one of the original founders of Papyrus—left to form MGI. In that time, Garcia and his team have devoted their full attention to making *Viper Racing* one of the most realistic sports car sims on the market—even though it meant building the game from the ground up.

One of *Viper Racing's* most impressive aspects is the design of the tracks themselves—seven road courses and one tri-oval, to be exact. For MGI, it was of paramount importance to make each track the

best it could be in terms of “driveability,” scenery, and real-world physics.

Mall Rats Redefine Road Geometry

“We designed our tracks by spending an hour or two laying down the road geometry,” explains Garcia. “And because of the way our tools work, we were able to drive on it immediately. So the track designer would lay down the geometry, drive it, adjust it, make another version, and keep doing it until he got a track that really met the criteria and felt good to drive. Once we had a track that we liked, we went to work on building the terrain around the track and adding the detail, like the trees and lakes. All of our tracks were built from the road surface out.”

With their tracks firmly in place, Garcia and the *Viper Racing* team set out to build their own virtual Viper. Learning the intricacies of the Viper's handling, performance, and physics required some thorough



DRIVERS ED FOR ADRENALINE JUNKIES: There's no written test or parallel parking in this one.



RACING LINEUP

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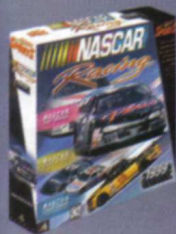
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research on their part. The end result is a car that truly mimics its real-life model.

"Dodge has a Viper on display at the Mall of America, so they let us get inside it, look underneath, take measurements and pretty much do whatever we wanted," says Garcia.

"A lot of what you end up doing is piecing together all these different bits of information. It's a combination of access to the vehicle, access to certain information, data research, 'guestimates,' etc. You really can't get the full story on a vehicle from anybody—they'll only give you pieces of information and it's up to you to put it all together."

From a graphics standpoint, *Viper Racing*—which supports all next-generation 3D hardware—is one of the most visually impressive racing games to date. Each course provides a highly detailed free-roaming environment, which means there are no walls to keep you confined to the track.

Ghostly Appeal

Garcia explains MGI's approach to creating the spectacular visuals of *Viper Racing*. "Most games don't really let you see anything 500 meters away, but *Viper Racing* offers a gigantic horizon so that you can see very far away from the track. We went with a lot of very open environments to give you a real sense of scale and grandeur—you can see a turn coming from way off in the distance instead of it sneaking up on you at the last sec-



DEJA VU: The ghost car option can store your best time on a specific track. The challenge is to improve your personal best time.

ond, and that's something we hope people will appreciate."

One of *Viper Racing's* most intriguing features is its unique ghost car mode. By toggling the ghost car option, players can have the ghost car record their best laps on a given track—then race against it. "It's a feature that we feel is definitely missing from most auto racing simulations," explains Garcia. "Racing against the ghost car is a great training method, as it allows you to learn the quickest line around the track and it teaches you to be consistent."

As a sports car simulation, it's obvious that *Viper Racing* is serious business—but the game is not without its lighter side. By accessing the fun mode, gamers have the option of racing in situations they never thought possible. In *Pave the World*, all terrain is covered in asphalt; in *Hornball*, you can shoot a 5,000-pound cannonball from the front of your car to really wipe out the competition; and in the wacky airplane mode, you can

turn your car into a plane and fly over the various tracks for a unique bird's-eye perspective.

"When one of our programmers came up with the idea of the Hornball mode," explains Garcia, "I noticed that he was spending

"Racing against the ghost car is a great training method, as it allows you to learn the quickest line around the track."

—RICHARD GARCIA

about half of his races with it on. It really turns it into a different game compared to a standard race—it requires some degree of skill to be able to use it and win. I knew a lot of other people would enjoy it, so we decided to keep it in the final game, and not in such a way that it will be completely hidden from most users."

Viper Racing also boasts a fully detailed paint kit option so gamers can design the look of their racing vehicles.

With its many features, graphic splendor and realistic racing physics, *Viper Racing* is sure to become the definitive sports car simulation upon its release in late November. **f**

Jeff Kitts is a New York-based freelance writer.



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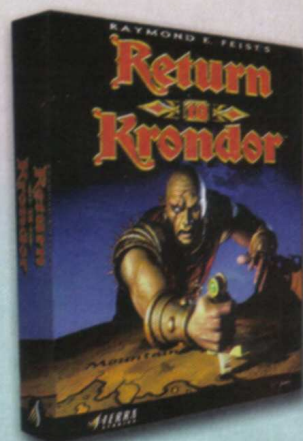
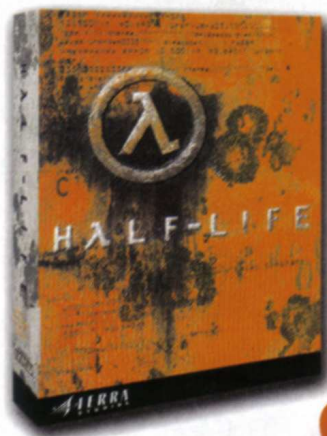
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MOTORSPORTS**

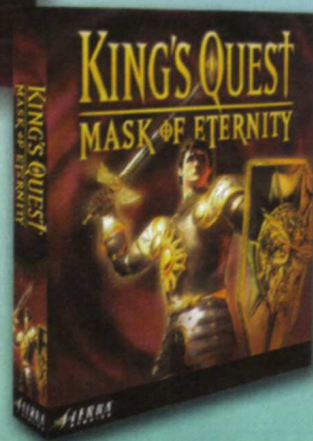
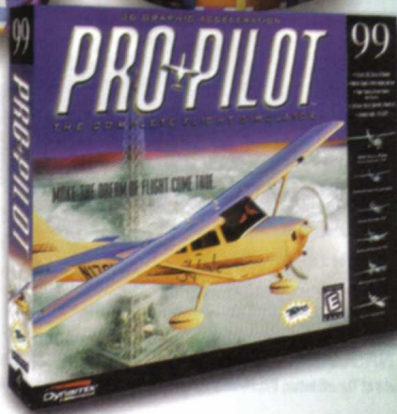
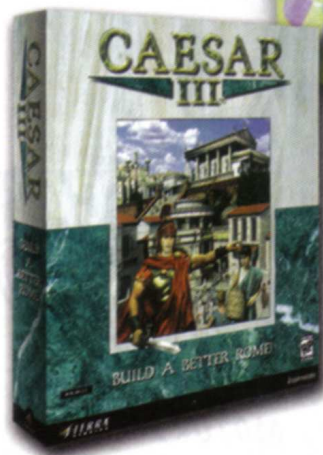
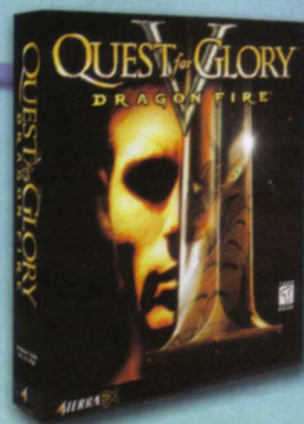
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LAUNCH

Game design legend Roberta Williams



steers adventure games

in yet another direction

Unmasking the Latest King's Quest Legend

By Eric Twelker

FOR MANY EXPERIENCED ADVENTURE GAME FANS, the name *King's Quest* is synonymous with the interactive storytelling experience. First introduced in 1984, the longest-lived series in computer game history has enveloped millions of fans throughout the years. Now eight installments later, series creator Roberta Williams continues evolving the story of Daventry and its array of mythical inhabitants. The result is one of the most exciting and innovative games of the year—*King's Quest: Mask of Eternity*.

Roam If You Want To...

As the *King's Quest* world has unfolded over the years, so too has its technology pushed past the limits of traditional adventure game design to deliver an ever-more interactive and innovative experience. *King's Quest: Mask of Eternity* makes no exception to the trend set over and over in years past. It provides an entirely new experience thanks to the go-anywhere, do-anything 3D engine that allows the player to explore every corner of the world with unprecedented freedom.

This unique playing environment promises to deliver adventure game enthusiasts into a new territory perfectly matched for the exploratory

nature of the genre. No longer limited to a flat, 2D plane with static, scrolling backgrounds, one now has the ability to fully explore the world. As Roberta Williams explains, "*Mask of Eternity* really offers the ultimate exploration experience. In adventure games of the past, you were so limited with the path you could choose—you could only see backdrop pictures of the environment of the designer's choosing. In *Mask*, you're not limited to the view of your surroundings; you can choose exactly where to go."

Similar to the free-roaming styles of *Mario 64* or a 3D first- or third-person action game, *Mask* allows the player to peek around any corner, push objects, open doors, wade into rivers and lakes and even interact—as in chat with or, if need be, fight—other characters wandering the world. You read that correctly. But *Mask of Eternity* is not a shoot-'em-up game. On the contrary, *Mask of Eternity's* rich, open environment allows you to live the unfolding story, even if you need to fight your way past evil characters to advance the story.

Roberta Williams explains the game's feel:

"I really enjoy the action elements in this game. I'm a classic adventure game player and admit that action games frustrate me. This is an adventure game for wannabe action gamers...it allows non-action gamers to feel like part of the club! Fighting and other action elements





THE DIMENSION OF DEATH: Connor discusses his unexpected destiny as an eternal champion with Azriel, Lord of the Dead.

Everyone has turned to stone... that is, everyone but Connor, who is somehow protected from the consequences by his piece of the golden Mask.



Strange Things Are Afoot in Daventry

in an adventure game do not transform the experience into a *Quake* or *Tomb Raider*-style game." For instance, Roberta adds, "In *King's Quest I* there was an underwater tunnel that the player had to swim through before running out of breath. That game was very action-oriented."

Walk through a few early segments of the game and along the way, you just might pick up a few tips for starting your journey in this vast virtual world.

In the opening scene, witness an astonishing event in a far-off, ethe-

real realm. On one of many islands in a sea of clouds, a robed priest-like character steps up to a glimmering golden Mask set atop an altar. With arms thrust upward, he summons a dark force. The skies darken and bolts of lightning converge on the divine Mask. With a powerful burst, the Mask explodes into pieces that fall to the world below.

In that faraway world, one of its most peaceful communities is moments away from experiencing a cataclysmic change of weather. The kingdom of Daventry is serene; farmers till their land, artisans practice their trade, and the great King Graham over-

sees the land's bountiful wealth. But in the palace, all is not well. Standing in front of his magic mirror with his courtiers, the king's foretelling object stirs and evinces the terrible celestial occurrence.

Meanwhile, in the village, a young townsman named Connor approaches the home of his girlfriend, Sarah. As they trade greetings, the sky darkens and a strong wind rushes across the land. Just then, a piece of the Mask falls from the heavens and lands at Connor's feet. He picks up the piece just as a supernatural storm sweeps across the land. It's over in a moment but unbelievable damage is done: Everyone has turned to stone...that is, everyone but Connor, who is somehow protected

from the consequences by his piece of the golden Mask.

Places to Go, Worlds to See

Standing alone, surrounded by an eerie calm with a strange bit of artifact in his grasp, you take control of Connor and lead his quest to restore Daventry and revive its inhabitants. With such a monumental task at hand, where does one begin?

Since *Mask* whisks the player into a 3D virtual world, getting a handle on Connor's physical controls is an important first step. Don't get frightened off by prospects of learning *Quake*- or *Tomb Raider*-style moves, though. The navigation system in *Mask* is much simpler than in those types of games.

Use the arrow keys to control Connor's general direction of travel. Configurable keyboard buttons control his jump and "Use" actions. Many actions, including opening doors and picking up items, can be performed by simply clicking the cursor on the item. The mouse key lets you rotate the camera, covering any direction. In this way, *Mask* combines the most intuitive of action and adventure game controls.

A handy pop-up help screen guides you through actions in the early segment of the game, ensuring that within minutes you'll master Connor's standing and running jumps—even Connor's impressive back flip! Down the line, you'll want to remember that Connor can also push objects as well, a skill useful for positioning blocks, crates and



AVENGING ANGEL: Connor encounters the lovely Sylph on his journey through the Dimension of Death.



THE FROZEN REACHES: A perpetual snowstorm covers this land; home of the frost demons and frigid lakes.



THE BARREN REGION: This volcanically active region is inhabited by a plethora of "hot-headed" creatures, including the infamous Basilisk.

hay bales that act as stepladders for access to high ledges and just-out-of-reach objects.

Interestingly, this seemingly wholly original form of "real-time" adventure navigation isn't quite a first. Says Roberta, "Sierra's first adventure games, including *King's Quest I*, were the first in the industry to show the player's character on the screen. At the time, we had to invent a system of controlling the character using the arrow keys to get him or her around the world in real-time. In many ways, *Mask* is modeling its navigation system after the very foundation of the game series."

First Things First: Get Your Bearings

With the controls mastered, it's time to begin Connor's quest. As the game begins, you, as Connor, stand face to now-stone face with Sarah. A raven drops onto her shoulder and an ominous silence covers the land. But where to begin in such a vast world? Roberta offers an important tip: "The very first thing players notice is a raven that has landed on Sarah's shoulder. Shoo it away. The bird leads you to a perfect starting point."

Magic Maps: The Only Way to Fly

Following the raven along a southerly path takes you to the edge of a lake. A stone figure stands at the shore. As Connor nears and

the raven stoops on a stump next to the figure, the character miraculously calls out, "Come closer, my lad!" You've found the wizard, mostly encased in stone, but with upper torso intact. Just before the evil scourge spread across the land, the wizard explains, he cast a countering spell that left him slightly immune to entombment in stone. The wizard offers insight into the recent events: The Mask of Eternity was destroyed by an evil entity that has taken up quarters in the sacred sanctity of the Mask that represents truth, light, and order. Now, chaos reigns and mayhem is spread across the land. Connor, the wizard reveals, has been chosen to find the four other pieces of the mask, return them to the sanctuary, and defeat the evil being.

The wizard passes along a magic map that aids in Connor's travels. It acts as an ancient global positioning satellite map, of sorts. As you travel, the blank map fills in your path and reveals roads and buildings you've discovered. One of the map's coolest features (not yet featured on modern-day GPS systems!) is a teleport button. Each world has one teleportation location that, after you discover the key to enabling the feature, allows you to instantly move between realms. You can bet your legs will thank you for it!

Roam Around the World

With map in hand, you can easily find your way around. As you

The Good, the Bad, and the Deadly

The Friendlies



Unicorn Once a strong, beautiful creature, it's now a hornless, ugly beast. Only Connor can help restore its beauty by retrieving the unicorn's horn from the baneful swamp witch.



The Prophet Tree This wise, old tree in the Swamp realm is a prophet-par-excellence. It is willing to offer stunning insights into Connor's quest—for a price, of course.



Wizard The kindly wizard of Daventry will offer you a magic map at the beginning of your quest—take it. And don't forget to visit him often as you travel through Daventry.

The Baddies



Zombies Found in several of the lands, zombies quickly push up out of the ground near Connor when he gets close. Destroying these stubborn creatures can prove difficult. It's best to battle them from a distance!



Weepers A mysterious entity, the weeper is the soul of the yet-to-be-judged. In the midst of the world's chaos, these dwellers of the Dimension of Death are now wanderers in search of life energy.

explore, investigate the various dwellings for useful items. Don't forget to check upstairs, in alcoves and on tables. Remember, this game isn't like the 2D adventure gaming style of finding objects. You must physically explore—not just sweep the cursor over the screen in search of hot spots—to search for items!

Returning to your starting point, Connor can step around Sarah's stone pose and into her dwelling, where he can explore and search for clues or helpful items. A stew is brewing by the fireplace. Take a sip and you'll gain several health points. On a bookcase, you'll find an elixir filled with a magical potion. This is the potion of shield, a

 The wizard passes along a magic map that aids in Connor's travels. It acts as an ancient global

positioning satellite map, of sorts.





The key to survival and success is the ability to solve problems as if it's the real world.



A New Way To Puzzle

Connor must face a variety of brain-twisting tests that, if successful, reaffirm his destiny as the "Chosen One."

As a prophetic and wise old tree tells Connor, "Strength and righteousness grow stronger by being tried."

Just as player control and exploration take on new forms in 3D-adventure gaming, so too are the puzzles entirely unique. When faced with a dilemma, one must take a look at the surroundings and available tools. The key to survival and success is the ability to solve problems as if it's the real world.

An example of *Mask's* 3D-adventure puzzles is found just down the road from Connor's house. A waterwheel sits on the edge of a lake-feeding stream. The churning waterwheel turns a grindstone inside the building. Entering the wheelhouse, Connor spots a rope and hook, the perfect tools for climbing cliffs and building walls. Problem is, the only access to the loft is in the path of the ominously spinning grindstone. Jump up on the grindstone table when it is spinning and you'll turn into human cornmeal. Stop the stone's orbit and the rope and hook are yours. Stopping the stone requires a bit of ingenuity. See that tree leaning precariously over the stream? Wouldn't it be just grand if you could find an ax, do your best Johnny Appleseed impersonation and land it in the path of the waterwheel? Enough said. Search the town for an ax and make it happen!

possible saving grace in a time of head-to-head combat. Other useful items Connor comes across include healing crystals, gold coins (for purchasing items from traders), and health-improving mushrooms.

Leaving the house, the next best stop is your own abode. It's located just north of Sarah's home and here you can retrieve a very important weapon—your trusty dagger. You don't want to leave home without it; the creatures of the darkness now have free reign over the land and won't hesitate to attack.



THE SWAMP: Now under the control of the swamp witch, this once lush region has been transformed into a murky mire.

A Beast's Burden

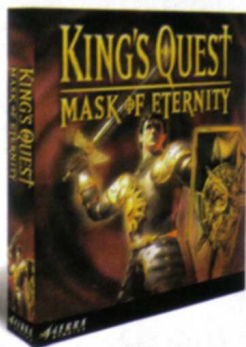
Meeting intriguing characters is a mainstay of Roberta Williams' adventure games. In some cases, these characters need help solving a dilemma. Others offer assistance in return for a favor. Whatever the circumstance may be, don't turn your back on these folks; offering a helping hand just may bring you a step closer to restoring peace to the world.

Up the hill from the wizard, Connor discovers a strangely familiar, yet nearly unrecognizable beast in need of help—one of many characters with peculiar circumstances Connor comes across. The beast reveals that it was a once-beautiful unicorn. In the chaos, a swamp witch stole its horn and transformed it into an ugly beast. The unicorn begs for Connor's help: Find the swamp witch and retrieve the horn that will restore it to its former glory. Before departing, the unicorn offers a helpful clue—the road to castle Daventry is blocked by a landslide, but a secret entrance can be found in a cave behind the waterfall. Inside, you'll find an important clue that will lead you to another world. With secrets like that, help the unicorn any chance you get.

As you journey beyond Daventry, you'll visit strange otherworldly realms filled with unimaginable characters, brain-twisting puzzle tests and incredible challenges. At the end of this unfolding tale, the most important question will be answered: Have you the strength

and courage to reinstate the Mask of Eternity and restore Truth, Light, and Order to your world?

When not writing professionally, Eric Twelker spends most of his time impersonating screensaver superstar Johnny Castaway on the island of Maui.



KING'S QUEST: MASK OF ETERNITY

www.sierrastudios.com

Developer	Sierra Studios
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Pending
Price	\$49.95
Order #	70090
Phone	1.800.757.7707

ROBERTA KNOWS MASK

Who better to offer a helping hand in your quest than Roberta Williams herself?

"Use the help menus in the beginning of the game...this feature familiarizes you with the navigation techniques and commands that you'll use throughout the game."

"Save your game often...in a 3D environment, it's easy to fall down cliffs or have an accident!"

"Don't try to solve the puzzles right away...explore the world and get a feel for your surroundings."

"Always keep your eyes open for subtle clues...if you see something that looks different, click on it. You may discover something new and helpful."

"Constantly upgrade to the best weapons and armor possible...you'll need greater weapon damage and armor protection as the game progresses!"

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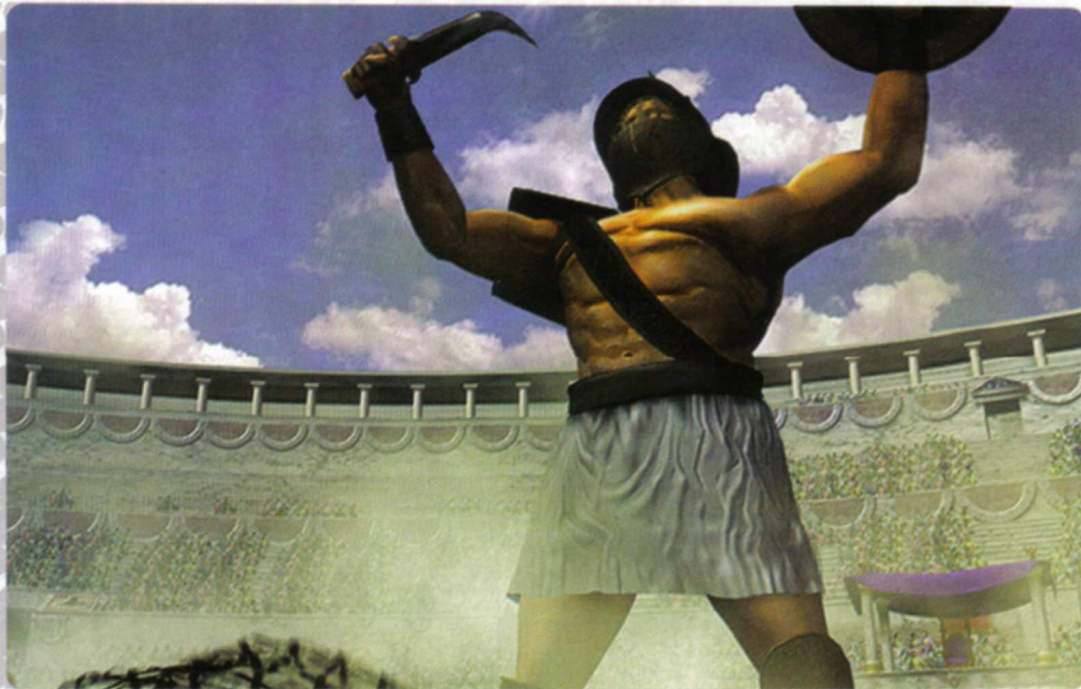
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STRATEGY

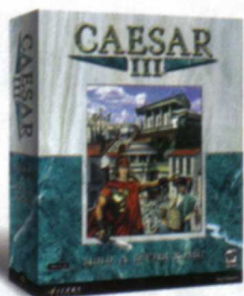
Rule Rome or Die Trying

**NERO MAXIMUS
GUIDES YOU
THROUGH THE
BASICS OF
CITY-BUILDING
IN CAESAR III**



By William R. Trotter

Editor's Note: Gaming columnist and amateur historian William Trotter has faithfully translated this ancient scroll recently discovered in a sealed olive oil jar in the Adriatic. Thought to be one of the lost annals of the obscure Roman author Scribulus Furious, it's the account of Nero Maximus, one of ancient Rome's early citizens. It chronicles his life—his successes and failures—and his contributions to one of the greatest civilizations mankind has known.



CAESAR III

www.sierrastudios.com

Developer	Impressions
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$49.95
Order #	70558
Phone	1.800.757.7707

"But what shall I do?" cried Nero. "I'm not skilled in anything!"

"Go into politics, of course. Three-quarters of the Senate is composed of men without any noticeable skills. I've obtained this scroll for you, giving you minor bureaucratic powers—you'll start off as the embodiment of insignificance. How you rise through the ranks depends solely on you. Now be off with you!"

Vox Populi

Dejected and terribly unsure of himself, Nero arrived at a desolate region north of Rome with very simple orders: attract 150 new settlers and see that their basic needs are fulfilled.

"Where in Jupiter's name do I start?" he asked his Greek tutor.

"Young sir, you must begin by allocating land for settlement."

With that sage advice in mind, Nero went

about establishing a village.

Indeed, it did not take long for settlers to trickle in. The new village seemed an attractive place, despite its lack of amenities. Under the tutelage of the faithful and wise Plato, Nero made sure that the basic necessity of life—water—was available, and enough prefects to control fires and crime. The most important thing he learned, and which became a guiding principle for his future



FIRST, ALLOCATE LAND TO SETTLERS: Your first order of business will be to allocate land and provide some basic necessities.

TALK TO YOUR PEOPLE: To find out how your citizenry is doing, just ask them—be prepared for an earful, though.



deeds, was to actually walk among his people, observing where they went and why, and constantly talking to them. He found that every citizen, however poor, had strong opinions, whether favorable or critical. By listening to their comments, Nero learned what worried his citizens, what the problem areas were in the economy, how quickly their moods shifted. By the time he completed his first assignment, he was already being spoken of as “The People’s Governor” for his good intentions and lack of arrogance. The title followed him wherever he went.

Esquiline: The Dynamics of the Marketplace

Newly promoted to the rank of Clerk, Nero undertook his second assignment with zeal: to develop a small agricultural city and supply it with a granary and a thriving marketplace. By now, he had worked out a systematic method for planning his city: straight roads, with few but strategically placed intersections; a master plan for the placement of reservoirs and aqueducts; and the most efficient placement of granaries and warehouses. He also hired more engineers, having already noticed the dismaying rapidity with which buildings could collapse from poor maintenance.

There was an irony to city-building, he discovered. All citizens want security, but they don’t want to live too close to the prefecture. All citizens want access to markets, but don’t want to live too close to them because of the noise and the smells.

“It is all a matter of the most exquisite balance,” Plato agreed. “Think of your city as a living organism and its people, in their daily circulations, as its life’s blood.”

It was at this time Nero experienced a crisis situation: a rash of fires that incinerated many of his “low-rent” housing districts. One answer, of course, was to build more prefectures. But these security structures had a negative impact on the desirability of the area around them. Nero came up with the concept of the “fire-break”—by clearing a single lane, evenly spaced, in densely populated areas, he was able to prevent the more serious fires from spreading to more valuable parts of the city.

Assignment No. 3: Quirinal and the Etruscan Raiders

Now promoted to the rank of Engineer, Nero faced numerous new challenges in developing this medium-size city. By now, he had developed a cohesive approach to city building. First he drew a rough map, indicating areas suitable for housing, possible locations for clay

pits and iron deposits, rivers where docks and warehouses could operate profitably and, perhaps most important, the water system. “Water is life,” he often said, and to the extent that his finances permitted, he put the highest priority on reservoirs and aqueducts.

He had learned more subtle things, too. He scheduled a festival every 60 days, dedicated to each god and goddess in turn—this not only helped retain the favor of the deities, it also made the citizenry happier, for they could look forward to a regular holiday. He discovered too that, in the realm of Imperial favor, it was far more advantageous to save up and send the Emperor one truly lavish gift every year (usually around the time of the winter solstice) than to pester him with smaller, more frequent gifts that he would scarcely notice.

TIP:

ON THE STREETS

Build roads straight with few but strategically placed intersections.



By listening to their comments, Nero learned what worried his citizens, and how quickly their moods shifted.

Nero also learned that one thing sure to draw the Emperor’s attention was a mishandled request.

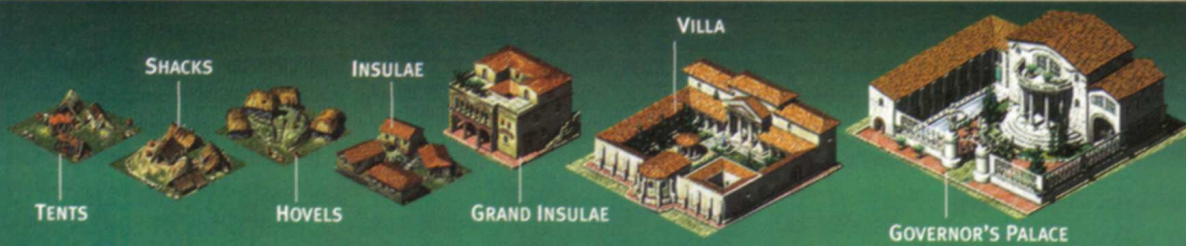
It was on this assignment that the Emperor requested 10 barrels of wine, to be delivered in 15 months. Nero immediately built two new vineyards and ordered his warehouses to “stockpile” wine. Even so, the shipment was two months late. A few weeks later he received an icy acknowledgment from the Emperor, and from that day on, resolved never to miss a deadline.

TIP:

HIRE ENGINEERS

Buildings in your city can rapidly decay and collapse if not properly maintained—keep engineers on hand.

NICE PLACE YOU GOT HERE



Dwellings in your Roman city range from basic tents and shacks up to the lavish governor’s palace.



GIVE 'TIL IT HURTS: Sending the Emperor gifts once in awhile can help win his favor—just make sure the gifts are impressive.

He sent emissaries to other cities and learned of their trade policies. Soon, he opened modestly profitable trade routes with Capua and Syracusae. One of his favorite sights was the arrival of a majestic ship at his docks, laden with goods.

"Water is life," Nero often said, ...and he put the highest priority on reservoirs and aqueducts.

Then came bad news: Etruscan raiders had been spotted in the region, and the city, thus far, was defenseless. After studying up on tactics in the newly opened Library, he decided that, since time was short, he would raise a legion of auxiliary javelin-throwers. They required less time, training, and equipment than a regular legion. Forts do not have to be connected

to a city by roads, and the presence of military facilities was notoriously detrimental to residential neighborhoods, so he built his encampment, barracks, and military academy at some distance from the city, to the north, which was the pre-



TRADE PLACES: Establishing trade routes with other cities increases activity at your port.

sumed direction from which the invaders would come.

Time ran out before he could train more than a dozen soldiers, but when the Etruscans were spotted in the plains north of the city, the untried recruits went forth bravely and engaged them. At first the legion held its own, inflicting numerous casualties on the small raiding party. But then its morale shattered after suffering 80 percent casualties and its survivors fled back to their fort.

Fortunately, their action bought time for the city prefects to mobilize, and when the handful of raiders began plundering the city, they were met at every intersection by a brave swordsman. Since the Etruscans had become scattered—and more than a little drunk after ransacking the wine warehouse—the prefects were able to hunt them down, one by one.

It took almost a year to repair all the damage to the city, and Nero knew the raiders were likely to return, sooner or later, and in greater numbers. Fortunately, with the income provided by new trade

routes, he scraped together enough money to build a double wall across the north end of the city. At regular intervals, he placed towers on which powerful ballistas were mounted. And he raised a legion of cavalry.

When the Etruscans returned, they found themselves bombarded by missiles long before they could approach

the walls. When Nero judged the time was ripe, he unleashed his cavalry through the gate house, and the Etruscans were routed, never to return.

His city prospered. When its population reached 4,000, the Emperor gave him the option of remaining there as governor for two more years, or being promoted to Architect and taking on another assignment. By now, Nero was a very different man from the young rake who had left Rome in shame. Trim, seasoned, and eager to face new challenges, he accepted the promotion.

Ascent and Tragic Fate

In his 30s, Nero rose steadily in rank and in the Emperor's favor. He won over the initially hostile natives of rural Sicily, by clever use of diplomatic missions. To the half-barbaric natives, he cunningly pointed out the advantages of Roman trade, the honor of Roman citizenship, and the power of Roman might. Within two years, Nero had developed the region into a prosperous shipping port and acquired a taste for both fish and pasta.

By now, the Emperor not only held Nero in esteem (indeed, he always looked forward to his annual gift and was childishly delighted on the occasion when Nero sent him a pair of tame giraffes), he regarded him as one of the Empire's most dependable governors.

Promoted now to the fairly exalted rank of Procurator, Nero's final assignment marked both the height of his



PARTY ON, NERO: Holding festivals keeps the gods happy and gives your people something to look forward to.



FINDING FAVOR: Establishing a favorable relationship with the Emperor is critical to your overall success.

career and the end of his life. Alarmed by reports that Rome's arch-rival, Carthage, was preparing to invade northern Italia from Spain, the Emperor sent Nero to Lugdunum, a rugged region in the foothills of the Alps, and ordered him to defend that approach to Rome.

No one knew when the Carthaginians would come, so the first priority after the basic economy was up and running was to heavily fortify the entire northern border of the province and to establish bases for three legions. Unfortunately, the iron mines were a great distance from the walls, so weapons were produced much too slowly.

Now in his mid-40s, Nero enjoyed a few halcyon months. From the balcony of his lavish villa, he took delight in the beauty of his city. Now backed by a very large treasury indeed, he graced the streets with

statues, and beautified the housing districts with many gardens. One thing he did have in abundance was marble, so each of the gods was honored with large, resplendent temples. The peoples' homes evolved into stout, middle-class houses; the theaters and schools flourished. He even laid the foundations for a hippodrome, the grandest of all entertainment facilities. And he still walked, every day, among his people, listening to their opinions, following their suggestions, inquiring as to their well-being.

Then, one night—when his legions were still only half-formed due to the shortage of arms—he was awakened by screams and the blaze of many fires. The Carthaginians were not fools—they had bypassed his walls and towers altogether, outflanked the city, and

appeared suddenly, in great numbers, in the southern farming district.

Brushing aside the futile resistance of individual prefects, they ran amok in the city. Hastily summoned from the north, the legions arrived piecemeal and found themselves quite outnumbered.



BUILD A WALL: A hefty double wall will help keep out the bad guys.



BURN, BABY, BURN: Even a thriving, well-defended city can fall to clever Carthaginian raiders.

THE ART OF WAR




THESE JAVELINS ARE FOR KILLIN': (1) Build up and train an army. (2) Kick some Carthaginian butt. Get ready for the next assignment.

...he was awakened by screams and the blaze of many fires. The Carthaginians were not fools—they had bypassed his towers and walls altogether...

Blood ran in the gutters that night. Even some of the citizens took up arms—the gladiators and lion tamers gave a brave account of themselves and took down many invaders before they, too, were overwhelmed.

With his beloved city in flames and the enemy battering at the door of his villa, Nero faced the unthinkable. His fate was sealed. He would be arrested shortly and made a slave. He would toil for the rest of his days in the putrid hold of a galley ship chained to another slave forever or...he could do the only thing left for a noble Roman and fall upon his sword. He chose the sword.

Back in Rome, the Emperor was saddened and alarmed. "Hannibal ad portas" the mobs cried in the streets ("Hannibal is at the gates!"). Not quite. The brave stand of Lugdunum's defenders had delayed the invaders long enough for Rome to mobilize its full might. The Emperor thought briefly about erecting a statue to honor Nero Maximus, but soon forgot about it. 

William R. Trotter is the author of 12 published books and more than 1,000 articles, reviews, and short stories.

TIP:

NOT IN MY BACK YARD

The people like to have easy access to markets but don't want to live too close—raw meat and noisy hucksters make bad neighbors.



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STRATEGY

Basic Training

LISTEN UP, GRUNT:
 YOU'RE GOING TO
 NEED A FEW
 POINTERS AND AS
 MUCH LUCK AS
 YOU CAN MUSTER
 TO DEAL WITH THE
 EVIL UNLEASHED
 IN HALF-LIFE



By Rob Smith

AND ON DAY ONE, ALL hell broke loose. Welcome to that hell, Gordon Freeman Ph.D. (MIT), research associate at the Black Mesa Laboratory. Hang up the lab coat, put down the science books, and ignore the blinking monitors. School is out and a world of danger is in.

What began as a normal day in the underground labyrinth known as your office is turning the concept of a regular nine-to-five workday inside out and upside down. The offspring of some God-forsaken dimension are bent on ensuring that you don't see either the light of the surface or, metaphorically, the end of the tunnel.

Since what you are about to encounter is not the work of an ordinary research scientist, a quick tutorial in the art of survival is necessary. Fortunately, you do have some help in the form of the HEV Mark IV protective suit you're used to wearing while handling toxic substances in the labs. So first

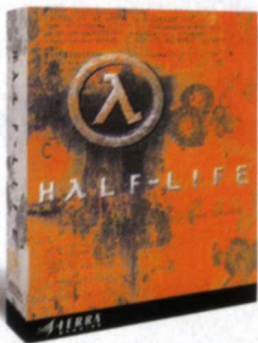
things first: Head to the Hazard Course (a mini training area in the game that helps you hone your skills) and take careful notes as an instructor takes you through the finer features of the suit...and survival.

Hazardous Route

First and foremost, you must learn how to maneuver in the suit. Start with the basics: Get used to walking forward and, particularly, straf-

ing (essentially a sidestep that lets you peek around corners and dodge attackers but still face them). Jumping over obstacles and ducking to crawl beneath them are standard functions, but make sure to do them in quick succession—a move you'll get to practice. Remember, when fighting otherworldly creatures, making quick tracks can be even more useful than a twitchy trigger-finger.

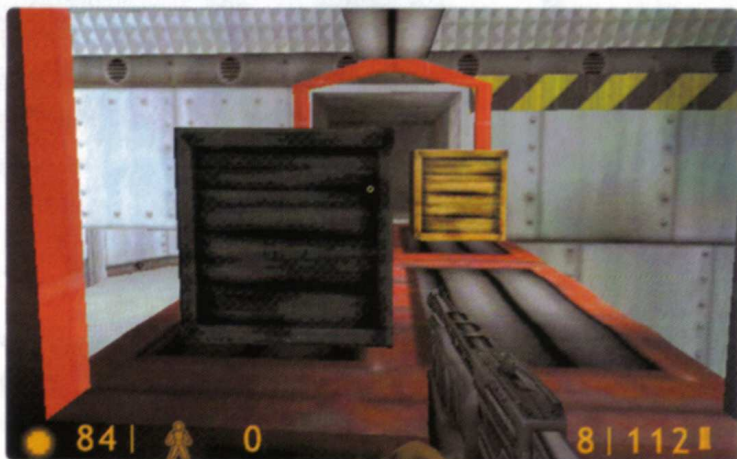
Your HEV suit allows for power



HALF-LIFE

www.sierra.com/half-life

Developer	Valve
Format	WIN95 CD, NT
Rating	Pending
Price	\$54.95
Order #	70365
Phone	1.800.757.7707



CLOSE QUARTERS: You'll spend some time maneuvering through tight spaces. Learn the basics of your HEV suit on the hazard course.

jumps that even on the Hazard Course can take some practice. Here's the key: When moving forward, hit and hold the crouch button as you approach your launch point and, while still holding crouch, hit the jump button (usually the "Space" bar—although you can customize your key commands to taste). You'll hear the powered suit rev up, which lets you leap across wide gaps in a single bound.

(You'll need to acquire a special long-jump module before your suit will allow you to perform this maneuver.)

You may find crawling around tunnels and air ducts claustrophobic, but get used to it. Jumping and crouching when in midair to get into tunnels is like a reverse of the powered long jump. Just remember to hit that crouch mid-jump, and you'll find yourself squeezing into some surprisingly tiny crawl spaces.

Now you get to have some real fun. Lock and load for weapons practice. Stand firmly in the center of the target on the floor; keep your

eyes and, even more vitally, your ears open. Your first targets are easy but then you have to use those satellite dishes on the sides of your head. That's right, your ears can tell you where the target (and later the enemy) is. Understanding spatial sound could mean the difference between rattling off a deadly shot and receiving one.

And always remember the secondary function of weapons. The plate of glass that says "Unbreakable" is, ahem, unbreakable. So how do you get the target? Well, think of throwing a grenade. Grenades do "splash" damage in a radius, so should a grenade get over the glass, who knows what damage it may do to the target?

Unforeseen Circumstances

Well, Dr. Freeman, the training is over. Time to go to work. Remember the basics: Security guards are your friends, so talk to them (by hitting the "Use" key) because they may cover your sorry

butt in a sticky situation. Scientists are also your friends, so talk to them too because if you're feeling battle weary, they may be able to offer a pick-me-up.

It's a big day at Black Mesa, so the scientists can be forgiven for not wanting to indulge in too much small talk.

THINK FIRST, SHOOT LATER



SOMETIMES BRAINS ARE BETTER THAN BRAWN. (1) Use the crowbar rather than wasting ammo to smash down grates and hastily built tunnel blockages. (2) Move boxes by pushing or pulling them into place to reach tricky areas.

They will, however, make certain you're doing your duties, which today involves getting suited up in the HEV suit and heading to the test lab. Take a moment to wander the complex, but make sure you're following the green line on the wall (it's there to help) to get to the suit chamber. Your security buddy at the door can't stop to chat, but he can let you through. Now just do your job, follow the instructions, sit back, and watch the experiment unfold. Panicking is, as always, acceptable.

TIP:

POWER JUMP

Move forward + hold down the crouch key + hit the jump key. You'll be able to clear those extra-wide gaps with ease.

Remember: Security guards are your friends... they may cover your sorry butt in a sticky situation.

Hit the Bricks

Don't ask questions, just concentrate on getting to the surface. Here's a simple rule: If you don't have anything in your hands, don't fight—ever! Creatures from other dimensions don't stop to think about the fairness of a fight. They eat first and ask questions...never.

The crowbar, however, is your friend. Not only is it a solid blunt instrument useful for bashing the snot out of a (preferably small) beast, it's also handy for jimmying doors and air vent covers, breaking windows and trashing boxes. Be careful with boxes and look around before smashing them to smithereens; you may need to

TIP:

NO AMMO?

Run like hell. If you are unarmed, don't bother going up against one of the nasties in Half-Life.

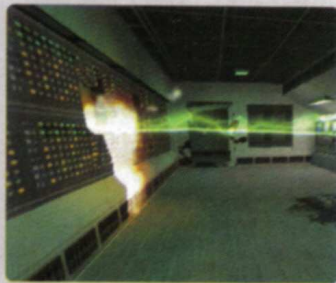


MEDIC! Keep your eye out for the First Aid posts, and remember to make a note of those that still have some juice in them.

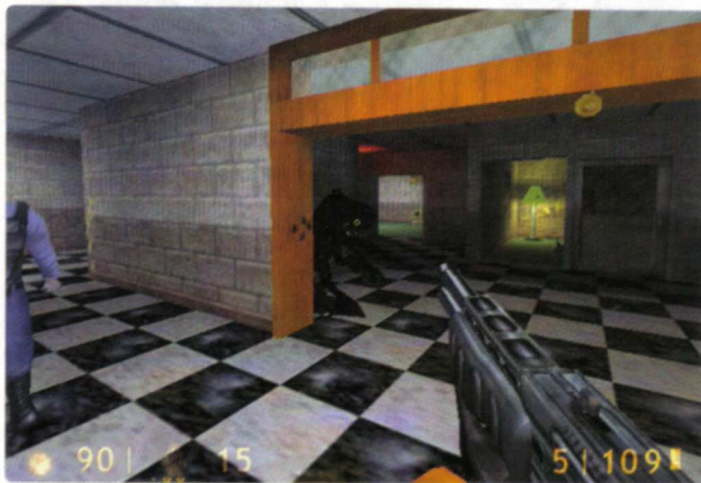


MASTER OF HER DOMAIN: She's your holographic guide through the hazard course. She's smart, athletic, and see-through!

BEAM ME UP



Intermittent beams and power blasts create brilliant lighting effects, but are unpredictable and deadly. Watch out for exposed electrical wires, too. In all cases, duck, run, or get out of the way.



A DEADLY GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK: In the Office Complex, Alien slaves can sneakily hide in corners, but if you've got a security guard with you, they're just cannon fodder.

jump on them to access certain areas. They're also useful as cover from enemy fire. Pushing boxes around is easy if you need to give yourself cover and advance down a corridor.

Since the lab sustained some serious damage during the explosive event in the test lab, you're going to find a lot of debris and

deadly exposed wiring. As a rule, it's a good idea to avoid anything that involves sparking electrical currents and ruptured fittings. Find another way through, or look for the possibility of a power supply switch that may turn off the power and allow you safe passage.

Help Is At Hand

Security guards can prove to be invaluable for conserving your supply of ammo. If you see or hear a guard in trouble, be sure to try to help him. If you save his life, he might save yours down the road. Make sure not to get in their line of fire though; they tend to be trigger-happy. Likewise, be sure they're out of harm's way before throwing grenades in any area with Barnacle monsters (see sidebar). Get them to stand still while you take care of business (just hit the "Use" key again).

Your fellow scientists, aside from being petrified at the sound of gunshots, can get in the way when trouble brews. Get them to follow

you around only when you know you need them for something (such as allowing passage through doors secured by the retinal scan units) or when the coast is clear.

Black Mesa is evidently a dangerous place to work. Scattered throughout the levels are first aid points and HEV suit power charges. Always take advantage of the help when you're passing by, even if it's just to top off the tank with a point or two of health. If you don't empty the machines, remember where they are, as you can always go back should you find yourself fried.

Traps, Tricks, and Surprises

The lab's architecture has taken a real beating. Many doors are stuck, elevators are damaged (be careful pushing buttons, there could be people stranded), and exits are blocked. There is always a way through; you just have to think laterally. Remember that you're in a fully 3D environment where you can look up, down, and all around. A door impassable through pushing, clicking, or crowbar-smashing can still be circumvented—try the window, for example. If it looks like there's something behind it that's useful, chances are you can get in—you may just have to take the long way around.

When entering a new area, it's a good idea to keep in mind where your exit is, or check for an exit before hitting any buttons or turning any wheels.

You're also going to have to get used to the air vent system.

TIP:

THERE MUST BE A WAY

Stuck doors and unbreakable glass are a common sight in this shattered complex. Don't give up, though; if there appears to be something useful on the other side, you may just have to take the long way.



CAN WE TALK? Be sure to stop and engage the guards and scientists in conversation. Sometimes they won't budge, but often they can get you through secure doors and give you health shots.

Mammoth underground complexes need air conditioning, and the system also acts as an alternative route out. Check left, right, up, and down before heading into a potential maze of tunnels and remember where you've been. Another important tip: Your HEV has a flashlight. If it's dark use the flashlight, but don't forget to turn it off when you're through. It will recharge itself automatically. You'll also need to use your ears. In tight spaces, hearing is the most important sense. You'll get to know the signature sounds of Headcrabs, and when you hear one, proceed with extreme caution—and with a fully loaded weapon poised and ready to fire.

Marines Are Your Friends

Actually, they aren't. Reports that the cavalry is heading in to the complex to rescue those remaining alive turns out to be, well, not quite accurate. Sorry, Dr. Freeman. Near the surface you're going to come up against all sorts of man-made traps. Most damaging are the motion-sensing gun turrets. They are alerted to your presence if you run through one of the red light beams baited across many corridors. Simply don't trip them or find out where the guns are and formulate a plan. Hand grenades are certainly your friends in these situations.

Red light beams aren't your only problem: You may find blue ones too. Avoid them! Duck under or jump over these beams; otherwise you'll trip explosives and put a serious dent in that nice shiny protective suit.

Most important of all—never, ever, ever run around like the perennial headless chicken or you'll find your noggin clamped by a Headcrab, fast. Look, listen, and learn—the day has just begun and it's going to be tragically short if you don't keep your cool. 🦋

Rob Smith is the executive editor of PC Accelerator magazine. His military training consists of a five-day stint in the Boy Scouts of America.

Hints

A HALF-LIFE BESTIARY

Half-Life's denizens can be a troublesome bunch if you don't treat them all with respect, and to a large helping of lead. Remember: Always, always, always RELOAD. Even if you've just fired one shot and there's nothing else to shoot at for that second, reload. Here's what to watch for, and what you should be packing to make quick work of Black Mesa's unwanted guests.



Headcrab

→ **It Attacks:** Can appear out of thin air (listen for the eerie telltale sound of burning, crackling air).

★ **To Destroy:** Use the 9mm pistol. It's a simple weapon but holds 18 bullets. Use the auto-targeting to get a fix and then cap the critter with two bullets. The shotgun is overkill, although you can get it with one round if you carefully target it.



Houndeye

→ **It Attacks:** Don't let it get close. It has a powerful sonic attack that is intensified when traveling in a pack.

★ **To Destroy:** A couple of pistol rounds is all that's necessary.



Barnacle

→ **It Attacks:** Watch for the telltale ropes—they aren't ropes and if you stick to them you'll get pulled up into its vicious gnashers. If you're caught, fire like a maniac into its mouth.

★ **To Destroy:** Unload two shotgun rounds into it (and duck while the remnants of other victims fall out of its maw).



Bullsquid

→ **It Attacks:** Evidently eats Headcrabs so if there are any around, watch it feast and do at least one job for you. Its green globule acid spit is pretty deadly so dodge it very carefully.

★ **To Destroy:** A couple of shotgun blasts is all that's needed to kill it.



Vortigaunt

→ **It Attacks:** A pulsing green electrical light that has a long range gives the Vortigaunt an advantage.

★ **To Destroy:** They're slow and fairly dumb, so try using boxes for cover and strafe out with a fully loaded shotgun to knock them down.



Marines

→ **It Attacks:** Training makes them tough foes. Watch out for the sandbag barricades they'll hide behind. They also work as a team, so don't madly chase a fleeing Marine; he's likely leading you to his buddies.

★ **To Destroy:** Use your own machine gun and a steady aim. It's easy to be panicked by their organization and movement. Relax and use the cover of boxes like they do. Unfortunately, a few scientists may have to be sacrificed for the greater good of your survival.



Motion-Sensing Gun Turrets

→ **It Attacks:** Alerted by the red light beams, it shoots at anything that moves. If there are any Headcrabs in the vicinity, let them attract the turrets to give you a open shot at taking them out.

★ **To Destroy:** Hand grenades are the most effective. Not only do they have a good blast radius, with practice they can be banked off walls to let you throw them around corners.

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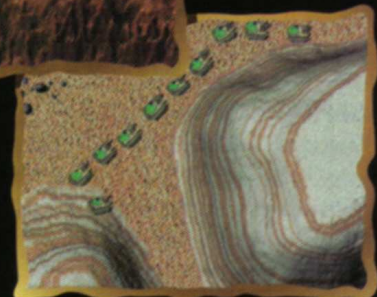
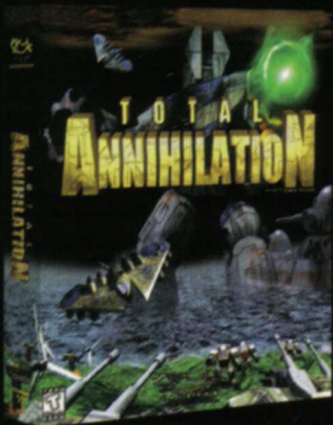
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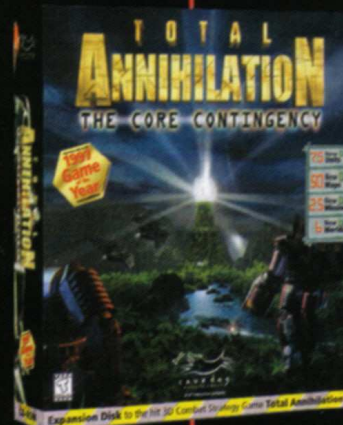
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STRATEGY

The Hero's Guide to Silmaria

HOW TO MAKE MONEY, WIN ALLIES, CONQUER NASTY MONSTERS, AND STAY ALIVE LONG ENOUGH TO BEAT YOUR OPPONENTS TO THE THRONE



By Christa Phillips

WHEN THE CURTAIN opens on *Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire*, the King of Silmaria has been assassinated and mercenaries have taken over many of the surrounding islands. At the behest of the wizard Erasmus, you are dispatched to the island of Marete to enter a contest called the Rites of Rulership. The hero who successfully completes the Rites of Freedom, Conquest, Valor, Destiny, Courage, Peace, and Justice will be offered the crown. Whether you choose to play as Fighter, Wizard or Thief, here are some tips and hints for making your way through *Dragon Fire*, completing the Rites of Rulership, and ascending to the throne of Silmaria.

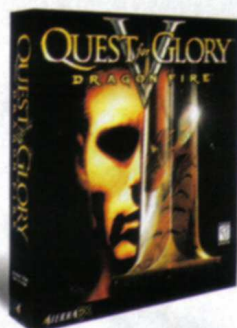
you'll need to make up the difference before you can even begin your quest. Fortunately, there are many ways for you to do this, and in the process, you'll meet some locals and learn the lay of the land.

In Pursuit of the Almighty Drachma

Wizards may find it easiest to simply head over to the Magic Shop to teach the local wizard some of their spells.

Masters of the arcane can also use their spells to play detective and earn a substantial reward. There are many nice places on Marete for Wizards to practice lobbing flame darts and lightning balls.

Fighters may enter the combat arena or ransack the bodies of monsters they dismember. Though winning the purse in the arena is nothing to swing your sword at, either method builds your weaponry skills.



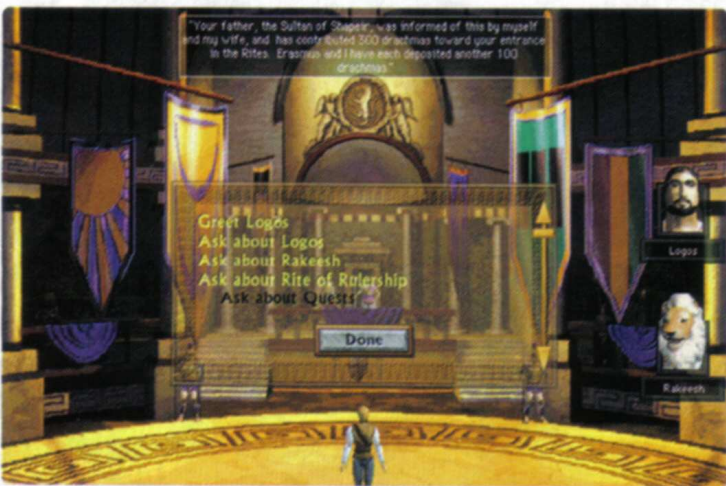
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Enter the Rites of Rulership

You, the Hero, are already a favorite in the contest for the throne. So much so, in fact, that the Sultan of Shapeir and other friends have donated half of the 1000-drachma fee required to enter the Rites. But



DONATIONS GLADLY ACCEPTED: You've been given 500 drachmas for the entrance fee, but you need another 500 to begin your quest.

Thieves will find that “acquiring” the entry fee will enable them to gain critical skills in lock picking and safe cracking. The Town Square has plenty of pockets to pick, but there are usually lots of guards milling around. Thieves can also compete to become Chief Thief of Silmaria, but that itself requires a hefty entrance fee, plus membership in the Thieves’ Guild.

Thieves and Fighters may pick up extra drachmas and gain experience by playing the Wheel of Fortune at the Dead Parrot Inn. Even if you don’t win at first, Nawar, Silmaria’s answer to Vanna White, is both easy on the eyes and good for some risqué banter.

All three Hero types may bet on the contestants in the battle arena. Bets can be placed at—you guessed it—the Dead Parrot. Fighters can even bet on themselves before going into combat.

Once you’ve secured the cash, transfer the additional 500 drachmas from your savings to the Rite of Rulership fund and get to the Hall of Kings. Your true adventure is about to begin.

Practice 'Til Perfect

Anytime you have a few moments to spare (for example, when waiting for the sun to go down and the Dead Parrot to open), be sure to practice your skills in fighting or magic use. Just through the West Gate of Silmaria you will find a target that’s useful for practicing lobbing rocks, daggers, or flame darts. The beach is also a good place to test your magical skills, and lighting balls look pretty cool in the moonlight.

Thieves won’t be able to go after the really big scores until they’ve honed their lock-picking and safe-cracking abilities. The Thieves’ Guild is a great place for this, and there’s even a pickpocket dummy on whom to practice the age-old, nefarious art.

Each type of Hero will find himself quickly running out of stamina and/or Mana if he isn’t in good shape and well practiced. So say it again—with feeling this time—practice, practice, practice.

Keep Your Distance

Dragon Fire producer Jay Usher has this advice: “For those of you who would rather keep your distance, your character can damage monsters from far away by throwing daggers, spears, rocks, or even casting spells. If you’ve become an accomplished Magic User and have accumulated enough Mana points, try conjuring up the *Dragon Fire* spell. It’s very appropriate for toasting your opponent. Actually, I prefer to get in the monster’s face, throw myself into ‘god mode’ (producers can do that, you know), and wreak havoc on my opponent.”



RICH MAN, DEAD MAN: Don’t be afraid to go through the deads’ belongings.



WHAT’S YOUR POISON? You’ll need Poison Cure pills. Head to the Apothecary and stock up.

INCREASE YOUR CASH FLOW



THERE’S MONEY TO BE MADE IN SILMARIA, and you’ll need cash if you want to enter the Rites. Here are a few options. (1) Enter the combat arena, kick ass and win a hefty purse. (2) Bet on the contestants in the Dead Parrot Inn (you can even bet on yourself!). (3) Try your hand at the Wheel of Fortune. (4) Thieves can pick pockets—practice on the dummy in the Thieves’ Guild.

Do Not Respect the Dead

Even if you have qualms about speaking ill of the recently deceased—especially if you “deceased” them—don’t hesitate to rifle through their stuff. They’re not going to need it, and it’s a great way for you to pick up weapons, armor, and even cold, hard cash. In fact, there is an object you’ll have to lift off a corpse in order to complete the Rites of Rulership. So hold your nose and rifle away!

Take Your Vitamins

Taking pills and using potions or poultices that help you stay healthy are great ways to heal yourself or prevent your untimely demise. Whenever you’re feeling a bit down, pop over to your local Apothecary and stock up on Healing pills, Poison Cure pills, Stamina pills, or anything else that’ll keep you going, and going, and going... (Mana Potions are purchased in the Magic Shop).

Plan Ahead

When you’re competing for the crown it makes good sense to have

TIP:

HANDY ITEMS

Think about the items you might need in the future. An *amphora* (bottle) is handy for transporting liquids, and a blackjack is handy for rendering bad guys unconscious.

HIDE AND LIVE



Use the 'Hide' spell to escape dangerous encounters with monsters. If you stand still, the Hydra will forget about you.

a little foresight. For instance, if you know you've got to haul yourself to some far-off cranny to gather up something to make something else or give it to someone or something else (we're trying not to give too much away—can you tell?), you're going to need something to carry this substance home in, right? So, while you're chatting up your old friend Wolfie in the Town Square, buy some amphorae. Those are Greek urns to the rest of us, and not only are they useful for transporting stuff like Hippocrene water and Hydra slime, you can write odes to them in your spare time.

Another example: Say you're a thief, and you know that you're going to the lair of some nasty beast. Say you also know this thing has a bunch of even nastier guards and minions. Well, you're going to

TIP:

DAMAGE FROM AFAR
It's possible to inflict damage on monsters from a safe distance using spears, rocks and spells.

need a blackjack—the perfect weapon for sneaking up behind thugs of all kinds and rendering them unconscious. Similarly, Fighters should visit the weapons dealer to make sure they have the best weapons they can afford—because they're going to need them! Likewise, Wizards need to make sure they have enough magic points to cast really powerful spells.

I'm Rubber, You're Glue

Usher advises, "Tactical use of spells will always increase their effectiveness. The 'Zap' spell increases the amount of damage done by your character's next successful close-up attack. The 'Reverse' spell causes direct-attack spells, such as 'Flame Dart,'

Ask for Help

As tough as you may think you are, fact is you will need both the help and advice of your neighboring Silmarians. Erasmus, the wizard, and his talking rat, Fenris, are good for a hearty slice of wisdom here and there and will sometimes indulge you with a useful hint or spell.

The Famous Adventurer (of the Famous Adventurer Correspondence School fame) is also your ally. Make sure you check out his bookshelves and give him what he requests—he tends to get a little cranky.

In the later Rites, you will need to work cooperatively with other applicants for the throne. It may hurt your pride a bit, but luckily you don't have a "pride" rating. Besides,

it's better to be red in the face than dead all over.

Steal the Linen

They may never have you back, but as long as you're bunking at Gnome Ann's, as a thief, make a point of stealing the sheets. Telling you why would give too much away, but trust me,

you'll need them later.

...as long as you're bunking at Gnome Ann's, as a thief, make a point of stealing the sheets.

'Force Bolt,' and 'Lightning Ball,' to bounce back and damage the attacker—very effective in making your opponents furious (if they survive) and causing them to launch their next attack with a bit less vigor."

There's No Shame in Hiding

"The 'Hide' spell is one of my personal favorites," says Usher. "By implementing this spell you become



TAKE THE SHEETS, PLEASE: C'mon, everybody does it. Besides, you'll probably need them later.



ASK THE FAMOUS ADVENTURER: He can provide necessary information. Be sure to peruse his vast library, too.



SWIM LIKE HELL: You may have a hard time swinging a sword underwater so try using your spear or dagger for fighting nasties.

very accomplished at hiding out until the monster forgets you're still around—then ambush it. Hiding out long enough will cause most monsters to forget you, and they'll leave the room, ending the encounter. Of course, this only works as long as your character stays still. Any movement reveals your whereabouts, and if you're within the monster's line of sight, expect another ugly encounter."

Win Friends and Influence People

You'll meet a lot of people in your travels through Silmaria. Talk to everyone about everything. You never know what little nugget of information you'll miss unless you pump anyone who'll give you the time of day. You'll notice that some of the people you meet need help.

Maybe they're in real trouble, or they're just feeling a bit uninspired. If you can find a way to help them out, you should. After all, you're a Hero. Helping your fellow citizens also has its benefits: People who are grateful are more likely to be loyal and will return the favor if and when the time comes.

Remember to Eat and Sleep

When you're hot on the trail of the Sigil of Naxos or Pegasus feathers, it's easy to lose track of time. Before you know it, your stamina is low, and you're unable to complete your task. Keep a supply of fruit or gyros on hand for a quick bite, and take an hour's rest when your stamina starts to slip. You don't want to frivolously use up potions and pills. Make sure you get a full



BULL'S EYE: It's a good idea to practice throwing flame darts before you really need them.

night's sleep when you can; you can only go so far on cat naps.

Things Are Different Underwater

Producer Jay Usher reminds Heroes, "Underwater combat can be tricky. The resistance from the water is actually calculated into the equations used for your character. The damage you inflict, depending on your choice of weapons, could be reduced significantly. Monsters, of course, will be unaffected by water resistance since they have adapted to the environment. Try a thrust attack with a spear or dagger rather than swinging a sword. Having less resistance, this can be effective. Any weapon you swing is less effective and obviously less desirable."

Use Your Imagination

Being a Hero isn't always a walk in the park. There will be times when Erasmus and the Famous Adventurer won't supply the answers, and teleportation won't take you everywhere you need to go. You're going to need to use some good old-fashioned ingenuity to fix stuff that breaks, or combine objects in unusual ways to build stuff you need. Don't be afraid to experiment.

Stop and Smell the Gyros

Finally, if you're going all the way to Silmaria anyway, take a moment to enjoy the sights and sounds. The beaches are pristine, the food is good (except maybe at Gnome Ann's), and the town isn't crowded even during tourist season. Sure, there are monsters and assassins trying to kill you, but you're going to deal with them, right? If you can rid Silmaria of its blight and successfully procure the throne, your subjects will certainly have a unique appreciation for you. If you experience *QFG V: Dragon Fire* the way it is intended to be experienced, by truly exploring the lands and peoples, you will gain an even more unique appreciation of the mythical kingdom you call your own. 🍷

Christa Phillips is a freelance writer and aspiring novelist who lives in Western Washington.

Hints

ROLE-PLAY TO WIN

Lori Cole, the designer of *Dragon Fire* and the four previous incarnations of *Quest for Glory*, is the supreme authority on playing the game. Here is her advice for your success in Silmaria.

FIGHTER: "To get the maximum points to win as a fighter, you will need to hunt down and vanquish at least one of all monster types. Also, wooing and winning the hand of Elsa in marriage is a definite bonus to your game."

WIZARD: "You really need to create a Magic Staff with Shakra's aid, but the magic wood needed for it cannot be found until after you have completed nearly half the Rites of Rulership. Wooing Katrina definitely leads to an exciting end game."

THIEF: "It's important to make contact with all the potential thieves in town. Your hangouts should be the Dead Parrot Inn and the Thieves' Guild, and you should hang out at both places on a regular basis. Ferrari has his uses, and Elsa will lead you to the bird of your dreams. A little romantic dalliance with Nawar is a fun way to pass the time."

PALADIN: "The Ring of Truth will reveal the true villain but its making will require your life's blood. Erana is your true soul mate."



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FIREWORKS FROM CINCINNATI

COMBINE THE STORYTELLING GENIUS OF RAYMOND E. FEIST WITH THE CREATIVE TALENTS OF SINJIN BAIN AND HIS TEAM AT PYROTECHNIX AND YOU'VE GOT RETURN TO KRONDOR



HERE ARE VAMPIRES IN DOWNTOWN CINCINNATI—AND THIEVES, WIZARDS, MAGES AND PRINCES. FORTUNATELY FOR THE UNSUSPECTING CINCINNATIANS, THESE UNSAVORY CHARACTERS—AND ASSORTED OTHER FANTASTIC PEOPLES—EXIST ONLY ON THE HARD DRIVES OF ONE OF SIERRA'S NEWEST DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, PYROTECHNIX, IN THE MUCH-ANTICIPATED ROLE-PLAYING GAME *RETURN TO KRONDOR*.

By Mark H. Walker

The game is the joint brainchild of PyroTechnix president Sinjin Bain and the renowned fantasy author Raymond E. Feist. Bain and his team of talented men and women have been working on *Return to Krondor* for the past two years.

"When we inherited *Krondor* from 7th Level it was little more than a great story with some cool artwork. We turned it into a game," explains Bain. "Our dynamic True3D engine has really made the game come to life. There's some serious gamers around here and everyone came together to create the game."

The All-Star Team

"It's been a team effort," emphasizes Bain. "This place is filled with extremely gifted people. Put them all on a project like *RtK* and it's unbelievable what they create. They were constantly working on ways to make the game better—tighter art, smoother technology; the ideas just kept coming. It was unsung heroes like Greg Dietrich, Greg Bishop, and Stan Bartsch who kept us moving along—but they're only part of the story.

The really tough part of mentioning a few people is there's not enough room in this article to mention everyone. It's important that gamers realize the entire team devoted so much of themselves to make this game happen and to do it right. It wasn't just the work of a few." >>>



PONDERING THEIR FATE: Squire James and his band of merry misfits plot their course with danger and destiny.



LEADER OF THE PACK: Sinjin Bain, PyroTechnix founder and part-time gamer, spent two years developing and refining *Return to Krondor*.

The entire crew at PyroTechnix obviously shares their leader's enthusiasm. When I visited in September (just before *Krondor's* release) the place looked like an animated advertisement for the game. There was a pre-release buzz throughout the downtown brick building and *Return to Krondor* posters hung on every wall. Many employees wore "Team Krondor" shirts and wherever I turned, *RtK* or bits of it were flashed on the monitors of coders, artists, and gamers. "With the exception of two people, our entire company was working on *Krondor*," explains Bain. "There are a couple of folks programming 'next-generation' 3D stuff but, in general, *RtK* was our way of life."

Looking for Archers in All the Wrong Places

The leader of PyroTechnix regretfully admits he doesn't get to game as much as he would like. He's frequently elbow deep in the details of running a business, so *RtK* gives him a great excuse to play.

"I would spend nearly every weekend playing through *Krondor*, looking for the obvious stuff my folks missed—like an inappropriately equipped archer struggling to wield his bow in a barroom brawl, a dead-end dialogue, whatever." He didn't miss much and neither did his team. The archers are where they belong, and the dialogue is...well, exactly what you would expect from *New York Times* best-selling author Raymond Feist.

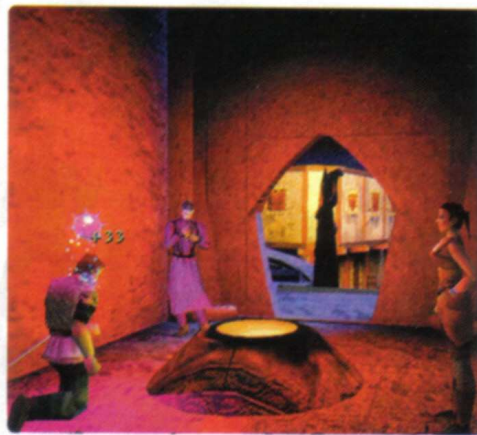
Everybody Loves Raymond

"Raymond and I spoke several times a week," states Bain. "We're

both creative people and we tossed around lots of ideas. I felt we had many creative exchanges. Ray's open mind to new approaches really helped us. We compared notes and he offered a lot of great input."

This is the second *Krondor* game Feist has collaborated on. The first, *Betrayal at Krondor*, is still one of the best-selling computer role-playing games of all time.

As was its predecessor, *Return to Krondor* is set in the land of Midkemia—a world Feist created in his Riftwar novels. "The story is one of the best parts of *Return to Krondor*," claims Bain. "It continually evolves and expands as more fantastic elements are introduced. There are parallel stories to follow, sewer monsters to battle, mysteries to solve and by the end of the game the tragic death of a young woman will be avenged. But underneath it all lies the journey to recover the Tear of the Gods."



ALL IN A DAY'S WORK: Finding the Ishapian Church's Tear of the Gods and outsmarting Sidi.

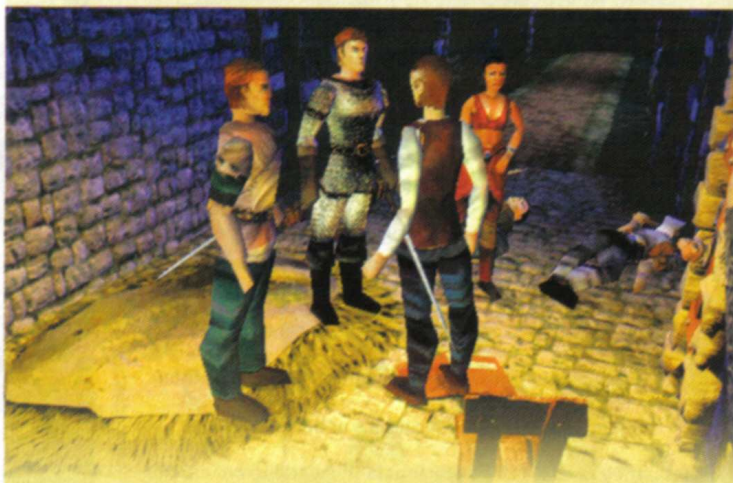
Return to Cincinnati

"This was a great project to create," states Sinjin. "We all had a good time doing it. People were working on 16 things at once to get the game done. We're proud to have our name on this title. It represents two years of our lives and some of our best work."

A Need to Bleed

Return to Krondor traces its turn-based combat lineage to the original *Betrayal at Krondor*. In *RtK* there are several attack options—you choose from where you attack, with what you attack and how you attack.

FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING IN THE THIRD DIMENSION



The bulk of *RtK's* questing is done from a third-person perspective. The 180 characters are motion-capture 3D, intricately animated and professionally voice acted. The camera flits from close-ups to overheads to dramatic boot-top-to-head shots of the hero and heroine. The effect is cinematic and nothing if not enthralling.



Brian "Pearl Jam" Jantzen

Brian came to us from SDRC with expertise in solid modeling and animation. He's known at Pyro for writing 3DStudioMax filters to solve all the problems of the known world. Oh, by the way, for Brian, work is merely an inconvenient means to an end to pay for his scuba diving activities.



Jeff "Jiffy" Mills

Jeff joined PyroTechnix from 7th Level and has fit right in as their lead technical artist. Jeff has contributed to many areas of Rtk including the creative and technical requirements of game authoring. He's an RPG veteran with both traditional paper RPG and computer RPG in his background.



Chuck "Easy Does it" Wiggins

Chuck is a seasoned veteran with expertise in many technical areas of object oriented architecture design and implementation. His musical talents (with a love for all things Cajun) brings a real sense of creativity to his technical work at PyroTechnix. When he's not playing music or working, Chuck is planning his next scuba vacation.



Brian "That's K-R-A-A-C-K" Kraack

Brian has been involved in key game development projects. His love of fantasy novels and knowledge of all things Ray Feist (and the letter K) has added to the development of Rtk in several areas. He's multi-talented and has a creative flair that has really added to the game authoring process of Rtk, which he has been leading for the past year.



Dave "Oy, my back is killing me" Mushaben

Dave is another PyroTechnix veteran and was part of the original True3D development team. His focus has been on tool development and project management. Dave's commitment and patience have enabled him to manage the interface requirements of Return to Krondor.

While the first two options are common for most battle systems, the third, selecting how your character fights (aggressively, normally,

or defensively), adds a new dimension to the fight.

Using mechanics adapted from the Midkemian role-playing system,

Rtk aptly depicts all forms of ranged combat, whether the damage is imparted by a sword, an archer's arrow or a mage's lightning bolt.

While on the subject of mages, don't ever underestimate them, their

numerous lightning bolts or the other throwing enchantments in their arsenal. There are 60 spells at your disposal, divided into six Paths. For instance, the Path of Fire uses Fourth of July pyrotechnics to scorch its unlucky recipients, while the Path of the Mind controls or confuses the bad guys (and girls).

The combat in *Krondor* is as vivid as the rest of the game. Unlike most RPGs that come to mind, *Rtk* has you—to warp an R.E.M. phrase—fight in the place where you stand. If you meet a gang of mercenaries in the local bar (as you do in the first chapter) that's where you will skirmish, not in an artificially created battlefield. PyroTechnix used motion-capture technology to replicate actual sword fighting, and while the clash of steel is real enough to make you wince in sympathy, the mage's flashing fireballs are simply stunning. Prepare for battle. 🗡️

Mark H. Walker, a long-time journalist, has written hundreds of computer game reviews and authored 10 computer entertainment books.



THE FUN NEVER ENDS: Battling with your friends against sewer monsters and other assorted evil forces is all part of the quest.



RETURN TO KRONDOR

www.sierrastudios.com

Developer	PyroTechnix
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Pending
Price	\$49.95
Order #	70559
Phone	1.800.757.7707



STROKES of GENIUS

By John Zhaski

*Vance Cook—
the man in charge
at Headgate Studios.*



In the world of computer gaming, development houses come and go. But Headgate Studios is a success story—the tale of a small company and its passion for an innovative fledgling product that caught the eye of a major publisher and reinvented the way gamers approach PC golf.

The story of Vance Cook, Headgate's founder and president, is forever tied to the evolution of golf games. In 1987, when computer golf games were first becoming popular, Cook was employed by Access Software. Access was a major player in computer entertainment, and its World Class Leaderboard for Commodore 64 was widely respected. Cook's job was to "port" the World Class Leaderboard project from the Commodore 64 to Apple II. But Cook soon matured as a developer and became project director and lead programmer of the much heralded, and often copied, Links franchise. Shortly after the successful launch of *Links 386 Pro*, the now legendary golf game, Cook struck out in a new direction.

A Change of Pace Cook left Access Software in 1992 to form Headgate Studios, a company bent on carving out its own niche in the business produc-

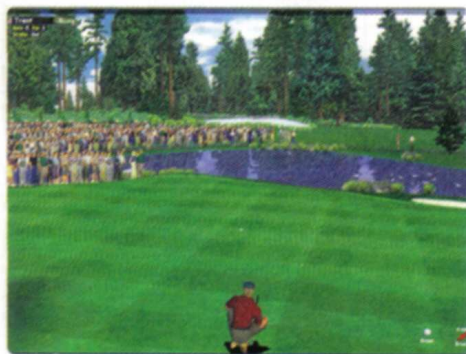
tivity software market. Headgate reached into this market with fervor. Its products were well received, but Cook remained unfulfilled and yearned to return to what he loved best—game design.

So he refocused his company's efforts on computer games. Headgate had about six employees with a tremendous task to perform. Their new idea was to create the fastest, most intricate and beautiful golf game to date.

Keep That Left Arm Straight Six people working on an advanced computer engine is not unheard of, especially in the early stages of development, but it was somewhat remarkable, given the state of the industry at the time. Technology was changing overnight, 3D acceleration was around the corner, and high-speed processors were finding their way into more and more homes. Headgate's idea was to entirely change the way people played interactive golf, and it was Cook who led the charge.

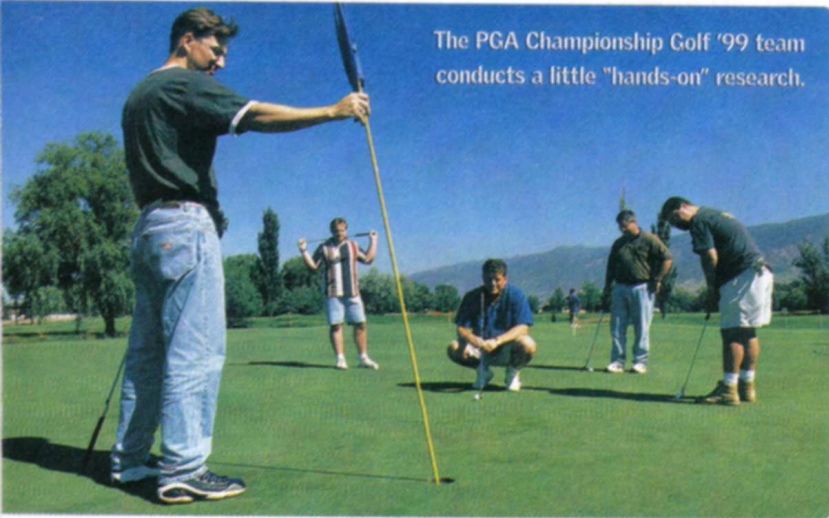
For years, every single golf game for computers relied on a swing meter. It was assumed the tri-click swing method was the only way to play computer golf—but was it really? Headgate tinkered with every sort of swing technology imaginable. Experiments with top-down perspectives, with user-controlled shot arcs, with almost every incarnation of swing meters yielded the same results: a feeling of detachment, of user insignificance, that was nothing like the true experience of golf.

Then one day it hit him, "Why not employ the mouse to swing the club?" Thus, the idea of TrueSwing technology took shape, and Headgate blazed forward with its newly designed golf engine.



PGA CHAMPIONSHIP ANYONE? Size up a birdie putt at Sahalee Country Club, site of the 1998 PGA Championship.

THE
GOLF
HIT



The PGA Championship Golf '99 team conducts a little "hands-on" research.

This Kid Can Play

In the world of games, as with novels or any other form of entertainment, a publisher is needed. When Headgate began to shop its revolutionary ideas to would-be publishers, there were many offers — Headgate's technology was that good. However, Cook had in mind particular requirements of any prospective publisher, and no company was giving him the answers he wanted to hear.

Some wanted complete control of the project; others demanded Headgate relocate from Salt Lake City. Then Sierra caught wind of what was going on at the tiny Utah-based development studio, and serious talks began.

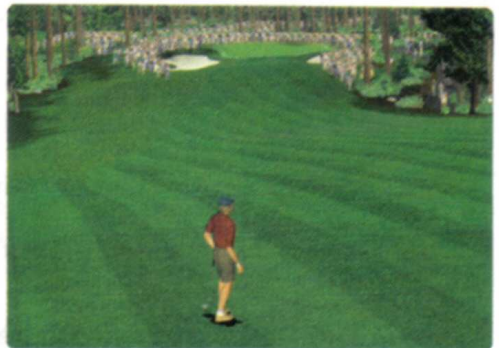
With Cook's approval, Sierra acquired Headgate in 1996. Sierra's philosophy was welcomed by everyone at Headgate: It sought to acquire top development studios without assimilating them into the larger corporate structure. Simply put, Sierra believes companies do their best work if left to themselves. Cook and Headgate stayed in Salt Lake City, but some things did change: Headgate soon commanded a larger capital base, and the company doubled in size. Headgate also set new goals for

its maturing golf engine. Before the acquisition, Headgate's desire was simple: create the very best golf game on the market. The backing of Sierra now made that dream a clear possibility. TrueSwing technology was set within a brilliant 3D landscape, and the idea of a real-time 3D golfer, once thought impossible, became a reality. After nearly three years in development, *Front Page Sports: Golf* launched in 1997 to overwhelming critical and consumer acclaim.

Indeed, *FPS: Golf* was an excellent product that challenged the already entrenched Links series and highly touted Jack Nicklaus series (from *Accolade*). In fact, *FPS: Golf* was so successful, and its TrueSwing technology so impressive, almost every other golf developer scrambled to adopt a mouse-swing interface. But Headgate, with TrueSwing already in place, had a big jump on the competition. So, for this year's product, *PGA Championship Golf 1999 Edition*, Headgate set its goals early. These goals were three-fold: (1) make TrueSwing more manageable for the average player, (2) improve the look of the 3D golfers, and (3) develop the most advanced course architect on the market.

Keep Your Head Down and Arm Straight

TrueSwing was a little rough around the edges when it debuted in 1997. It's not that TrueSwing wasn't fun, it was just hard to master. Many inex-



The team at Headgate went to great pains so you could design entire courses, exchange them over the Internet, and host network tournaments.

perienced players had difficulty hitting consistent shots. For the casual gaming crowd, or those unaccustomed to the game of golf, using a mouse to swing was a new, and thus unwieldy, interface. Headgate listened to players, and the new version of TrueSwing is easier to get the hang of. Players still slice or hook the ball with a poor shot, but there is less error with the mouse, meaning the game plays through more quickly, and good players will hit a higher ratio of exceptional shots.

Also, the lie of the ball has much more of an effect on shots. TrueSwing may now be a little easier in some ways, allowing more consistent fairway play, but stray from the fairway and the result is a very difficult shot from the rough. *PGA Championship Golf '99* ships with The Royal Birkdale course (site of the 1998 British Open), and true to the real game, playing out of the rough is incredibly challenging. Players in the rough who simply hack away for the green risk serious trouble—and aggravation. Also, with a renewed emphasis on golf strategy—especially the draw and fade—players who once used a



Fans of past golf games implored Cook and his team to create a course editor. But Cook wanted to develop a tool to help players design not just holes, but entire courses.

straightedge to guide their mouse will now be punished for employing a tactic most call cheating.

TrueSwing has made these improvements through a concept called "getting back to the ball." In this year's game, the ball is in a fixed position—the perfect contact point ("the sweet spot") rests exactly where the mouse begins each shot. Users must pull the mouse back, then push it forward precisely so it follows through the exact point where the mouse started. Failure to do so results in less-than-perfect shots that can do anything from hook, slice, or not go anywhere at all. To execute fades and draws, users must slide the mouse back laterally in their back-swing and match that with the lateral movement of their follow-through. "Getting back to the ball" is the single greatest improvement to TrueSwing and will please everyone who wanted a more realistic simulation of an actual golf swing.

More Polygons Please

Headgate's second goal, improving the 3D golfer, has been met—and exceeded. This year, there are over 400 different golfer motions in the game. Furthermore, the polygon count has been upped to a maximum of 20,000 polygons per golfer. The result is a smoother blending of motion-capture animation with a real-time representation of the mouse swing. The golfers simply look amazing.

The Course That You Built

The new course architect was Headgate's final goal. Many fans of

There is less error with the mouse, meaning the game plays through more quickly, and good players will hit a higher ratio of exceptional shots.

past revs of Sierra's golf games implored Cook and his team to include a course editor. It was the missing link. But Cook wanted to develop a tool to help players design not just holes, but entire courses. Furthermore, he wanted to offer players the chance to exchange courses or hold network competitions using their original creations. In *PGA Championship Golf '99*, the course architect is so advanced, it could easily be sold as a separate software package.

Once players dive into the course architect, they will notice a tremendous range of control. Players can first choose a parcel of land, then rough out 18 holes that fit into the space. A giant lake might be placed in the middle, with holes that wind around the outside. The Course Wizard is the programming tool that allows players to rough out these courses using a simple click and drag system. But while the Course Wizard provides large-scale control in the initial stages, the Course Architect gives players precise control over course design, allowing them to place trees and obstacles along every square inch of landscape. Furthermore, players who have a favorite course can simply take their score card and, using the map, create a rough outline of that course. Then, zooming in to a closer view, they can add their favorite



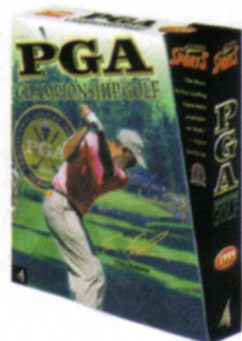
NERVOUS? Is it the spectators' eyes watching you prepare to tee off at 18, or is it the eyes of Mark O'Meara and Phil Mickelson?

trees, or even remove the frustrating landmark that costs them a bogey every week. The Course Architect is diverse enough that players can take anywhere from an hour to an entire year to design their course. Any level of detail can be employed, and any golf course re-created.

The Best Package Yet

The experience of Vance Cook and the top-notch staff at Headgate have created yet another golf game that defies categorization. *PGA Championship Golf '99* can be played at any level—from a quick nine holes to a multiple-round championship weekend. With the enhanced TrueSwing technology and a course editor that could easily be sold as a separate landscape CAD package, the golf possibilities are limitless. For the first time ever, Sierra and Headgate studios offer a golf game that puts you on the course as a pro, and in the clubhouse as a course designer. It's the best of both worlds. **f**

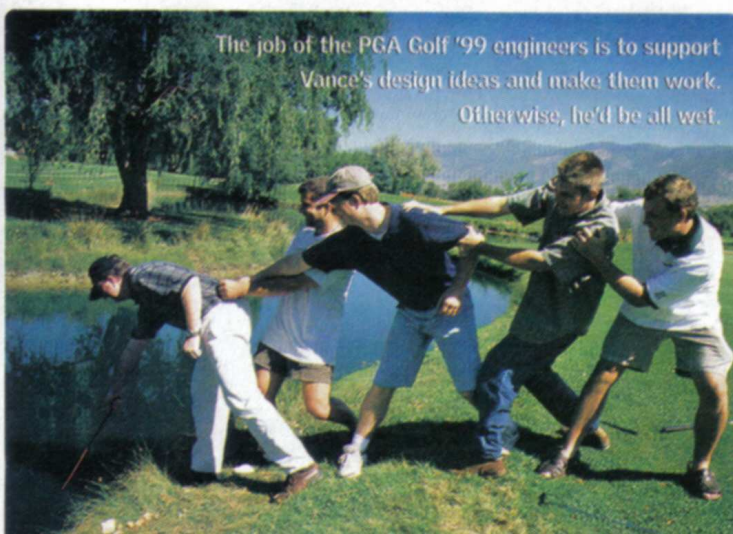
John Zhaski is a lifelong golfer and has been playing electronic games since 1975.



PGA CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF 1999 EDITION

www.sierra.com

Developer	Headgate
Format	Win95 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$29.95
Order #	70487
Phone	1.800.757.7707



The job of the PGA Golf '99 engineers is to support Vance's design ideas and make them work. Otherwise, he'd be all wet.



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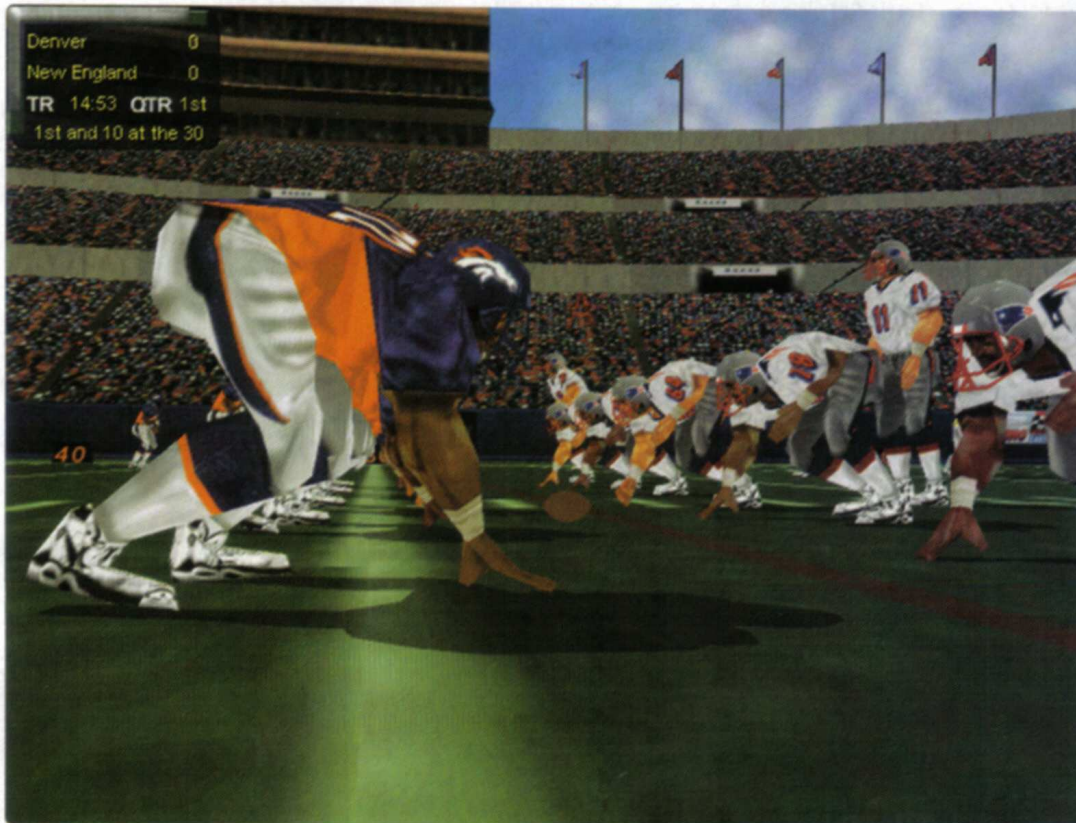
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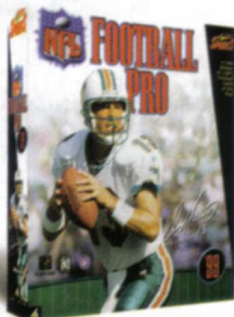
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PAY DIRT!



NFL FOOTBALL PRO '99

www.sierra.com

Developer	Sierra Sports
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$29.95
Order #	70459
Phone	1.800.757.7707

NFL Football Pro '99 is a rare breed of game that scores touchdowns for both arcade and simulations fanatics

By Hugh Falk

IN MY YEARS AS A GAMER and game reviewer, I have played more than 15 PC football games, and I kept them all. How many of you still have copies of *Gridiron!*, *GFL*, or *Mike Ditka Ultimate Football* lying around? It's safe to say that I'm a football (and PC game) fanatic. Truthfully, many football games are simply forgettable, but in looking back at the history of PC football, there is one game series that stands out in my mind as an innovator in PC sports simulations—*Front*

Page Sports: Football, one of 1993's brightest stars (as bright as VGA would allow). Sierra was the first to successfully merge statistics and action in one game. The series has evolved over the years, and the 1999 edition looks poised to recapture that feeling I first felt in 1993.

To emphasize that *NFL Football Pro '99* (FP99) is not just a minor upgrade, the series has been renamed *Sierra Sports: Football Pro*. The goal of the design team, Sierra Sports Northwest, was to build

upon what has made the series successful, but not to rely upon conventions that are no longer state of the art. With an arcade mode that rivals any console-based football game and with the statistics and depth that have always surpassed football games on any platform, *NFL Football Pro '99* strives to offer the total football experience.

Mike Branham, director of Sierra Sports Northwest, calls FP99 "an evolutionary experience. You start by diving in and getting dirty with the arcade mode. Then you wade into the depth and accuracy of the stats engine. And just when you think that might be all, you dig deeper and find yourself creating leagues via FTP and overseeing multimillion-dollar deals that include players and draft picks."

Dad, Can I Borrow a Quarter?

Arcade action fans will have a lot more to like about *FP99*. For starters, the color depth has been raised from 256 colors to 16-bit color. If nothing else, that's 65,279 more colors! But colors are old news; let's talk polygons. This year's graphics engine is true 3D and can push up to 1,200 polygons per player and about 10,000 polygons at once. 3D cards are supported via Direct 3D, but the

Other niceties in *FP99* include an interactive audience, which not only cheers and jeers at appropriate times, but also fills the stadium based upon the team's popularity and success ratings. The camera feature has been simplified and improved too. Now there is a "smart cam" that follows the action, zooms, and pans automatically to show players everything they need to see. For an even better view, two players can now go helmet to helmet using two



BITS AND PIECES: Every team, every player, every stadium, every condition. In *NFL Football Pro '99*, every aspect of the game is under your control.

Now, for example, it's possible to have a QB with a high Arm Strength rating, but a normal Break Tackle rating.

computers connected via LAN, modem, or serial cable. Also, unlike much of the arcade-style competition on the market, *FP99* is truly meant to simulate the real game—including the score. With other

game can also be played without a 3D card.

The arcade interface has also been improved. Menus have been simplified in order to make selections fast, even when using a joystick. In fact, arcade players can now start a game without ever letting go of the joystick. Mouse and keyboard are also supported but not necessary. This is great for those who hate to switch controllers, but it's even better for those who have little brothers, sisters, nephews, etc., with a seemingly permanent coat of gelatinous glop on their hands.

games (which will remain nameless, but resemble heavyset ex-NFL coaches) every third Hail Mary results in a touchdown, and receivers are given an unfair advantage over cornerbacks. Players can expect more realistic scoring and play execution in *FP99*.

Part of the realism is due to players' abilities, which are handled altogether differently from previous games in the series. Each player now has more than 30 attributes including Arm Strength, Ball Carrying, Vision, etc. This replaces the old ratings system, which had eight generic categories such as

Intelligence and Strength. "The problem with the old system was obvious in quarterback ratings," explains Branham. "In order for a quarterback to throw the ball 60 yards down the field, he needed a high strength rating. However, if the strength rating was too high, he became Superman." Now, for example, it's possible to have a QB with a high Arm Strength rating, but a normal Break Tackle rating.

Injuries is another important area that greatly benefits from the new rating system. For example, if a player hurts his wrist, it doesn't affect his ability to run. Players



SMASH-MOUTH FOOTBALL: Coach calls the play, everyone in the huddle hears it, the ball is snapped, and your QB winds up with cracked ribs. Sometimes things just don't go like you planned.



CLASSIFIED: Devise secret plays in the Play Editor and test them at practice before heading to the big game.

also age over multiple seasons, and only applicable ratings diminish over time until their inevitable retirement.

Tricks Are for Coaches

Players who also love to coach will be glad to get their hands on the highly versatile Play Editor, which allows trick plays, including direct snaps, laterals, options, and special situation plays like spiking the ball and taking a knee. The editor has the power of a small programming language, but programmers need not apply since player logic can be added using plain English. The Play Editor has always

been a strength of the series, and *FP99* continues the tradition. Each team can stock its play book with 16 formations, 128 offensive plays and 64 defensive plays

(with play flipping). Also, if you want a player like Deion Sanders to play both offense and defense, the Play Editor will accommodate



EVERY PLAY IN THE BOOK...from the flea-flicker to the halfback pass to the crowd-pleasing Hail Mary. Whether you do the Ickey Shuffle or the Mile High Salute in the end-zone is another issue altogether.

Injuries is another important area that greatly benefits from the new rating system. For example, if a player hurts his wrist, it doesn't affect his ability to run.

(although, Ego and Dance Ability ratings are not supported in this version). The best news for play designers in *FP99* is the editor can be accessed from within the main program. In the past, plays were created in a separate utility, but now they can be created either way, and testing new plays is much easier and faster.

Human coaches aren't the only ones getting new tools in *FP99*. The AI (artificial intelligence) coaches

now have a new level of intelligence at their disposal. Low-level coaching profiles are similar to previous versions. AI coaches choose plays based on down, distance, time, point spread, etc. In *FP99*, AI coaches are also guided by high-level profiles, which use the low level as a base but also consider the game in progress. The AI coach reads each team's tendencies toward formation, pass vs. run, and blitz vs. no blitz. He then gives

weights to each play based on its success and uses this information to fine-tune the play selection. All coaches are also smart enough to know how to run a hurry-up offense

exist solely between the hash-marks. Being a commissioner can be just as rewarding as being a player or coach. Like previous iterations, *FP99* allows commissioners

to create their own leagues, which includes teams controlled by up to 30 remote player/coaches. There is a level of depth in *FP99* to satisfy everyone.

The biggest addition to *FP99* is a new financial system. Now players can act as commissioners (make league changes), coaches (make roster and play call changes), players (control the on-field action), and general managers (manage finances and oversee draft day). The GM feature allows players to set ticket prices, concession prices, and worry about salary caps. *FP99* actually incorporates the NFL Collective Bargaining Agreement into the game, and real-life rules and regulations govern free agency, drafts, and trading.

Finally the "unsung heroes" of football get their time to shine. No, I'm not talking about linemen; I'm talking about accountants. Remember, it isn't whether you win or lose, it's how much money you make. If your team goes bankrupt, for example, you'll be forced to take out an Operating Loan, which will only add to your organizational

expenses down the road. Branham says, "If you can do it in the NFL, you can do it in our product—within reason."

Never before has the game of football been simulated so completely. *FP99* allows players to experience the whole NFL, the real NFL, and not just some dumbed-down facsimile. Sierra Sports Northwest has strived to create a game that can be appreciated on many levels. Players who want to worry about lower tackling instead of lower expenditure ratios can let the game's IA deal with back office tasks while they contend with a fast and furious arcade experience. The end result is a game that surpasses its 1993 roots and lets players enjoy the game of football during those lonely moments after the most exciting day of the year—Super Bowl Sunday. **f**

Hugh Falk first wrote about a Sierra game in the July 1993 issue of the TSN Times. Sierra still gets regular requests for back issues—but only from Hugh Falk himself.

Players also age over multiple seasons, and only applicable ratings diminish over time until their inevitable retirement.

to conserve time. Not to be left behind, human coaches can use special hot keys, which allow them to bypass the play selector and run their own hurry-up offense.

Pre-season games are another nice tool for coaches. Once the pre-season is over, 80-man rosters must be cut to the standard 53 players. Of course, all coaching tools are offered for one reason—winning. Like the real NFL, coaches who don't seem to grasp this concept will be rewarded with higher draft picks the following year. There's nothing like drafting a superstar to help raise game attendance. However, fielding a losing team also has financial repercussions. More on that in a bit...

Dad, Can I Borrow a Quarter Million?

The arcade and coaching modes of *FP99* are fun, but longtime players of the series know that life doesn't

MANAGE THIS!

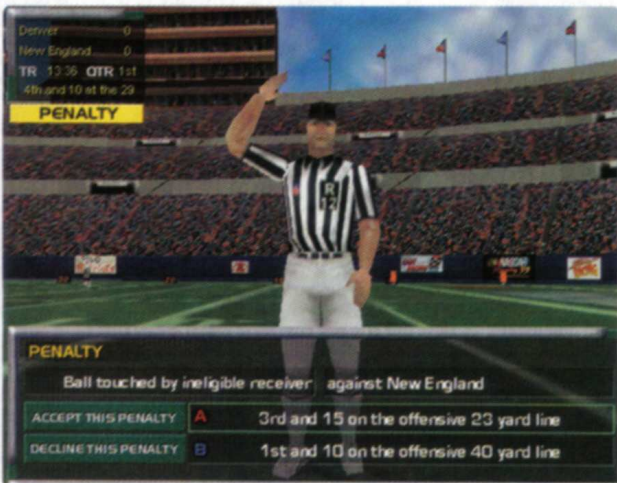
Playing as manager or commissioner has its ups and downs. Dealing with finance is just one of the dilemmas you'll face. With hundreds of peoples' careers at your fingertips, it's almost as nerve-wracking as being a player! Check it out:

LEADERS & RECORDS												
reason	view	qualifiers	positions	col								
Active leaders	Individuals	all players	all	col								
	teams	league minimum	all applicable	col								
			select	col								
passing	receiving	rushing	game	turnovers	col							
interceptions	touchdowns	efficiency	field goals	penalty	rank							
Passing												
rank	name	team	att	comp	int	td	fg	blk	sc	40yd	49yd	
1	Moore	SEA	21	13	61.9	266	8.7	25	7	8	6.8	8
2	Breese	MOB	22	28	12.7	289	8.6	16	2	8	6.2	11
3	Elroy	SEA	24	22	91.7	287	7.4	66	1	8	6.8	7
4	Hoying	PIL	22	8	36.4	28	11.8	1	1	6.3	4	21

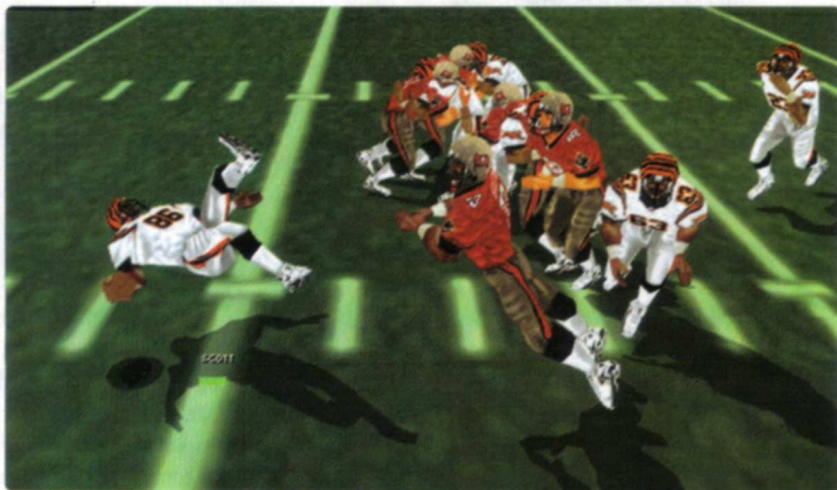
PLAYLISTS: Choose your starting players wisely. The difference between a check in the "W" or the "L" column may be as simple as who your starting wide receiver is.

REVENUE	amount	rank
gate receipt sharing	\$ 0	30
broadcast revenue	+\$ 300,000	15
luxury box admission	+\$ 900,000	16
general admission	+\$ 1,802,250	16
concessions	+\$ 164,700	3
total revenue	=\$ 3,166,950	18
EXPENSES		
profit sharing	\$ 260,000	2
operating expenses	+\$ 50,000	1
salaries	+\$ 3,000,000	2
stadium expenses	+\$ 630,675	2
total expenses	=\$ 3,940,675	2
total (revenue-expenses)	\$ 773,725	29
statement		
total YTD	\$ 773,725	29
year projected	\$ 12,379,600	29
cash on hand	\$ 15,450,000	3
salary cap remaining	\$ 2,000,000	28

SALARY CAPS: You have a limited amount of cash to spend, so be careful who you pick up in the draft. You need high-profile players like Deion Sanders to bring in capital.



'SCUSE ME, DID YOU DROP YOUR HANKY? Penalties can cost you yardage and maybe even the game.



DO YOU LIKE APPLES? The play your coach drew up failed and your wide receiver just got laid-out by a blitzing cornerback. How do you like them apples?



Planetary Destruct-A-Thon

Sleek, fast and lethal—mankind has finally met its match

By Bryan Edge-Salois



STAR SIEGE

www.starsiege.com

Developer	Dynamix
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$49.95
Order #	83675
Phone	1.800.757.7707

AT THE END OF *EARTH SIEGE 2* in 2627, humanity had rallied and destroyed the lunar base of the Cybrid leader Prometheus, throwing the Cybrid legions into confusion. Prometheus escaped destruction and fled with a small Cybrid force into the depths of space. Here Prometheus established a secret base and rebuilt *its* shattered armies.

In the wake of this devastating war, humanity also began to rebuild. Led by Solomon Petresun (a charismatic war hero), mankind created the Great Human Empire in preparation against the next coming of Prometheus. Many years passed. The Empire flourished and grew strong again under Petresun. This

environment encouraged a warrior spirit in its citizens—yet it also fostered division. The colony worlds of Mars, Venus and Titan were completely subordinate to the Imperial war machine. The colonists resented their second-class status and the repression that met their efforts to obtain justice. By 2820, underground movements on Mars and Venus were plotting rebellion. Yet the Emperor refused to bend. In his mind, the Cybrid threat trumped all objections to his policies. His first priority was and would always be the defense of Mother Earth.

The Imperial military vastly outnumbered and outgunned the colonists. Dreams of rebellion seemed futile—then the unthink-

able happened. Rebel sympathizers discovered a hidden cache of alien technology on Mars, technology that transformed Martian forces into a match for the Imperials. Led by Horace, a renegade Imperial Knight, the Martians rebelled in 2828. They savaged the Imperial forces and a furious Emperor dispatched the bulk of the Empire's military to crush the rebellion. Commanded by Harabec's own brother Canon, the Imperial strike-force invaded a defiant Mars.



Meanwhile Prometheus had been carefully monitoring the events on Mars through *Its* vast spy network. The Rebellion was the opportunity *It* had been patiently waiting for—now *It* would unleash *Its* Cybrid armada against the Earth.

It is 2829. Prometheus sees *Its* chance. Earth's defenses are stripped to the bone. With colonists and Imperials locked in battle, the Cybrids execute a devastating offensive with overwhelming force. Earth falls. The divided humans on Mars find themselves with no choice but to unite in a desperate alliance, hoping against hope to find a miracle that will save humanity.

The Peril Lurks

If you thought the battle for survival against the Cybrid menace ended in *Earthsiege 2*, guess again. Dynamix brings you *Starsiege*, the third chapter in a story that began with *Metaltech: Earthsiege*. Rick Overman, lead programmer for the *Starsiege* development team, says Dynamix is "trying to re-define the genre as futuristic combat," as opposed to just a "fighting robot game." *Starsiege* may well be the game that does just that, adding a whole new level of depth to the series by adding a fascinating story and extras that raise it from a shooter sequel to a solar-system classic.

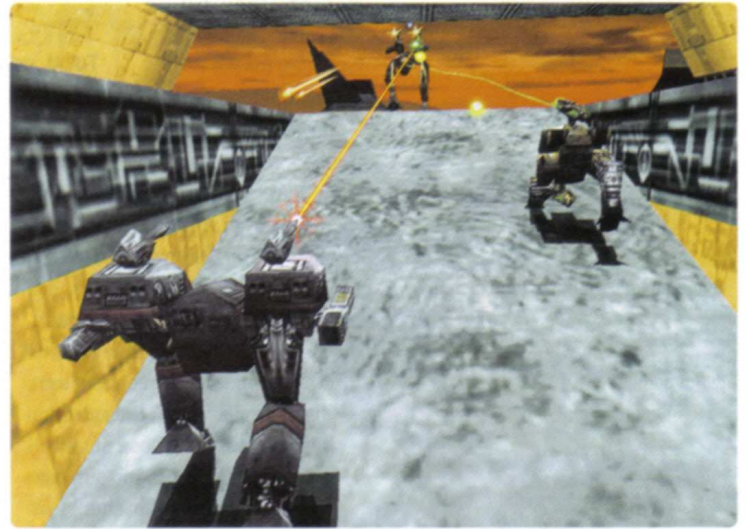
One of the ways they accomplished it is through the game's printed manual and, even more importantly, the compendium that is included with the game CDs. This compendium spans over 150 pages and includes everything from detailed vehicle descriptions to history of the *Starsiege* universe. Within the game interface itself you can access something called NewsNet, which displays headlines of current events as they occur within the game. Clicking on NewsNet brings up a screen in which you can read the full story behind the headline, and you can also access an encyclopedia of events. As you progress through the game, the headlines and stories

will change, and may reflect some results of your exploits.

This isn't to say that all this depth means *Starsiege* isn't loaded with action, which it has in spades. If manning a 50-ton, heavy assault-class vehicle with enough destructive capability to level a small city is your idea of a good time, then *Starsiege* is definitely for you. You'll find no shortage of firepower here, boasting over 30 fully customizable vehicles, from tanks to HERCs (for the uninitiated, HERCs are mechanized walking towers of death and destruction).

Any Way You Like It

One of the biggest strengths of *Starsiege* comes in the form of customization. You can import your own character photo and squadron insignia in the single-player game, and the vehicle lab alone can take hours of your time as you meticulously design and redesign your HERCs until they're exactly the way you want them. Autocannons, missiles, lasers, particle-beam weapons, electromagnetic pulse projectors, and nanite cannons are but a few of the 70 or so weapons from which you can choose to outfit your HERC. Additionally, you will need to select from different armor types, sensor arrays, reactors (for your energy needs), engines (for propulsion), and other technological extras such as cloaking devices. You can even rotate the image of your HERC while you're creating it and, once you're pleased with your creation, you can save it to a file. Since the file is so small, you can easily attach it to an email and send it to your friends and teammates.



FUTURISTIC COMBAT: *Starsiege* lays it heavy on the firepower, featuring over 30 customizable vehicles from tanks to HERCs.

After *Starsiege's* release, the *Starsiege* mission editor will be released via the Web, allowing players to craft their own single and multiplayer missions. The mission editor also lets you create entire campaigns, and you can even insert your own movie files and bitmaps into the mission briefing to make truly unique campaigns.

Another exciting feature is you can create customized "skins" for your vehicles. You can paint your HERC any way you like, right down to having slogans and logos ("Kiss My Grits!") plastered across your favorite death machine. Of course,

Paint your HERC any way you like, right down to having slogans and logos.

A particularly fun tactic is to blow off your enemies' weapons and leave them to run around the battlefield like a scared chicken.

if you don't want to take the time to do this, numerous skins are provided. Additionally, the in-game heads-up display (HUD) is also fully customizable, so you can arrange the on-screen controls, such as your radar, shield indicator, and other indicators, in any fashion you like.

Control Yourself
Another refreshing change is the control scheme used by the game. *Starsiege* allows the beginner to jump right in and commence blasting, but still retains unlimited flexibility for the pro. For the beginner, the basic control scheme

consists of using the four keyboard directional arrows as your forward/reverse throttle and left/right movement, and your mouse as the targeting cursor. The left mouse button fires your weapons. For those of you who play *Quake* and similar 3D-shooters, this should seem very familiar, and it is almost a standard control configuration for many types of games now.



TOTAL CONTROL: Starsiege retains unlimited flexibility in its control schemes. Beginners can go with what they know, and pros can go with what works.



You will eventually want to learn how to adjust your shields, weapon-firing chains, targeting computer, radar, and the like, but the essentials are learned in short order. For the pro, any key or control in the game can be re-assigned to any other game function, meaning you can use your favorite control scheme from another game, or experiment with different ones until the perfect butt-kicking combination is found.

Starsiege also comes with numerous pre-configured control schemes for various joysticks, joystick-mouse combinations, keyboard-mouse combinations, etc., so you may not even need to take the time to set up a new one. The folks at Dynamix are avid gamers too, and they've taken the liberty to provide some of their favorites. Whatever your preference, you get the best of both worlds—ease and flexibility.

Using the mouse as a targeting cursor makes concentrating fire on a HERC's vulnerable points much easier. You can, for example, use your lasers to shear off your opponent's leg, arm, or weapon. A particularly fun tactic is to blow off all of your enemies' weapons and leave them to run around the battlefield like a scared chicken. Of

course, they might find a repair pad, power down their HERC and repair it, but the minute a glimmer of hope shines in their little metallic eyes, blow the crap out of them.

In keeping with the simplified control schemes, *Starsiege* also boasts a simplified interface, making it easy for the uninitiated to find their way around in the menus and get playing as quickly as possible. A small box displays help information, so whenever your mouse cursor is over a button, that button's function is displayed for you.

Lead or Follow?

The strategy element of the game doesn't end with combat, however. You can strategically plan your own missions, choosing your HERC drop points and giving orders to your teammates prior to the beginning of your mission. This allows you to make better use of your squad mates and helps keep them from being little more than target practice for the enemy. It also allows for more strategy on the player's part. Rather than just receiving orders and getting dumped into the battlefield, you can try out your own tactics. Also unlike its predecessors in the series, *Starsiege* allows you



DIRECT HIT: Like a warm knife in butter, the laser beam slices and dices with deadly accuracy.

to play through a series of missions (more than 45 single and multi-player missions in all) as either Human (Imperial Knight or Martian Rebel), or one of the sinister Cybrids themselves. This means you can play virtually any HERC in the game and go through two separate stories.

While stressing quality and depth over its predecessors, *Starsiege* is still loaded with eye-candy. Taking full advantage of 3D accelerators, *Starsiege* displays everything from dry Martian outposts to gorgeous, rolling green hills in equal splendor. Many of these levels have buildings (like HERC hangars, for example) you can actually enter seamlessly (no waiting for the CD to load). Use of colored lighting gives lasers and particle-beam weapons a brilliant glow as they cut across the screen and sever an adversary's right leg from its body. Missiles spiral forth, trailing translucent smoke which clouds your vision—but not long enough to miss an opponent's



EYE CANDY: With booming 3D accelerator support, explosions in *Starsiege* don't just make you grimace, they singe your eyebrows.

chassis blowing apart in a fiery technological supernova.

Tech Support

Starsiege offers native support with the 3Dfx Voodoo and Voodoo2 chipsets and OpenGL drivers will be available in early 1999. While some unnamed Mech games offer only hardware support for their graphics, *Starsiege* gives sci-fi combat gamers superior graphics with its software and your hardware.

Starsiege will also support 3D Sound (Direct3D and Aureal A3d) for

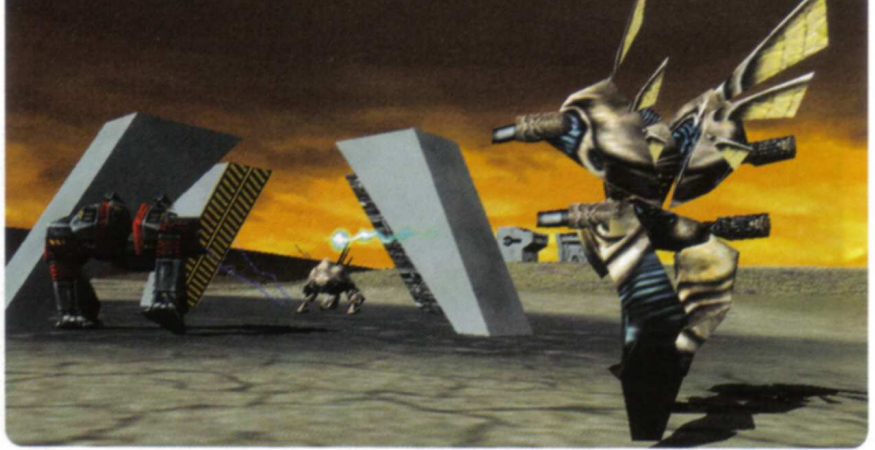
the true HERC experience. If you have the right hardware, you'll hear the thunder, see the flames, and feel your weapons spewing hot lead (or whatever you happen to be firing) into your foes.

According to Overman, *Starsiege* runs well on a Pentium 166 (equipped with one of the 3D accelerators listed above), 24MB of RAM, Windows 95/98, and a sound card and quad-speed CD-ROM drive. Of course, in the gaming world, the more computer horsepower you can muster, the better—but it's nice to know you may not have to run out and upgrade. Another first, *Starsiege* supports Windows NT 4.0.

Multiplayer Mayhem Is Free

Virtually an unlimited number of players (limited only by bandwidth and server speed) can play *Starsiege*. Overman indicated that 16-player Internet melees are not out of the question with 28.8 modems and a dedicated server, and can frequently be found while playing the Alpha Tech Release 2. As many as 20 have successfully played on a local area network! *Starsiege* features a full range of multiplayer games, ranging from simple death matches to objective-based raids. The mission editor offers unlimited multiplayer possibilities.

Unlike too many multiplayer games these days, there is a myriad of options available to *Starsiege* players. Foremost you can choose the type of online game you want to play, Deathmatch, Capture the Flag, King of the Hill, Swarm, etc. And, when the mission editor is released, you'll be able to dream up your own



TIMING IS EVERYTHING: Stopping to recharge while under fire can be detrimental to your health. Recharge pre-battle and avoid becoming easy pickin's.

multiplayer games. The game host can further customize the multiplayer game by limiting technologies available to players and setting tonnage limits on the vehicles. The scenarios are endless.

Multiplayer *Starsiege* is playable via the Internet (TCP/IP), modem (28.8 or faster), direct serial connection and IPX networks. The World Opponent Network (www.won.net) will be hosting several high-performance dedicated servers full of mechanized multiplayer mayhem. And if you haven't already been playing the Alpha Tech Release 2 over the Internet to get a taste of the game, you can go to www.starsiege.com and download it. It offers a small selection of HERCS and is multiplayer only, but it's one way of trying it before you buy it.

Anticipation of this game's release has been steadily building for the past couple of months. But as Overman and his team push through the design and development process, the scope of the game continues to expand and improve. Once an action adventure confined to the Earth's realm, *Starsiege* is now an all-encompassing experience pushing the limits of this solar system. ☛

Bryan Edge-Salois is a tech support veteran, computer guru, avid gamer and freelance writer.

Use of colored lighting gives lasers and particle-beam weapons a brilliant glow... as they cut and...sever an adversary's right leg from its body.





Comrades in Arms

Starsiege TRIBES: A squad-based first-person shooter geared for team efforts, wide-area combat—and total paranoia

By Chris Hudak



STARSLIEGE TRIBES

www.starsiege.com

Developer	Dynamix
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$39.95
Order #	83667
Phone	1.800.757.7707

LIFE DOESN'T GET MUCH worse than this. After weeks of talking smack on the Net, on the phone and in person, your clique of gamers—your squad, your Tribe—has finally come to the virtual battleground to settle the matter once and for all. The deal: a straight-up fight out in miles of open terrain. No "territory-holding," none of that candy-assed, eighth-grade Capture the Flag crap—just a powered-armor brawl in the wasteland, ending with the eight of you dancing a victory boogie on the bodies of the enemy squad.

That was the plan, anyway.

Now the eight of you have been reduced to three, and that's just the beginning: You're all hurting, each a good half-mile from the others, each pinned down, each painfully low on ammo. The enemy, to the best of your knowledge, is still at full manpower. Your squad leader bought it about five minutes ago, burned out of the air in mid-jump by a laser-sniper you never even saw. And, worst of all, if you lose this battle, you're gonna be hearing about it for weeks, in smug, smarty-pants emails and Net postings from some pasty-faced keyboard dweeb in Missile Silo, Indiana, you haven't even met face to face. Of the

remaining squad members, you're the one in the best shape, and that's bad news, 'cause you don't have a frigging clue what's going on. Three things are certain: A) Every time you stick your head up from behind your cover, somebody out there takes a shot at it; B) if the aforementioned head takes one more high-velocity projectile, you ain't gonna have a head any more; and C) just within your sight, separated from you by a tantalizingly (and suspiciously) empty stretch of ground, is the Armored Personnel Carrier you can use to gun down enemy soldiers, if only you could get to it.

And you know, *you know*, that the moment you start your run, some patient, unseen enemy out there is going to end it for you.

Welcome to *Starsiege TRIBES* and better luck next time.

Get Your Filthy Hands Off My Desert

If you've never been sucked in by



'SCUSE ME WHILE I KISS THE SKY: The TRIBES jetpack is a multipurpose tool, useful for hopping from place to place, or to rain hot lead and plasma on unsuspecting campers.



the allure of first-person action games, *Starsiege TRIBES* may be the one that gets you. In this tense and gorgeous squad-level combat sim, up to 32 players form teams, or tribes, and square off against other tribes in futuristic infantry actions wherein each man (or woman—*TRIBES* offers female warrior models as well as male) can mean the difference between victory and defeat.

Some justifiably proud designer at Dynamix is probably gonna spon-

aneously give birth when I say this, but it wouldn't be unfair to compare the combat schemes—or “dynamics,” if you prefer—of *Starsiege TRIBES* to those found in Robert Heinlein's classic *Starship Troopers* (the novel, not the movie). Your combat soldier sports powered armor, the ability to make jetpack-assisted “jumps” for upward of a mile at a time, and can lay out the equivalent firepower of a present-day expeditionary force all by his/her lonesome: Pulse guns, mor-

tars, energy weapons, seeking missiles, and a particularly nasty high-intensity laser sniper rifle are just the highlights.

More than anything else, the one aspect of *Starsiege TRIBES* that separates it from first-person killfests like *Quake II* is the concept of support, in the military sense of the word. In such games geared for single-player action, you can certainly carry a variety of weapons, but it's still you—singular, against them—plural. Even when it's not, there isn't much in the way of organization. *TRIBES* assigns the squad leader for each group of players a Tribe Commander role. The commander has access to a satellite view

of the battlefield situation, and depending upon the current condition of his Tribe's sensor systems, knows not only where his men are, but where the enemy's men are as well. This nicely distributes the pressure among the players: It puts pressure on the commander to organize his forces; it puts pressure on the squad members to support and protect the commander; and you can bet it puts pressure on the enemy to pin the commander and take him out before his God's-eye view of the battlezone causes any permanent damage.

Situation Normal— All F#%ked Up!

It's no secret that one of the large motivations for the heavy multi-player emphasis of *Starsiege TRIBES* is rooted in the matter of artificial intelligence (AI). The sad fact is that computer AI is only so good, and sometimes the only way to give the computer's forces the appearance of human traits (such as paranoia, deviousness, surprise, and so forth) is through elaborate environmental designs that cattleprod the live player from setup to setup. Such battles can be challenging—but it feels canned.

But human players, God bless 'em, can surprise you all day long without even trying, and *Starsiege TRIBES* gives them every opportunity to shine gloriously or screw up



But human players, God bless 'em, can surprise you all day long without even trying...



FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY: Stocking up on weapons doesn't help much when you get a grenade delivered to your doorstep.



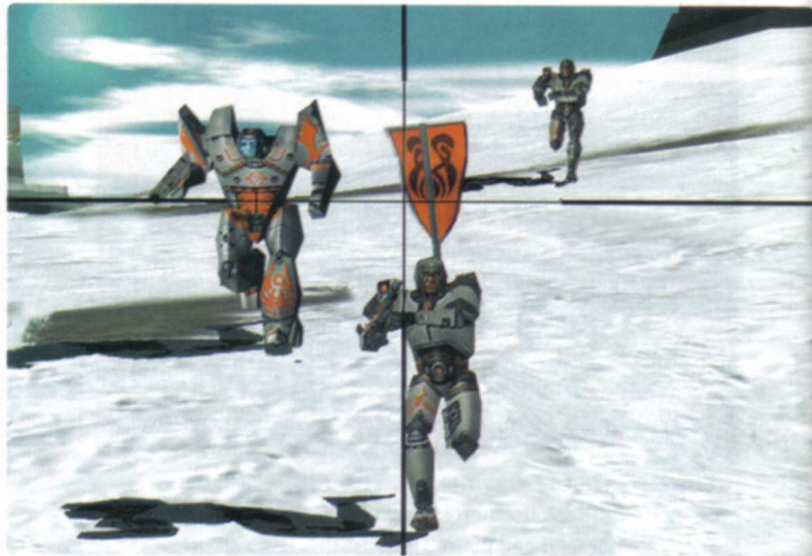
righteously: red-herring diversions (running around like an idiot in full view of the enemy's guns while your squadmates jump on the flank); using the wrong ordnance (unleashing high-yield explosives on targets at point-blank range—we've all done it, and if you show me someone who hasn't, I'll show you a liar); obsession (lunging relentlessly for a target on sheer guts and/or frustration, without regard for the odds); total panic under fire (see "we've all done it," above), and even something like honor (the knowing self-sacrifice when one's teammates are just within reach of their goal and need someone to buy the squad a few extra seconds).

I Can See for Miles and Miles

Without naming names, it can be said that most first-person action titles don't pull off the outdoor thing very well; some don't even try, and those that do only manage to offer labyrinthine ceilings and walls painted to look like skies and trees. It doesn't stop said titles from being great games...but it does look silly. Not so in *Starsiege TRIBES*, where the open terrain stretches for literal—er, virtual—miles in every direction, unrestricted by "walls" of trees or arbitrarily impassable rivers or some such cheesy other.

One of the most satisfying uses of this free-range terrain is the jet-assisted jump ability. The impressive landscapes and smooth, convincing soldier models (realistically jointed) make for an almost dreamlike experience—there you'll be running all-out across some open field, and suddenly, *foom!* you hit the boosters and you're climbing into the air as if breaking the law of gravity were no more than a jay-walking offense. Once up there, you can use your altitude for scouting purposes,

"An adjustable zoom lets you get in close enough to shoot a mosquito off an enemy's ass from three states away."
—PC Accelerator



MY SENTIMENTS EXACTLY: "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers. For he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother."
— William Shakespeare, King Henry V

checking on the position of objectives or enemy soldiers. If you're dexterous enough—and it definitely takes some work—you can use your temporary airborne status as a kind of air-strike prelude to the havoc you'll wreak once you land; spot the enemy, and start cranking off shots from the air as your reach the peak of your parabola, raining death on your target even as you start your descent. It's impressive as all-get-out when you time things just right...and embarrassing as hell when you land smack in the middle of a large, angry knot of humorless enemy troopers. Of course, while you're up there, everybody can see you too, which leads us to...

If Looks Could Kill

When I (foolishly) agreed to play against the *TRIBES* design team members during my visit to the

Dynamix offices, the sniper-mode laser attack was definitely the assault of choice. While not the most brash or flashy modus operandus (and definitely not the kind of thing you want to be futzing around with while under heavy fire), it's a quick, surgical way of dealing death without getting too close, giving away your position, or wasting the more serious firepower you'll need when things start to get ugly. The sniper mode brings a small, distant chunk of terrain into radical zoom-in, glass-exact clarity. One instant you'll be looking at a far ridge with mere pixels—or are they specks of dust in your eye?—moving along it in silhouette, and the next instant you're locked in so tight and close and sharp that you can identify the nearly departed by the color scheme of his armor or, if the game engine allowed, the

expression on his face; it's an eye-gogglingly beautiful visual trick that imparts a wonderful sense of scope and distance to the onscreen battlegrounds.

Of course, this monocular mania has a price. First, while you're focused on a distant target, you pretty much give up your right to be peripherally aware of anything happening around you. It's a good idea to take that scope away from your eye and blink in the sunlight every few seconds or so, unless your idea of a good time includes getting capped in the head at point-blank range by an enemy soldier who bumbles across you at the height of your concentration. Also, at such radical magnification, the merest overenthusiastic twitch of your fingers on the mouse can suddenly reduce that distant crosshaired vista to a jiggling blur (there's a reason that the sniper character in all those war movies is always portrayed as a stoic, unflappable type). In other words, this is not the attack you want to be using on a rapidly closing target who is not only backed by support-fire but who is also "into it" as the phrase goes (aware that he is being targeted from afar, and thus purposely making himself a difficult moving target): The person who ends up being a victim of a sniper attack is traditionally a relative sitting duck, somebody too slow or too smug or otherwise too assured of his safety. When you fine-tune your sniper skills to the point that you can reli-

ably burn troopers right out of the sky as they boost from landing zone to landing zone, you have become a deadly and valuable asset to your tribe.

Rally 'Round the Family With Pockets Full of Shells

Hard-core computer gamers are nothing if not obsessive, and those who gravitate toward the futuristic mech/armored soldier genre are among the most notorious of the lot. These are people who upgrade their computers with video and sound cards that, individually, are equivalent to what some people pay for rent. These are people who maniacally focus on creating custom insignias and banners and color-coded design schemes for their online combat units. Happily catering to this set, *Starsiege TRIBES* allows players to seamlessly and painlessly import such creations to adorn body models, installations, vehicles, etc. These are people who get emotionally involved when one or more of their numbers fall in battle (they probably have sad little funerals, 21 guns, the whole nine yards). To wit, these are people with waaaay too much time on their hands. Even as you read this, oodles of websites by and for *Starsiege TRIBES* fanatics are humming and sizzling with traffic, and the game isn't even done yet.

If you can think of it, it's probably out there on the Web: Design diaries, discussion groups (and we're talking serious, heated, philosophical debates here), custom skins, and (most adorable of all, in a really scary way) the tribes themselves: Oh yes, there they are, already forming, already standing there sternly as if on induction-center posters, their selective-service fingers pointed in diminished perspective like Uncle

I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN

The standard skins (technoid for the armor your character wears) in *TRIBES* are gorgeous, but modified armor exclusive to your tribe can set you apart from the Joneses. We bribed members of Tribe Synergy to let us show off some skins they have created. If you want to be a member of their tribe, or see more of their customized skins, visit their website at <http://home.inreach.com/jpalermo/tribes>. Download the original skins to customize at www.tribesplayers.com.

TRENSHOD'S "BOILS"



HIGH D'S "SNOW"



EXCALIBUR'S "MIDNIGHT"



JUDGE'S "SKULL"



Here's some skins we would like to see (and some we'd like to frag):

- ◆ Star Wars Stormtroopers
- ◆ The Spice Girls
- ◆ Teletubbies
- ◆ The kids from South Park
- ◆ Gene Simmons from KISS
- ◆ Regis and Kathie Lee
- ◆ The cast from Friends
- ◆ That damn Leonardo DiCaprio
- ◆ Martha Stewart
- ◆ Kenneth Starr

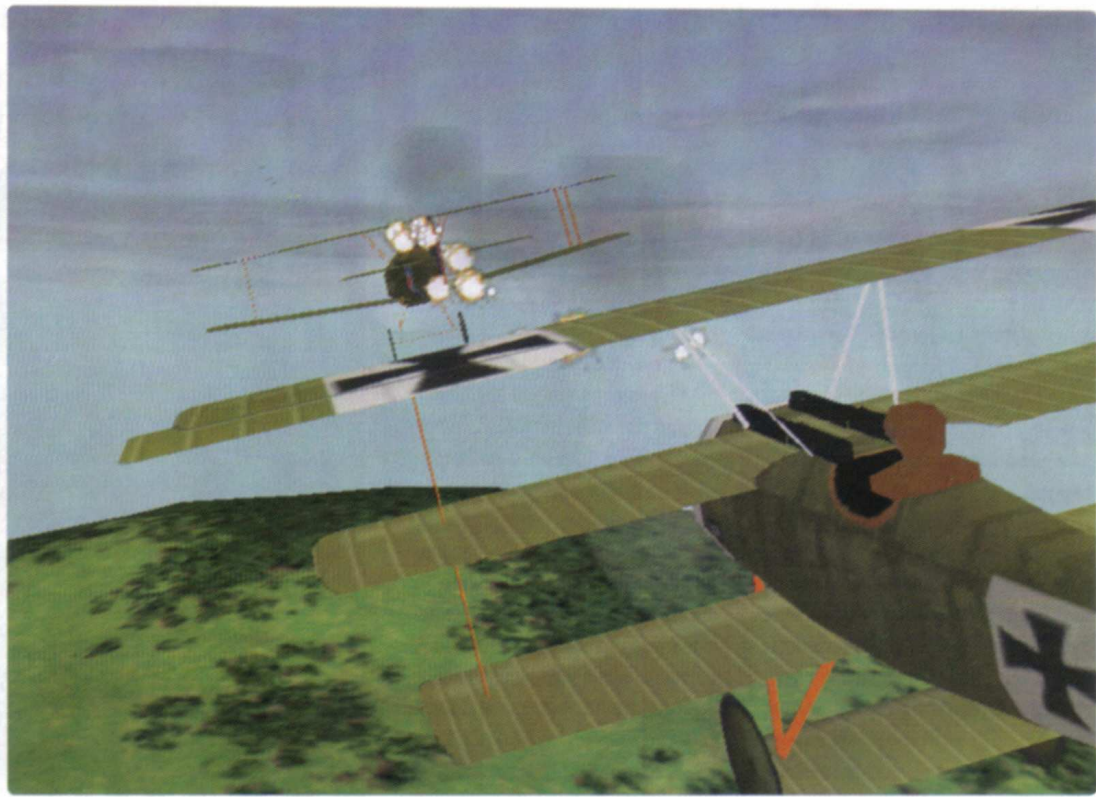


GUNS DON'T KILL PEOPLE; I DO: Erik in Payroll, meet Keith in Accounting. But watch out, he has you in his sniper scope.

Sam, wanting YOU to join. If the seductive mix of sharp graphics, boundless paranoia and virtual solidarity found in *Starsiege TRIBES* snaps you up in its grip, you won't be at a loss for friends out here on the Net where we're all brothers at heart.

Unless you mess with my TRIBE, dogmeat. 🐕

CHRIS HUDAK appears as the main character in the story "Keyboard" written by author Harlan Ellison.



Showdown Over

Red Baron 3D answers the call for improved flight models, 3D card support, and multiplayer mayhem

By John Bruning



RED BARON 3D

www.sierra.com

Developer	Dynamix
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$39.95
Order #	70469
Phone	1.800.757.7707

SO HERE'S THE SITUATION: I was 10 feet off the ground running for my life with four bad guys right on my six. I tried to juke, I tried to dodge—nothing shook them loose. As I screamed over my aerodrome, I knew I had only one chance. Deftly (ha!), I tucked the stick into my stomach. My Airco DH-2 roared upward. A little aileron and I was half-rolling back down right between two burning hangars. Let's see those bloodhounds follow that! Before I could even check six, my fighter was turned into a flying spaghetti strainer. Seconds later, I was nothing but burnt and broken wreckage clog-

ging up our runway. Of course, all 20 of my teammates witnessed my death, as they were all taking off at the time. From somewhere in the Dynamix Q/A (quality assurance) lab a voice called out, "So, that's how historians die."

I sat despondent, wondering where my skill had failed me. I had spent hundreds of hours playing *Red Baron II* last fall, but this felt like a totally new game. Eric Lanz, the senior Q/A engineer on the project, took pity on me. Calling over from his computer, he offered, "Hey, we've changed the flight models now to model drag better. Don't make sustained turns or you'll

bleed off all your speed."

It was a Thursday night in September during the final days of the *Red Baron 3D* project, and all the Dynamix sim heads were in the lab battling with the most die-hard of fans—our beta testers. I figured we'd walk all over them. No way. We all died frequently and horribly. It'll go down in Dynamix lore as the Thursday Night Massacre. Not to say we didn't have a great time, eating pizza and battling beta testers to the death (usually our own). All the fear, fire, and pain—I can't remember the last time I had such a blast.

Trees and Other Hazards

The new 3D card support is easily the most noticeable change from *RBII*. In Glide mode, the simulation's environment is stunningly realistic. For example, the rolling terrain is crisp and much smoother than in *RBII*. At low altitudes, trees even appear to help you avoid unintended



STRAFING THE GROUND: Trees and shrubs provide depth perception for low altitude flying, but don't get too close!



GHOSTLY APPARITION: In Ghost mode, the new transparent cockpit allows for easy viewing of enemy targets.

encounters with Mother Earth. Hills and mountains are clearly defined, and now you can use the terrain to mask your approach to an aerodrome or other juicy target.

According to Project Director Tucker Hatfield, "We wanted *RB3D* to look real, so we took the time to

flight model. First off, torque and gyroscopic effects have been added. This makes flying anything with a rotary engine an arm-wrenching experience. It now takes a whole lot of practice to get good at flying Dr.Is or early Nieuports. And don't even get me started on that DH-2!

example," he explains, "fuel is now consumed more accurately. In the first game, it was consumed way too slowly. Also, throttle settings and battle damage now directly affect rate of fuel consumption."



the Somme

do the little things right to enhance the feeling of actually being there. The explosions are a great example. They're actually their own light sources now. So during dawn or dusk missions you can see the glow the blasts create."

When a plane crashes, a concussion ring blows outward from the wreck. Seen from a few hundred feet away, it is a spectacular sight. Clouds and fog have also been added, which makes for some interesting tactical challenges. Now you can use clouds to mask your approach to enemy planes and ground targets, or duck into one to hide. Says Hatfield, "The biggest thing about *3D* is if you take it as a whole package, the overall look and feel is more authentic."

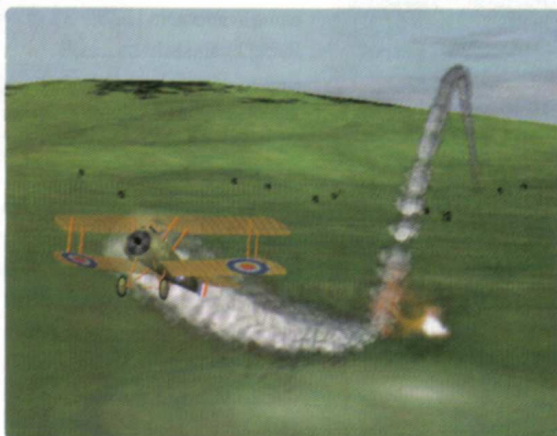
Fun With Flight Models

For all true aviation buffs, an accurate flight model is at the top of their wish list for every PC combat sim. *RB3D* delivers that with a host of improvements to the original *RBII*

Other important aspects of flight have also been included. Propeller efficiency, prop wash and propeller drag have all been modeled. Likewise, slipstream effects have also been taken into account. Battle damage affects drag, so getting hit in one wing will cause your plane to yaw and lose speed. Tucker emphasizes that lots of things from *RBII*'s code were tweaked to make the game more challenging. "As an

Pardon Me, Do You Have a Light?

The damage model has also been vastly improved. Holes in your fuel tank? Well, throttle back or you're sure to cause a fire. Considering that the fuel tanks were located right under the pilot's seat, flames in the cockpit would surely have caused even Ned Flanders to utter a "#@\$*!!" or two. Engine damage has been changed as well. In fact,



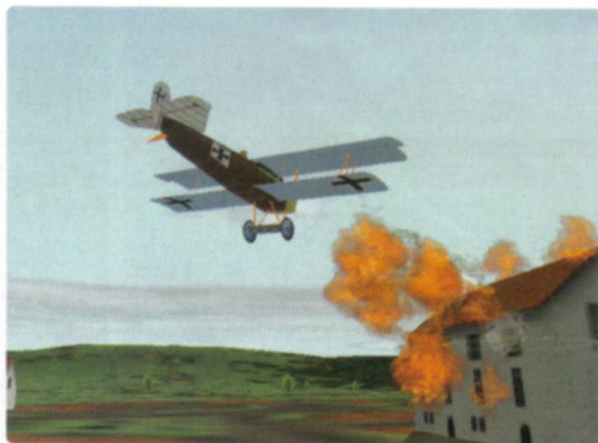
ONLY THE BRAVE SURVIVE: With flight modeling so real, it requires true courage to step into the cockpit.

...use clouds to mask your approach to enemy planes and ground targets, or duck into one to hide.



the team rewrote this entire section of code so if your engine is hit, you will have a better chance of nursing your crippled bird all the way back home if you manage it properly. Take care not to run the engine at full throttle after it's been hit; doing so will usually cause a fire. A hit in the oil line will prompt a leak, but the rate at which your oil leaks out depends on your throttle setting. Slow down, and the oil drips out slowly. Keep that throttle firewalled, and you're sure to burn your engine up—a bad thing to do considering you have no parachute.

Of course, if ultra-realistic flight doesn't grab your fancy, just crank down the realism options until you feel comfortable. *RB3D* allows you to customize your flight model within whatever difficulty setting (easy, normal, and realistic) you've selected. Like flying in realistic mode, but hate torque effects?



FOR THE PYRO IN YOU: With new 3D special effects, such as fire, smoke, flak and gunfire, destruction can be fun.

Just turn them off! The flight model is that flexible.

Multiplayer Mania

Flight model and graphics enhancements alone would make *RB3D* a great game, but the development team didn't stop there. Brian Apgar, one of the key engineers on the project, has written all-new multiplayer code. Apgar explains, "We wanted to give our users a rich online environment with lots of action."

He wasn't kidding. Multiplayer games are non-stop firefests. Little time is spent boring holes in the sky looking for enemies or flying to a target. Having flown *Air Warrior II* and *III* for years, one of my biggest complaints has always been the long travel time between your base and your target. *RB3D* eliminates that. The aerodromes and targets are all close together (this is WWI after all), minimizing the flight time it takes to get to major trouble spots. In two hours of flying against those pesky (but talented) beta testers, I think I had five minutes of air time when I was not either in a fight or running from one. When I finished for the evening, I hardly had the energy to drive home.

In *RB3D*'s new mass multiplayer mode, at least 20 people will be able to hammer each other over the Internet. Our test mission against the

beta testers included far more than that, so 20 is the minimum ceiling. Users playing across a LAN (local area network) will probably be able to get more players than Net users. What makes this even more fun is the fact that Dynamix is encouraging users to set up their own servers, which will allow the hosts to tailor their games in whatever manner they wish.

Limiting aircraft sets, picking locations, setting up missions and selecting flight model levels and flying conditions (day or night, for example) will all be allowed.

And what would WWI online be without custom paint schemes? *RB3D* lets you go hog wild with paint and brush. Come up with whatever outrageous color scheme you want for your plane, then send the file to the other players on your server. Soon, you'll be the one everybody picks on, as they recognize your sleek purple, green and black polka-dotted Spad from miles away! Having the ability to personalize your aircraft in a multiplayer setting is truly inspired. So, if you see a Fokker DVII online someday that is in University of Oregon green and yellow with a fighting Duck on the side, you'll know that's me. I'll be out hunting University of Washington Huskies.

The Legend Lives On

When *Red Baron II* first shipped last December, it admittedly took heat for not including 3D card support or adequate multiplayer options. Those problems have been fixed, and *RB3D* is just an absolute rip to play. The Eagle of Lille I am not, but that won't keep me out of the air. So, I'll see you over the Somme, where I'm known as the Sitting Duck of St. Quentin. **f**

John Bruning worked as Dynamix's historian on the company's flight sim line from 1990-1996.



BE CREATIVE: Do you have a thing for purple? Customize the colors, insignias, and look of your aircraft.

The Americans May Have Saved the War, But Not Without a Price

“You cannot guess how I hate to put these new boys into the hardest kind of fighting while they are still so totally inexperienced that they do not know how to properly protect themselves. It is absolutely necessary to throw the green men in, and when they don't come back, one has to simply grin and bear it.”

—Major Charles J. Biddle, USAS

THE AMERICANS STEPPED into the maelstrom of fighting in strength during the summer of 1918. After a year of organizing and sending troops across the Atlantic, the United States was at last ready for war. During the spring, the first American fighter squadrons saw action. Most notable of these was the 94th Aero, a unit that would become the closest thing to an elite outfit in the U.S. Air Service. Flying outdated Nieuport 28s at first, the 94th Aero Squadron went through a tough baptism of fire, but in the process, discovered it had one of the best pilots of the war in its ranks—Eddie Rickenbacker.

It did not take long for Eddie Rickenbacker to show his stuff in combat. On April 1, 1918, he downed a Pfalz D. III from Jasta 64 over Baussant. A month later, he claimed another Pfalz, this one flown by Lt. Sheerer of Jasta 64. By the end of May, his score rose to six, including two more fighters and a pair of Albatros two-seat recon planes.

In September, flying Spad 13 fighters during the worst month in the history of the USAS, Eddie cut a swath through his opponents like no other American pilot. Between September 14 and October 30, he scored 20 more kills than anyone in the vicious fighting over St. Mihiel and the Argonne Forest. When the war ended, his grateful nation later awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor, one of only two given to fighter pilots for service in France. Rickenbacker later started an automobile company before becoming president of Eastern Airlines. He lived a long, full life, dying at age 82 in Zurich, Switzerland, on July 27, 1973.

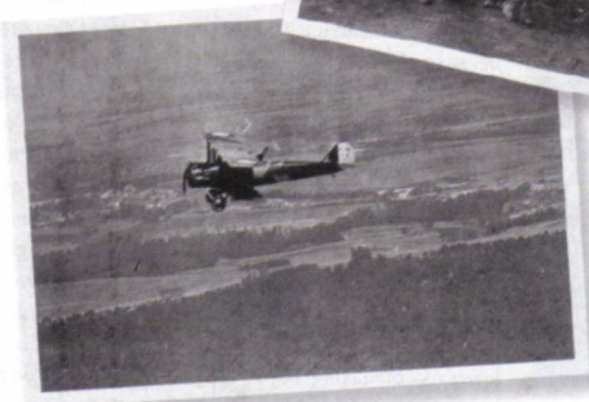
While Rickenbacker was gaining fame as America's premier ace, the rest of the USAS was taking a pounding at the hands of veteran German Jastas. That

October saw the USAS take terrible losses as it supported the Allied drive in the Meuse-Argonne area. Throughout the last two months of the war, new replacements and fresh units joined the fighting, but the service suffered such high casualties that the number of planes available actually shrank by the time of the Armistice. In October alone, the Americans lost 537 planes and 583 aviators.

Yet, despite the losses, the Americans were the final element needed in the Allied equation to secure victory over the stubborn German defenders. Though losses ran high both on the ground and in the air, the influx of fresh American pilots and soldiers swelled the ranks of the advancing Allied armies and ensured the victories at St. Mihiel and the Argonne Forest. In the final days of the war, America sacrificed nearly 100,000 men to achieve that victory.

After four years of brutal, exhausting warfare, Germany had at last reached the end of its rope. At home, citizens were war weary and threatened with full-scale starvation. Influenza outbreaks all over Germany had killed thousands and left the population weakened and dispirited. Finally, as the German army slowly collapsed on the Western Front, the navy mutinied at home, sparking a revolution and a rebellion that lasted until 1920.

Germany had no choice but to surrender. As the Kaiser fled to neutral Holland, Germany asked for an armistice based on U.S. President Wilson's famous Fourteen Points. On November 11, 1918, at 11 a.m., the fighting ceased. The worst four years in European history finally had come to an end.





Fly Straight, Fly True

The line between flight sim and flight reality blurs with a little help from Pro Pilot '99

aviation flight and genuinely provides users with that powerful feeling of soaring high above the horizon in a variety of different airplanes.

Pro Pilot '99 builds on what *Pro Pilot* (which now unofficially goes by the moniker of *Pro Pilot '98* among flight simulation enthusiasts) started and elevates it to new altitudes. Many aspects of real-world aviation have been simulated with unparalleled faithfulness and, unless they've really followed their urge to fly or have been exposed to the true world of aviation, most people don't realize flying is really all about following procedures. This explains why there are so many checklists and placards placed all over a typical aircraft cockpit—and why PC pilots are such maniacs about accuracy and detail.

By Ben Chiu

AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER just about everyone has entertained the thought of becoming a pilot. This really shouldn't come as a surprise since our quest for flight is probably as old as humankind itself. Likewise, because of this almost multilateral human desire to spread our wings and soar like birds, it probably shouldn't be any surprise that the most popular computer game genre of all time is flight simulation. For many of us in the modern world, simulations offer the thrill and challenge of real flight at a much lower relative cost—not to mention the lower risk of making a terminal error at 15,000 feet.

Recently, I had a chance to take a close look at a *Pro Pilot's* successor, *Pro Pilot '99*. *Pro Pilot '99* follows the same basic design goals as its predecessor: 1) to develop the most complete general aviation flight simulation and 2) to incorporate all of the useful integrated features that you might have to buy as add-ons for other popular sims. Another important consideration, as *Pro Pilot '99* designers know, is flight sim fans are freaks about detail and accuracy. *Pro Pilot '99* precisely mirrors general



Cessna® Skyhawk® 172R

Learn from the Pros

Dynamix, the development house in Eugene, Oregon (that calls the *Pro Pilot* series one of its own), has formed a relationship with the



PRO PILOT '99

www.sierra.com	
Developer	Dynamix
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$49.95
Order #	70482
Phone	1.800.757.7707



YOU'RE NOT DREAMING: Scenic flights can be accessed, created and/or traded over the Internet.

National Association of Flight Instructors (NAFI). Dynamix adopted this "partnering with professionals" strategy to bring qualified information based upon Federal Aviation Administration Guidelines (known as FARs) to *Pro Pilot '99*. These guidelines can be accessed through the customizable Pop-Up Operator's Handbook (POH). The handbook creates instant access to critical information while on the ground, in the air, and even while in 3D accelerated mode.

The POH includes a variety of features: performance data and checklist for each aircraft; quick-help tutorials developed in conjunction with NAFI;



Beechcraft® Super King Air® B200

Scenic Flights to visit thousands of landmarks, cities and landscapes; and Challenge Flights that allow you to test your skill. While using the POH, you can access the Personal Notes section and store notes about your flights. Create customized Scenic and Challenge Flights to post on the Internet and trade with other flight enthusiasts. Incidentally, the POH pages are placed as overlays instead of in separate windows—which means no annoying window and graphics-mode switching for 3Dfx Voodoo accelerator card owners.

Documentation enhancements also include a detailed 75-page "Getting Started" manual. This has been added

to help new virtual aviators understand the simulations menu system. Flying has a dauntingly steep learning curve, so laying out as much information for you as possible can only help you in your quest to earn those virtual wings.

A Whole New Look

Of course, if you're one of the hardcore simulation buffs out there, talking about a simulation's graphics seems almost unimportant—but that may be a mistake. The most obvious and arguably beneficial new feature of *Pro Pilot '99* is its 3Dfx Voodoo Glide support. 3D graphics acceleration produces smoother movement and less pausing for a more accurate portrayal of flight (and it also makes *Pro Pilot '99* easier on the eyes).

The combination of all-new textures that use smaller pixels; the use of eight levels of MIP mapping (a method of enhancing the illusion of depth in 3D computer graphics); and effects such as cloud translucency (which include spectacular fog/hazing effects), sun glare, positional sunlight, and lens flares all greatly augment *Pro Pilot '99's* visual aesthetic. Other visual enhancements such as runway and low visibility lights like VASI (Visual Airplane Slope Indicator) and PAPI (Precision Approach Path Indicators) that realistically glow rather than shine like laser beams complete the picture.

The most obvious and arguably beneficial new feature is its 3Dfx Voodoo Glide support.



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Beechcraft® Baron® B58



POP-UP OPERATOR'S HANDBOOK: With its help, anyone can fly any of the six aircraft to thousands of places.



SEE THE WORLD: With so many view options, both inside and outside of the aircraft, you can fly by instrument, visual references, or just enjoy the world as it goes by.

Pro Pilot '99
will ship with
more than **4,300**
airports in the
United States,
Montreal, Toronto
and Western
Europe.

The benefits of these graphic improvements are especially useful for simulating realistic visibility conditions and IMC (Instrument Meteorological Conditions) environments. The visibility, cloud layering, and wind gust options in *Pro Pilot '99* help PC pilots create and tackle a multitude of varying weather patterns and environments. Other graphical features include an alternate panel view, which tilts the view of the instrument panel down for better outside visibility out of the cockpit windscreen, and a Panoramic Transitions option that applies a cinematic tracking shot perspective between viewpoints when you switch views. All of these features make *Pro Pilot '99* a much better instrument flight trainer than its predecessor.

A Bird's-Eye View of the World

In addition to the five original aircraft featured in *Pro Pilot*, *Pro Pilot '99* offers the Cessna C-172R—complete with another realistic instrument panel. Scenery showing Western Europe is also included.



Cessna® CitationJet™ 525

About 1,000 airports are covered in the European area, making it as detailed as the original *Pro Pilot's* scenery. All said and told, *Pro Pilot '99* will ship with more than 4,300 airports in the United States, Montreal,

Toronto and Western Europe. All are also accessible through the easy-to-use Flight Planning Wizard that creates simple cross-country

plans with the use of the mouse. Perhaps the most amazing thing about *Pro Pilot '99's* complete package is that a full install will require less than 500 megabytes of hard disk space.

Some of the other enhancements to *Pro Pilot '99* include an improved autopilot and taxiways—which are being added in order of airspace priority (B, C, and D).

In addition, advanced features such as GPS (Global Positioning System) and 38 million accurate terrain elevation points will keep experienced pilots on course whether they're flying by the use of the cockpit instruments or visually by ground landmarks and landscapes.



Beechcraft® Bonanza® V35

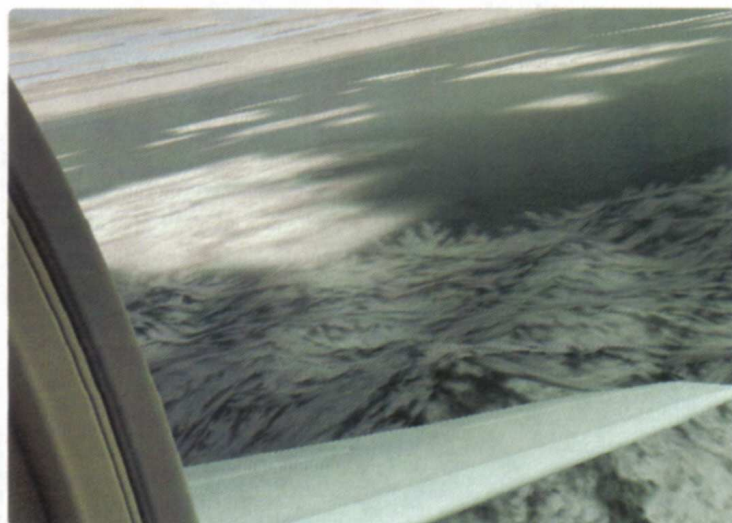
One of the most fascinating features of *Pro Pilot '99* is its improved ATC (Air Traffic Control) vectoring. The computerized ATC literally tells you where to fly. While it still isn't perfect, it's accurate. Keep in mind that the FAA hasn't perfected ATC vectoring either.

In real-world aviation, dealing with the ATC system is a big part of flying. Believe it or not, one of the most difficult aspects of learning to be a pilot is learning to use the radio (your communication line to ATC). The difficulty isn't with the operation of the radio, but with understanding what's being said. Understandably, to a new pilot, radio chatter just sounds like gibberish. When you fly with the copilot, the radio interaction is realistic and remarkably conveys the true cockpit environment.

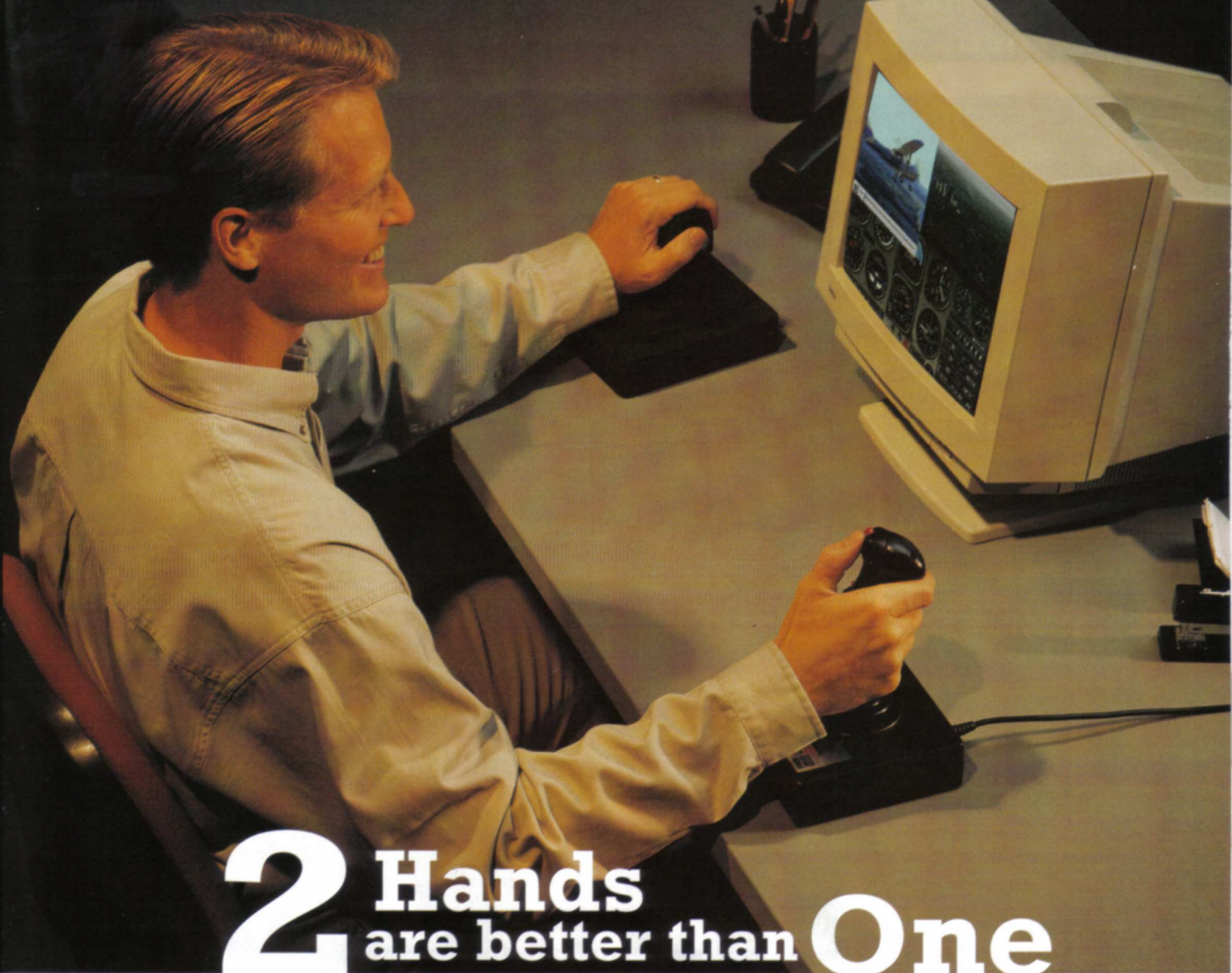
If you liked *Pro Pilot*, you'll love *Pro Pilot '99*—and you'll be especially happy if you own a 3Dfx Voodoo-based graphics card. If

you're interested in a good procedure-based aviation simulation, consider giving *Pro Pilot '99* a try—it delivers the goods. 🍌

Ben Chiu is a popular simulations columnist and author of seven books on air combat and flight simulations.



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Hang on for The RIDE

Berkeley Systems invites you to flaunt your knowledge in the definitive computer quiz-show experience that proves once and for all time that YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

By Chris Hudak

BACK TO THE FUTURE, Indiana Jones, Batman, Days of Thunder, Jurassic Park and...YOU DON'T KNOW JACK The Ride? Wait a minute—is this irony? You bet your ass it is—it's irony, it's sarcasm, it's comedy, it's blatant player mockery, it's smirking high-mindedness made code and informational effluvia incarnate. Everybody's got to have a

"ride" these days (it's just so "not done" to not have one), and now it should come as no surprise that the makers of the acclaimed YOU DON'T KNOW JACK computer game series (said series now encompassing four volumes spanning three platforms, not including two special movie- and sports-related editions) have come to the stage with what can only be described as a "meta-

JACK" experience that combines all the highlights of the earlier games and includes some new twists, turns...and screws.

Your World and Welcome to It

For those readers who have spent the last few years with their heads firmly encased in Lucite, YOU DON'T KNOW JACK is a TV-style quiz show software title with an attitude. It's for one to three players willing to suffer a certain amount of verbal abuse at the hands of the show's virtual host. But these aren't just any old lame-ass Jeopardy questions ("Um, I'd like to take 'Unusual Vegetables' for \$500").

These are questions that require the elite, relational-database parts



TICKET TO RIDE

Pick your question category and buckle up.

Luckily, her veil covers the bullet holes

Hi kids! My name's Nick-O-Teen!

Coleslaw, French fries or Hand Grenades?

An actor, President and criminal, all in one

words that apply to two different categories ("Scoop" can refer to either ice cream or a news story, for example), and then challenges you to find the common thread running through those seven words. Whew!

Wink Martindale, We Need Ya

Such mental gymnastics would be hard enough if the host were nice to you, but he's not. He mocks your reaction time ("Oy, that sucked!"), gloats when you knock yourself out of the quiz competition with a wrong answer ("Speaking of bystanders, stand to one side and say 'Bye'.") and really cranks on your case if you choose a multiple-choice answer that wasn't even a good guess. "You guessed

'George and Ruthie'? [helpless laughter] George and Ruthie are my parrots!"

The Ride thows some new curves at longtime *JACK* fans. When the game first sets up (and asks how many people will be playing, their names, etc.), it begins with a Moral Dilemma. This subtly sets the tone of the barrage of questions to come: Who is a bigger turn-on, the Land-o-Lakes butter maiden or the

These aren't any old lame-ass Jeopardy questions.

leather-clad, pizza-eating Red Baron? Like a slight spin on a billiard ball, this initial choice will seem insignificant at first. But over time, it governs the direction the game takes. Right about now

of your mind to work (with a grimace and quite against their will) a little too closely with the slummy, informational neural ghettos and Almost Totally Useless Crap lobes of your brain. Consider: If the *Monty Python* character famous for the line "Get me a bucket" was sent to the Hell of Dante's *Inferno* for his sins, to which circle would he be confined? Can you already feel the turmoil in your brain? "Auuugh!" your high-minded, literate, educated self cries in disgust. "I have to work with that... that...uncouth humor-lobe!" (Since I am loathe to give away game solutions and I made that last one up, I can tell you the answer: He'd be incarcerated with the Gluttons... and this is by no means anything like the weirdest or most round-about question you'll find in *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK*).

Just when you've got your mind accustomed to working on two levels at once, *JACK The Ride* pulls your gray matter in a third direction with the Road Kill question. First it requires you to identify seven

Random Rides

JACK ATTACK

REMEMBER THE CLUE

BUNS

PRINCESS LEIA

GIBBERISH QUESTION

SCHMIDT'S HEAVY HAIR DO HAUNT RUBY.

IT'S A SAYING ABOUT FORGETTING SOMETHING
BECAUSE IT ISN'T RIGHT IN FRONT OF YOU.
YOU DON'T RECALL BECAUSE YOU DON'T SEE IT.

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2 BEELZEBUS \$28,500

3 BEELZEBUS \$28,500

DISORDA!

\$750

OUTER SPACE
OR
OUTSIDE U.S.

1
OUTER SPACE

2
OUTSIDE THE U.S.

3
BOTH

3 BUZZ

SHARP TURNS AHEAD: JACK ATTACK, GIBBERISH QUESTION and DisOrDat—when you least expect it, *The Ride* offers random feature questions for a quick change of pace.

Silly Rabbit, HeadRush Is for Kids

But wait! There's more! The creative team of Berkeley Systems and Jellyvision, in their infinite wisdom—and now let us all take just a moment of silence to let those words hang in the air as they will—have brought forth yet another incarnation of the *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* phenomenon. Aimed specifically at the teen gamer set, *HeadRush* (as the name implies) is a slightly more glitzy, blitzy, hyperactive, spin-off *JACK* experience. It's got the same humor and sarcasm and pop-riffing categories as its slightly more mature counterpart, but it's glazed with a kind of Chocolate Frosted Sugar

The twisted trivia game that will make you PEE in your PANTS!

Bombs coating. It's tweaked and accelerated to blipvert pace with a definite slant toward the puerile whenever possible. The back of the box sums it up best, cheerily labeling itself (I'm not kidding here, either) "The twisted trivia game that will make you PEE in your PANTS!"

The brilliant idea here was to create a trivia game to engage the attention of the attention-span-challenged. *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK*'s comparatively composed question intermissions are replaced here with cartoonish clips poking visual fun at everything from Max Fleischer cartoons to Japanese anime to—I'm still not kidding—Tampax commercials. There's even one snippet that addresses that innermost, lurking fear of every suburban teen with a new pair of fresh white Nikes—Stepping in Dog Doo. Just don't even ask. Of course, the structural latticework of the *JACK* legacy is still largely in place. The *JACK* Attack has been renamed the Head Rush, but you'll know how to work the controls; the DisOrDat has survived intact; and while a teen-oriented game might seem an ideal venue in which to Screw Your Neighbor, you now have to settle for biting them very hard with one of six goggle-eyed icons. The song, to fish a phrase from the cultural myth-pool, remains the same.

Ooooooh, Lacey

Despite *HeadRush*'s ostensible *Party of Five* attitude, you can't be too much of a dimwit if you want to prevail here. The questions may be couched in the parlance of *Beavis & Butthead*, Will Smith, Stridex Pads or an AOL chat room, but they're still about human anatomy, the Kelvin



GONE TO YOUR HEAD: You can Bite Your Neighbor to force them to answer—but don't forget to floss!

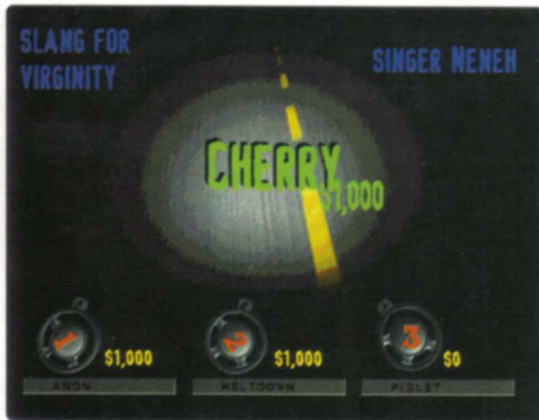
scale, the American Revolution and the Doppler effect. Of course, just when you're feeling quite brainy and pleased wit' yo own intellectual bad self, along comes the DisOrDat question. It will throw out something earth-shattering like: Which motion picture soundtracks did Celine Dion sing in?

One thing that might throw more uptight players is the occasional appearance of a question whose answer is less a matter of "fact" than of established, unbreakable teen mores. Once, the game's virtual host informed me by way of an answer that '80s fashion just sucked. That's all there was to it, and any moron would say the same thing (if you disagree with the host on this point, you lose the question). On the whole though, it's OK if you geezer 20-somethings wanna play too. The marketing hype may have the general public believing that anyone older than 15 will be completely lost here, but it ain't so. You'd need to have spent the last decade in your parent's basement to not find the occasional cultural touchstone in this younger, faster-paced *JACK* sibling.

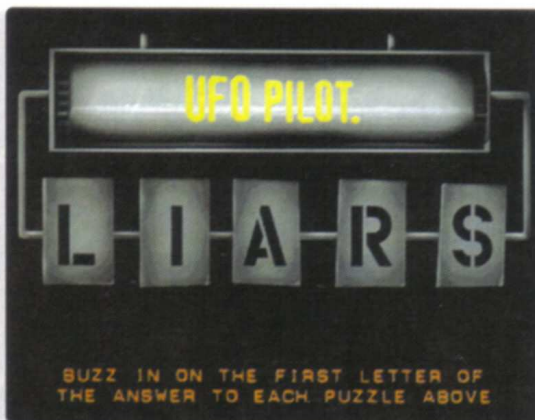


HEAD GAMES: *HeadRush* is a wild gameshow rollercoaster crammed with high-octane music and a hilarious hambone host.





ROAD KILL: Don't be another statistic—pay attention, engage the brain, and get it right.



INVITINGLY IRREVERENT: Just what you would expect from a collection of trivia and miscellaneous nonsense.

you've got to be thinking, "Who makes up this stuff?"...and the answer is the talented, if disturbed, people at Jellyvision.

Silent Night, Holy @#!&

A word of caution: *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* is pointedly not for little kids. To say that the questions can be a little racy is like saying the French can be a little rude. Even the category titles can make a computer user blink in surprise. The ones that sprang immediately to my mind are "Oh, it's so big!" and "Eat @#!& and Die"—both of which could crop up unexpectedly while you were showing the game to, say, your girlfriend's father, who is, for the sake of argument, a minister. Even when the topics aren't crude

or sexual, they can raise some hackles. For instance, one question on the topic of religious Transubstantiation ended with the host's wisecrack that Communion tasted "stale, as though it had been hanging around somewhere for a few days." Even yours truly, a longtime game reviewer, clapped a shocked hand over his mouth at that one.

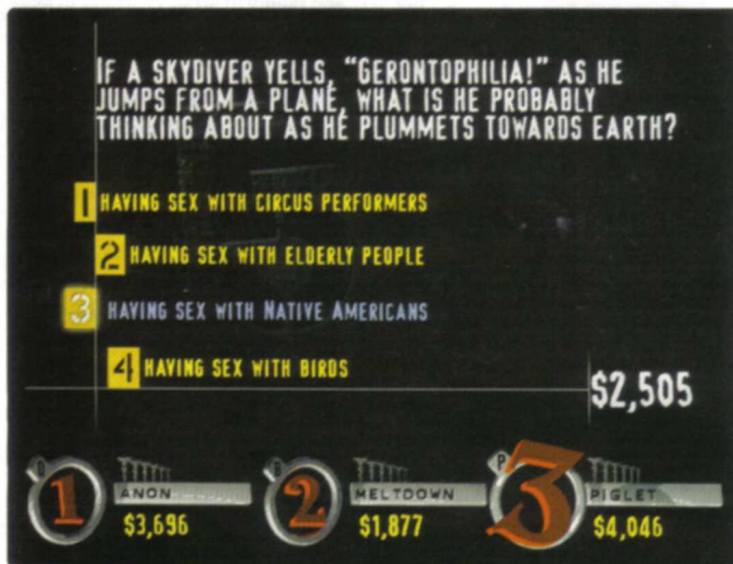
We Will All Go Together When We Go

Gotta-have-it types and newcomers to the special world of Jellyvision-style infomania and verbal abuse (as well as just plain old gluttons for punishment) will probably want to bring themselves up to date by going right for *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK The Irreverent*

Even yours truly clapped a shocked hand over his mouth at that one.

Collection. This mega-game set includes all four *JACK* volumes—that's over 3,200 questions (or more, if players acquire the Bonus Question packs available for the *JACK* series). If you want to be a bean-counter about it, that's 80+ hours of gameplay. *YOU DON'T KNOW JACK* is ideally a game for multiple players (usually at a party or some social function, and preferably after everyone involved has had a few stiff drinks); theoretically you could have three 21-question rounds of *JACK* every day for almost three months solid before you encountered a repeat question! And even then, honestly—what are the odds that you're gonna remember the precise allusional relationships between the activities of the Brady Bunch and, say, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration? The word you're searching for is *JACK*. 🍷

Chris Hudak recently played 10 straight games of 9-ball with professional pool goddess Jeanette "The Black Widow" Lee.



YOU MUST BE THIS TALL TO RIDE: As juvenile (and delinquent) as many of the YDKJ games are, they're definitely not for kids.

JACK LINEUP

www.sierra.com



YOU DON'T KNOW JACK THE RIDE

Format	WIN95/Mac CD
Price	\$29.95
Rating	Teen
Order #	70584



YOU DON'T KNOW JACK THE IRREVERENT COLLECTION

Format	WIN95/Mac CD
Price	\$49.95
Rating	Teen
Order #	70585



HEADRUSH

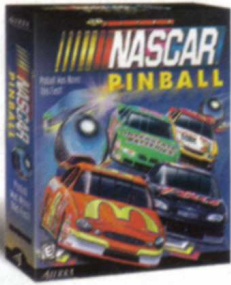
Format	WIN/Mac CD
Price	\$29.95
Rating	Teen
Order #	70573

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3D ULTRA NASCAR PINBALL

www.sierra.com	
Developer	Dynamix
Format	WIN95/98 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$29.95
Order #	70489
Phone	1.800.757.7707

By Candi Strecker

WHEN IT COMES TO POP culture, Americans love to mix things up. We get a kick out of a Las Vegas casino that looks like an Egyptian pyramid. We buy Barbie and Ken dolls dressed in Star Trek uniforms. We call our friends on telephones shaped like cartoon characters and we snack on burritos stuffed with Thai noodles or Greek gyro filling. It seems as if the more things you mix together, the merrier. This blend-o-rama concept works in the world of games, too. For proof, take a look at the newest game in Sierra Attractions' 3D Ultra series. In 3D Ultra NASCAR Pinball, the thrills of America's

fastest-growing sports attraction are combined with the action and mystique of the silver ball.

Like all games in Sierra's family-friendly 3D Ultra series, *NASCAR Pinball* features easy-to-grasp play suitable for all ages and skill levels. You can sit down with a five-year-old (as I did) and attack the pinball

table with a "flog-those-flippers" approach or put into practice those years of experience earned at the arcade pinball machines. More experienced and skillful players will find high levels of excitement and plenty of strategic challenges within this game.

The Need for Speed

3D Ultra NASCAR Pinball merges stock car racing's nonstop action with the classic traditions of pinball. The challenge for designer Kyle Miller was to find the common ground between racing a car around in circles and swatting a metal ball toward stationary targets. "In both pinball and NASCAR racing, a player has to be ready



to take advantage of opportunities that suddenly appear," he explains. "It's all about reflexes, timing concentration and fun." With this in mind, Miller and his team were able to map the look, sound and feel of competitive racing onto the classic playfield structure of pinball, retaining the best adrenaline-rush qualities of both.

One to four players can get behind the wheel of this game, choosing to play as one of four legendary cars and drivers from the NASCAR Winston Cup circuit—Bill Elliott, Dale Earnhardt, Terry Labonte or Bobby Labonte. Each pinball playfield's bumpers and flippers are "customized" with the vivid colors and famous number of the player's chosen car and driver.

Three Kinds of Action

There's more to winning a race than just getting onto a track and zoom-

ing around it at top speed. Total racing strategy includes pre-race preparation and the skillful use of mid-race pitstops. That's why *3D Ultra NASCAR Pinball's* action takes place on three different virtual pinball tables. Get your car up to its optimal performance level on the Garage Table, and you'll earn extra points for every target you hit later on the Speedway. Leaving the Speedway for the Pitstop Table may seem like a waste of time, but if you don't, your car's efficiency rating can drop to zero—and you're out of the race.

The challenge facing each racer is to use pinball skills and strategy to earn points during four race events held on four famous tracks: Bristol Motor Speedway, Watkins Glen International, Atlanta Motor Speedway and Talladega Superspeedway. Points win races, and winning races qualifies a player for the special "Winner's Circle Multiball" championship round.

Start with a pre-race tune-up in

the Garage. Eight bumper targets here symbolize shocks, suspension, weight distribution, and other crucial components. You've got just one chance—one ball—to bring your car up to peak performance by hitting all eight targets four times each. Blast your ball through the loop in the back of the Garage to earn bonus points and trigger a hilarious whoopsie-daisy animation of auto parts and tools flying into the air.

Next is the Speedway Table, where the crowd cheers, announcers roar, and cars zoom around the central pinball playfield. Four looping ramps represent the four turns of the racetrack. Take these turns in order if you can, or hit Turn 1 over and over for big bonuses. Six drop-targets spelling out N-A-S-C-A-R trigger one of the ten "Special Events," quick animated games-within-the-game like Collect the

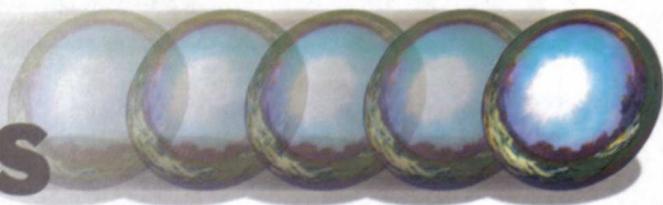
of total racing strategy—head for the Pits while the yellow flag is out to maintain your race position.

Convincing silver-ball action is a crucial part of *NASCAR Pinball's* pulse-pounding gameplay. You'll "feel" your ball respond to the pull of gravity, the snap of the flippers, the slam of the plunger and the whiplash of the bumpers. (You can even "nudge" your ball so hard that the virtual table tilts.) Lap after lap and ball after ball, this game provides plenty of challenges to players' endurance, strategy and skill.

Real NASCAR racing action continues nonstop for hours, but in this game you can always take a break by clicking your way into the "NASCAR Vault." The audio-video presentations here let you

You'll "feel" your ball respond to the pull of gravity, the snap of the flippers, the slam of the plunger and the whiplash of the bumpers.

Flips the Tables



ing around it at top speed. Total racing strategy includes pre-race preparation and the skillful use of mid-race pitstops. That's why *3D Ultra NASCAR Pinball's* action takes place on three different virtual pinball tables. Get your car up to its optimal performance level on the Garage Table, and you'll earn extra points for every target you hit later on the Speedway. Leaving the Speedway for the Pitstop Table may seem like a waste of time, but if you don't, your car's efficiency rating can drop to zero—and you're out of the race.

The challenge facing each racer is to use pinball skills and strategy to earn points during four race events held on four famous tracks: Bristol Motor Speedway, Watkins Glen International, Atlanta Motor Speedway and Talladega Superspeedway. Points win races, and winning races qualifies a player for the special "Winner's Circle Multiball" championship round.

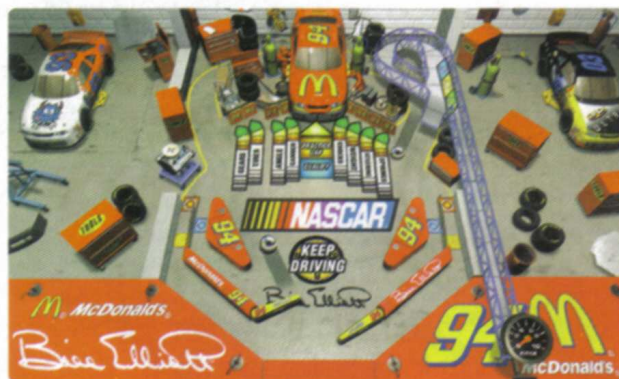
Start with a pre-race tune-up in

Tires and Avoid the Black Flag. Different sets of Special Events are part of each of the game's four racetracks. Download the 2 Million Point demo of *NASCAR Pinball* from www.nascarpinball.com and experience the Terry Labonte table.

Another tricky combination of shots lets players gain access to the Speedway's side table, the Backfield. Use the mini-flippers here to "knock down the wall" between the pinball zone and the racetrack, then slam your ball across the track into the HIT HERE target for big bonus points—but don't smash into any of the other cars as they speed by!

Life in the Pits

Never underestimate the importance of the Pits, where worn-down cars get restored to peak efficiency in mid-race. Hit the Pitstop Table's targets to boost your car's performance before returning to the Speedway. Pitstop timing is a crucial part



STOP 'N' GO! From the Garage (top) to the Pits (bottom), good strategy pays off big in points.



THE INTIMIDATOR: Dale Earnhardt's table is loaded with as many thrills as his legendary racing career.

take a wild ride through NASCAR's 50-year history, meet the game's four featured drivers, or learn about the twists and turns that make each of the four featured racetracks so unique.

The Guys Who Make It Happen

3D Ultra NASCAR Pinball's motion-capture pit crew is a first in pinball simulation history. Why go the extra mile to provide this touch of realism? It's a tribute to the pit crew's contribution to the total performance of their racing team. These guys' names may not be

household words, but they're as crucial to a NASCAR win as the driver and the car. Watch them swarm into action when you pull into this game's Pitstop Table: Within seconds, they've changed the tires, added gas, cleaned the windshield, and handed the driver a drink. And here's the amazing part—their actions are so carefully choreographed that they don't bump into each other while doing all these things. **f**

Candi Strecker studies American pop culture (and writes about it) from San Francisco.

Where No Ball Has Gone Before

3D *ULTRA MINIGOLF DELUXE* is the latest edition to Sierra's best-selling minigolf simulation. With the deluxe nine, players now have a total of 27 unique holes to master. The deluxe nine holes include several critters with interactive AI (artificial intelligence) that behave differently each time you play the hole, adding a

demented touch of unpredictability to the gameplay. Real-world obstacles like windmills and opening and closing doors will seem pretty tame after you've faced Tornado Alley's rampaging twister and Deep Sea Diving's hungry shark. *MiniGolf Deluxe* can be played by one to four players on the same computer. Internet play is built in,

so with a click of the mouse, two competitors in Akron and Albuquerque can put their golf shoes toe to toe on the virtual Astroturf. Online play is a great way to pick up on other golfers' best tricks and techniques.



THE DELUXE NINE: The Mad Scientist's Lab and the Future City promise something new and exciting every time you play.

Par for the Course

Ready to play? Then select your course. The front nine features the plywood classics of miniature golfdom, golden oldies like the windmill, the castle, and the Old Woman Who Lives in a Shoe. The back nine takes you into the landscapes of the imagination, as you putt your

way through haunted houses, jungle ruins, erupting volcanoes and moon bases. On the deluxe nine, the outright impossible becomes possible. If you can't decide, let the game deal you a random shuffle of holes. With a click on the Caddy icon, players choose their putters. This icon remains onscreen during play, so you can switch from your Big Bertha to your featherweight club at any point. This is also where you choose between one-click EasyPutt play or the more realistic TruePutt mode. EasyPutt is more manageable for beginners, while advanced players will like the way TruePutt lets them add "body English" to their strokes. To check it out, download the demo at www.sierra.com/minigolf2.



track of elapsed time instead of counting your strokes. Music, voices, and sound effects add another level of fun to *MiniGolf Deluxe*. You'll appreciate the perfect ringing sound the ball makes when you putt into the cup, the invisible audience's hushed "golf claps" applause, and the familiar-sounding voice that exclaims "D'oh!!" every time you miss a putt by inches. **f**



3D ULTRA MINIGOLF DELUXE

www.sierra.com

Developer	Dynamix
Format	WIN95/98 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$29.95
Order #	70488
Phone	1.800.757.7707

The package looked hot.
The descriptions were glowing.
The screen shots sizzled.

And my fifty went up in smoke.



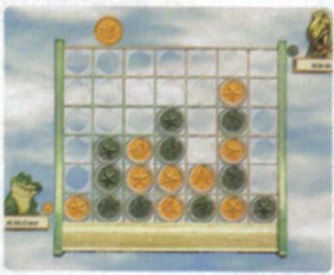
Choosing a game by the packaging is always risky. They all look good. That's why you need to go to GameSpot. There you can download the latest demos so you can try before you buy, read in-depth reviews by top editors and gamers, get hints and tips to play better and much more. **AND, IT'S ALL FREE.** So before you buy another game, go to GameSpot... because you've got better things to burn than your money.

GameSpot is giving away 50 free hint guides to 50 lucky winners!
Sign up for either GameSpot or videogames.com newsletters through this url and
automatically register to WIN NOW! www.gamespot.com/promos/winnow



Where gamers go to know.





Classic Reconstruction

The Hoyle Games are now packed with more competition, more strategy tutorials and more hints

By Marc Saltzman

CASINO, BOARD, AND CARD games are like a favorite pair of faded jeans: they're timeless classics capable of surviving any fad du jour. Sure, 1997 may have been the year of real-time strategy games and '98 may be coined as the renaissance of the RPG, but there's nothing like turning on your PC and playing a game of Backgammon, Gin Rummy, or Poker on a rainy Sunday afternoon.

A couple of years ago, Sierra brought these three time-honored favorites to the computer with its distinguished Hoyle series. Now, Sierra Attractions is introducing all-new versions of these game collec-

tions just in time for the holidays. The new *Hoyle Casino*, *Hoyle Board Games*, and *Hoyle Card Games* boast a number of new games and features providing hundreds of hours of non-repetitive play to suit all tastes.

HOYLE CASINO: Ante Up! Vegas Without Hidden Cameras or Wayne Newton

This updated winner features Blackjack, Roulette, Craps, and Poker. In addition, virtual gamblers can now play

Pai Gow Poker, Keno, Video Poker, and new slot machines in the new *Hoyle Casino*. There are 10 animated, interactive characters to play, including Rebecca, a spunky southwestern ranch owner, and Carlos, a suave Latin lover who takes himself a little too seriously. As with earlier incarnations of *Hoyle Casino*, each character has a unique personality and betting style. If a player prefers, he or she can play in these games of chance against human opponents, as the new *Hoyle Casino* supports "hot-seat" games, with up to four players side-by-side at the same PC. Now Pai Gow, Craps, Roulette, Blackjack and Poker can be played FREE at the World Opponent Network (www.won.net).

According to Steve Van Horn, executive producer of the new *Hoyle Casino*, one of the primary objec-



"You have \$5,000 to start with, plus an extra \$5,000 in the ATM machine. But if you drop below a thousand bucks, you can get cash from a loan shark."

— gamecenter.com

tives in developing the new version was to heighten the Las Vegas-style experience. "This time around, we've rendered all the games in perspective 3D, including the cards and dealer's hands," says Van Horn. "And just as you choose what game and table to play in Vegas, *Hoyle Casino* allows you to customize the

game to your liking, including setting variations within the game, adjusting the attitude of your opponents, speed of the game, and chattiness of the dealer."

In addition to superior new graphics, the team enhanced the gameplay with several new features including practice mode, hints, and a detailed strategy guide and tutorial. "Our focus groups pointed out the importance of providing tutorials and strategy guidance to the player," explains Van Horn. In practice mode, the game informs players after a poor move but only when players make a mistake. When the "wrong" move has been identified to the player, the program highlights what would have been the "right" move.

Along with spelling out the correct move, the practice mode offers the strategy and thinking that would support that move. It then

offers overall strategy tips to help the player improve his/her game.

The online tutorial button offers strategy tips during the game, and a 130-page strategy manual from Hoyle is packed with professional strategic advice. And as if all that isn't enough to help

players improve their game, if all else fails, there is a hint button in the interface of the game. Pressing this button any time a player can't decide what to do will highlight the correct move based on the player's situation.

HOYLE BOARD GAMES: The Best of the Old and the New

Vegas and its games are definitely for adults. Switch gears and get into a family mode. Remember those beloved board games from your childhood? Chances are they're stored in a closet or the attic, missing pieces no doubt and collecting dust. Getting schedules to

coincide for a friendly match of Dominoes or Checkers these days can be nearly impossible. Fortunately, Sierra has resurrected many of these challenging parlor games for PCs.

Hoyle Board Games has been completely revamped, adding four new games to the ten existing classics: Snakes and Ladders, Dominoes, Chinese Checkers, Chess, Backgammon, Yacht, Pachisi, Battling Ships, Checkers and Zen Bones (a variation of mah jong.) New diversions include Reversi; the African skill game known as Mancala; a vertical four-in-a-row game titled Line 'Em Up; and Placer Racer, an addictive arcade-style game. Plus there's a comprehensive help index containing rules to all the games, 10 animated opponents, and multi-player Internet support so users can play on WON for free. Alternatively, players can indulge in 13 head-to-head multiplayer games against friends and family on the same PC. Other changes such as new artwork and a simpler-to-use interface are noticed immediately. Gamers can customize their game



HOW ABOUT SOME HELP, TROY?: The new Hoyle Casino features Practice Mode, Hints, and a Tutorial button.



WHO NEEDS TETRIS? Hoyle Board Games comes with four new games, including one that's sure to dethrone Tetris as the most addictive digital game ever—Placer Racer.

HOYLE LINEUP

www.sierra.com



HOYLE® BOARD GAMES 2.0

Format	WIN CD
Price	\$29.95
Rating	Everyone
Order #	70479



HOYLE CARD GAMES 2.0

Format	WIN CD
Price	\$29.95
Rating	Everyone
Order #	70480



HOYLE CASINO

Format	WIN CD
Price	\$29.95
Rating	Everyone
Order #	70478

1.800.757.7707

settings (how about a log cabin or an outerspace theme?), backgrounds, music and more.

To be more accommodating to families who want to play together, *Hoyle Board Games* has a few features to help kids feel comfortable as they work on their skills. Games can now highlight moves so kids don't have to take time to count individual squares. There are also introductory screens that provide a refresher course on the rules of the game. This is helpful for kids and adults. But it's the kids who will feel especially comfortable playing against computer opponents such as a dinosaur, a bear, or a "grandmotherly" character named Ethel. The Hoyle team went to great pains to give users what they want, and once the focus groups and surveys were collected, the team went through them and implemented changes that made sense.

HOYLE CARD GAMES: Rethinking the Whole Deal

Many of the updated features in the new *Hoyle Casino* and *Hoyle Board Games* can also be found in the latest version of *Hoyle Card Games*,

Hoyle Card Games is a perfect gift for the entire family because of the varied selection of games and skill levels.

including the new interface.

Fourteen popular card games are at the player's disposal. Go Fish, Memory Match and 30 new variations of Solitaire have been added to the collection of Hearts, Crazy Eights, Spades, War, Old Maid, Gin Rummy, Cribbage, Euchre, Poker and Bridge.

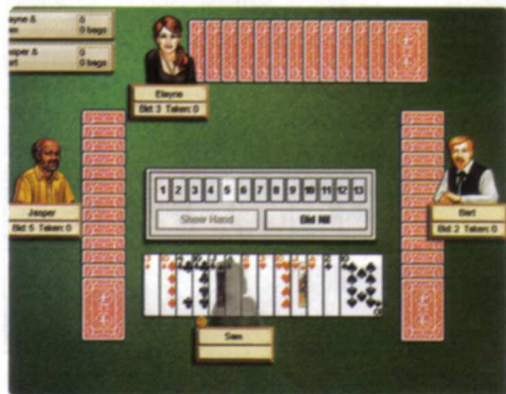
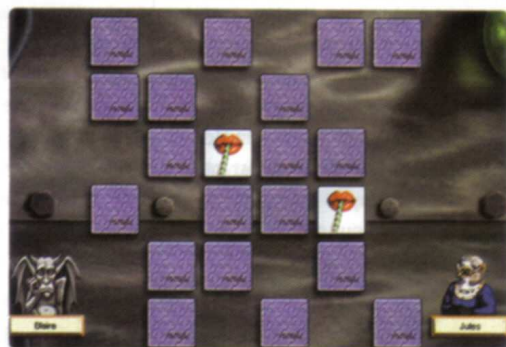
With all these games, players can challenge 10 animated opponents, each with a unique personal-



ity, voice, and adjustable skill level. Michael Katz, lead engineer for the game, maintains "the heart of *Hoyle Card Games* is in the quality of the artificial intelligence. The multiple levels of computer play offer fun for the beginner and a serious challenge for the expert." Of course, as with all the new Hoyle games, players have a number of exciting multiplayer options, including Internet play at WON and "hot seat" on the same computer.

Hoyle Card Games is a perfect gift for the entire family because of the varied

selection of games and skill levels. An eight-year-old may enjoy Old Maid or Go Fish while his or her parents will enjoy spending their down time relaxing with Euchre or Bridge. Gamers who purchase any of these new Hoyle collections (at roughly half the price of most other PC games, by the way) should also search the directories of the CD for free demos of other Hoyle products from Sierra Attractions.



NO CONVENTIONAL CONCENTRATION: The newest incarnation of *Hoyle Card Games* adds Go Fish, 30 new variations of Solitaire, and a mind bender called Memory Match.

All the Hoyle games can be played directly off the hard drive without the CD. This means that if you have Hoyle loaded on your laptop for a traveling distraction, none of the three games will devour your battery supply. Let the games begin....

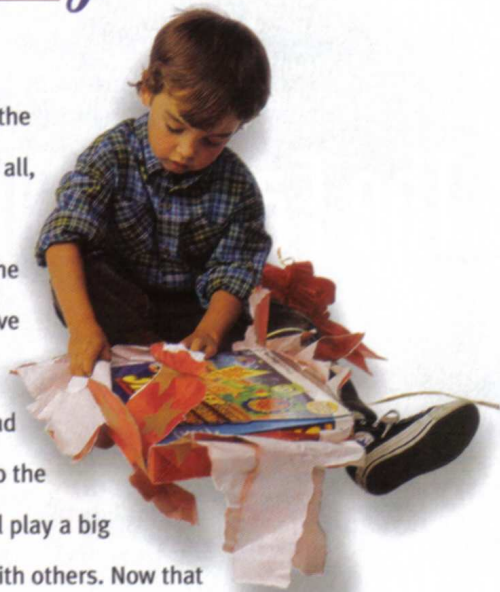
Marc Saltzman contributes to over 40 international publications and is the author of *Gamer's Web Directory: Sites, Cheats & Secrets*.

Holiday gift ideas

for the whole family

THE TREES ARE LEAFLESS AND THE nights are freezing cold. Sure signs another holiday season is almost upon us with its blur of lights, echoes of song, and tastes of celebration. Amid this annual bustle is the opportunity to share our good fortunes with the ones we love. For me, it means another year of being the representative of the computer age. In the last 12 months I have managed to “encourage” my relatives to join me at a computer. The plummeting prices of PCs have helped, but one ploy more than any other has brought the clan online—promises of baby pictures. Tell your mom and dad, grandmas and grandpas, brothers and sisters you will email them hundreds of baby pictures, and they will trade in their cars, rent the spare room in their house, and start clipping grocery coupons to buy their own PC. My wife and I are heading into our first

holiday season with the most precious gift of all, our new baby girl, Kaye. I expect that she will receive lots of love and attention, but with our family spread out from one coast to the other, computers will play a big role in sharing her with others. Now that I have them online, what do I give them for Christmas? Something to keep them occupied while they wait for a new picture of Kaye—software. With the wide variety of interests in any family, you might think it would be hard to find personal software gifts for the whole family. Think again. What I found is that Sierra Home is way ahead of the pack, not only in finding solutions for modern problems but in creating innovative ways to make the home PC bring out the artistic side of all of us!



shopping lists

seasonal greetings

USA '99: streets & destinations: mapping your future

USA '99: STREETS & DESTINATIONS is mapping software from Sierra Home that should be a big hit with my dad and my sister.

My dad is a sales rep in the Detroit area and a true road warrior. USA '99 will allow him to be

the Magellan of the Midwest. He can plan his routes, locate his motel and restaurant choices on the maps themselves, and highlight interesting landmarks along the way.

Despite the fact he's a computer novice, USA '99 will make it easier for him to get door-to-door driving instruction by providing a seamless internet link to MapQuest (www.mapquest.com).

But this program can help with a lot more than just long-distance driving. Looking for an apart-

ment or a new home? Type in an address and it will pinpoint the exact location. Having a party or a family picnic? Customize maps that

USA '99 will allow [my dad] to be the Magellan of the Midwest.

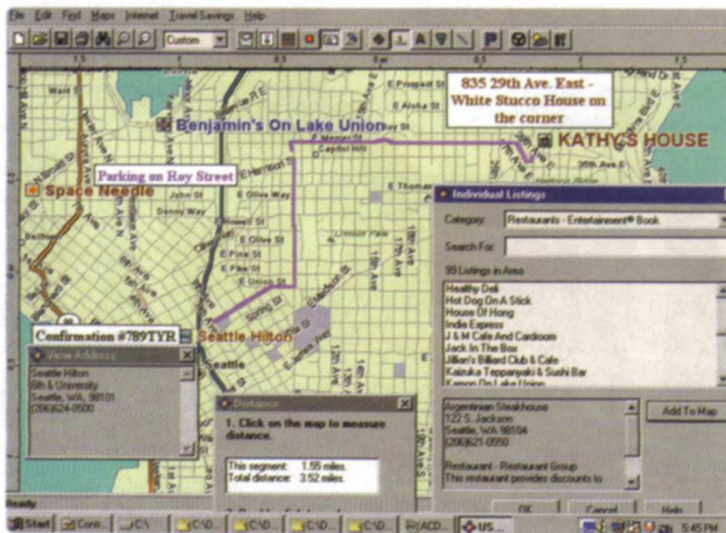
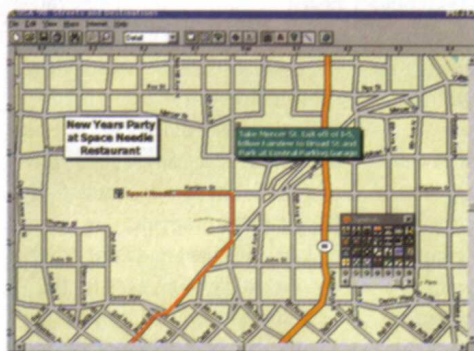
will ensure no one gets lost on the way. My sister will love USA '99 because she is the social butterfly of the family, going to concerts, art shows, fairs, and festivals all over the Northwest. The personal maps are going to be a real asset in her travels and party planning.

Make It Yours

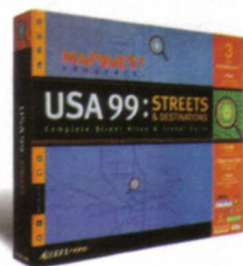
Constructing personalized maps is simple (I know that from personal experience). I live in the heart of Seattle near many of the Emerald City's downtown venues. On one occasion last spring my sister was coming into town for a concert. She had never been to my apartment before, and I was concerned that she might get lost. USA '99 helped to guide her 60 miles north from her home in Olympia to my specific parking spot downtown. I was able to make a map that included numbered symbols on the map that corresponded with my numbered directions. I was able to highlight the route, include only

the landmarks I wanted her to use, and add descriptive text. The final product was crystal clear, as much for what it did not include as for what it did. My map didn't include any of the clutter found on most store-bought maps, and the directions I sent her were extremely clear and concise.

What's really handy is that the program allows you to save the maps as BMP (bitmap) files, which result in easy email attachments. I am glad to report that my sister found her way from her home to mine without a hitch.



TREASURE MAP: If grandma's house is full for the holidays, USA '99 makes it easy to find hotels, attractions and points of interest nearby. You can plot your route and plan where to stay and play in minutes.



USA '99: STREETS & DESTINATIONS

www.sierrahome.com

Developer	Sierra Home
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$29.95
Order #	70679
Phone	1.800.757.7707

fashion trip: your personal fashion consultant

FROM MY SISTER, QUEEN OF THE road trip, to my wife's sister, queen of the fashion trip. She is the style-conscious member of the family. With this in mind, could I find a better gift for her than *Fashion Trip*?

combinations that are ideal for her body type, and offer suggestions on which styles to embrace and which to avoid. The online magazine will feature you as the center of fashion attention, with articles and features aimed at your personal profile. You can even look online with friends and ask their opinion as you "try on" different outfits. Mall cruising in the '90s.

With the help of the Internet and your ISP, your *Fashion Trip* will never go out of style and you're always aware of the latest in the world of fashion. Stores, clothes, and accessories will be continually updated so you'll always find exactly what you want from your favorite vendors.



DRESSING ROOM: Go online to try the latest designer outfits on your mannequin.

In essence, *Fashion Trip* is a personal fashion consultant. It's the program that brings a shopping mall right to your home via your PC.

Fashion Trip has it all. Virtual dressing rooms allow you to mix and match outfits from several of the hottest brand names in garments, accessories and shoes. The hip can check out the latest fashions from designers like Levi's and Esprit, the latest cosmetics from well-known lines like Clinique, and the latest in music from Interscope Records. Over 30 fashion and entertainment retailers are part of this exclusive "personal mall."

After answering a few simple questions, *Fashion Trip* becomes personalized to reflect the user's shopping preferences. Fashion experts will recommend outfit



FASHION TRIP

www.sierrahome.com

Developer	Sierra Home
Format	WIN95 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$39.95
Order #	70617
Phone	1.800.757.7707

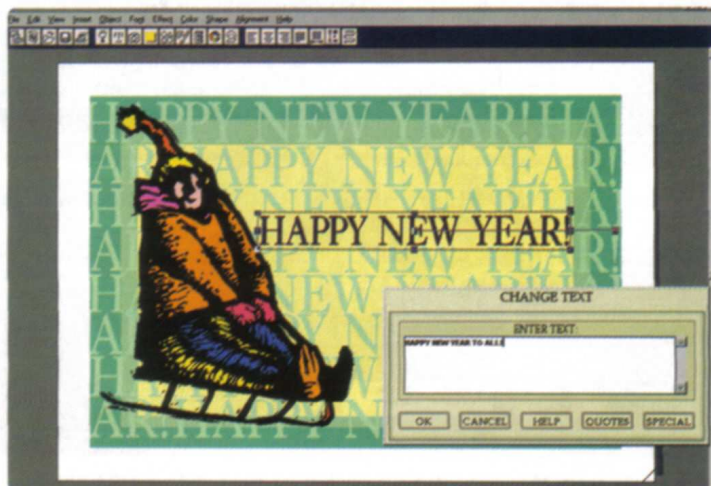
print artist platinum: powerful tools for creative minds

NEXT ON MY LIST IS MY BROTHER. AS a single father of a six-year-old boy, he is up to his eyeballs in cars, dinosaurs and rocket ships. He is also a working, full-time student and does not have much time to learn complicated programs. These factors make him the perfect recipient of *Print Artist Platinum*.

This latest version in the ever-popular *Print Artist* series continues a winning tradition and makes a fantastic program even better. It combines the ease of use of many starter graphics programs with the advanced layering and editing effects you may associate with more complex and expensive programs. For the novice: Let *Print Artist's* 4,000 layouts and 150,000 graphics (over seven CDs worth) be your design inspiration. For the art savvy: Jump into advanced areas and create professional-looking graphics with the click of a mouse.

The Graphics Grabber, your program "assistant" and the true heart of *Print Artist*, has been re-created with two goals in mind: easier use and more powerful features. You can now browse several directories on your hard drive for graphics at the same time, and when you use a graphic from a Graphics Grabber CD, *Print Artist* automatically imports it to your hard drive. The seven CDs are clearly labeled for quick access of the graphics, and the Graphics Grabber offers more specific keyword searches than ever before. You will quickly get hooked on how fast you can create a perfect project for any family occasion with this powerful program.

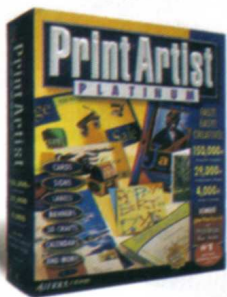
Name an event and *Print Artist* has art and layouts ready for the occasion. Customize birthday parties with banners, hats, cards, and place settings. Personalize your family holidays and special occa-



HELP FOR THE HOLIDAYS: The vector-based images let you customize your graphics. Add your own saying to make any card unique.

sions. Design your own family holiday cards. The trips you once made to the store for greeting cards and stationery are a thing of the past with *Print Artist*. It took me less than 10 minutes to make a baby shower invitation this summer. I imported photos of my wife and me as babies and used an ultra-sound photo we had of Kaye. I added pink ribbon and baby animal graphics to create an awesome invitation. Why settle for mass-made cards and decorations when it is so easy to make your own?

Small business owners will love the Avery labels, business cards, and stationery you can design with quickness and ease. As my brother sends out resumes, he will appreciate those features. This is such a great way to get someone rolling with a graphics suite. *Print Artist Platinum* comes bundled with several bonuses: *Electronic-Card Maker*, the *AGFA Font Manager*, *SnapShot SE* (a digital photo management and editing program), and a special edition of *Print Artist Craft Factory*. And to top it all off, you get a 60-day free membership to ArtToday, a premier graphics website with over 750,000 images available for free download.



PRINT ARTIST PLATINUM

www.sierrahome.com

Developer Sierra Home

Format WIN95 CD

Rating Everyone

Price \$49.95

Order # 70590

Phone 1.800.757.7707

print artist craft factory: a creative outlet for kids



MY BROTHER WILL HAVE MORE clip-art than he can shake his mouse at, so I need to find a way for his son to take advantage of the graphics treasure chest on his dad's PC. *Print Artist Craft Factory* is the way to go if the "graphic designer" in question has grass stains on his knees and likes to race dino-cars. Christopher is going to love this one. His interests range from T.rexes to racing cars to rocket ships. And, like so many kids his age, he is wildly imaginative.

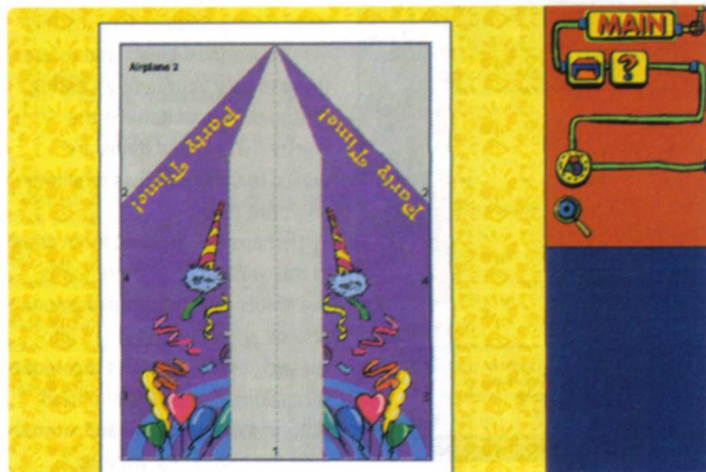
PA Craft Factory is an inviting, easy-to-use graphics program for kids (based on the award-winning *Print Artist* engine) loaded with whimsical art and over 40 types of projects. It includes 800 layouts and over 5,500 graphics ready to inspire the artist in your child. The interface is colorful and intuitive, and a spirited voice offers audible help throughout the entire

program. After you sign in, the main screen displays 22 project types and as the mouse passes over each one, the name of the project is displayed. From airplanes to posters, you can be assured there will always be something to interest your child.

There are also many educational projects in *PA Craft Factory*, such as Flash Cards and Clock Faces. But because your child is participating in making them, there is a better chance he or she will actually learn from the finished product. My nephew can make his own dinosaur Flash Cards. *PA Craft Factory* has lots of positive images and is very "up" on school. Bookmarks and bookplates are filled with cheery characters that announce, "School Is Cool!" The portrayal of school as a fun place to be is a refreshing and inspiring feature.

Encouraging the artist in any

child, *PA Craft Factory* will let my nephew create his own toys, personalize his books, and decorate his room. He can make his Mother's Day and Father's Day cards or design his own birthday party theme. He can design and print out a cut-out city to complement his dino-car collection. The program even includes the cut-out directions on the finished print so he can follow along. When we play a board game, he usually makes up the rules as we go. He'll love creating board games with *PA Craft Factory* and customizing the playing pieces. What gift could be more appropriate than one that stimulates his imagination? *PA Craft Factory* will provide my nephew with hours of creative time, both in front of and away from the computer.



PARTY FAVORS: Kids can completely customize their paper airplanes and other print projects for a fun and easy creative pastime.



PRINT ARTIST CRAFT FACTORY

www.sierrahome.com

Developer Sierra Home

Format WIN95 CD

Rating Everyone

Price \$29.95

Order # 70160

Phone 1.800.757.7707

mastercook deluxe 5.0: therecipe forsuccess

WHILE MY NEPHEW HAS NEVER SEEN a home or classroom without a computer, my granny has only recently seen one with it. She is new to computers, though she is an expert hand at something equally complex—cooking. Giving the best cook in the family the latest version of the best cooking software out there, *MasterCook Deluxe 5.0*, seems like an obvious choice, but I have ulterior motives for giving this gift—I want her recipes! My granny's southern cuisine is legendary grub—I could write poetry about her chicken and dumplings! What could my granny and other experienced cooks, possibly learn from cooking software? Plenty. Depending on the version, *MasterCook* includes culinary instruction and tips from experts at *Betty Crocker*, *Cooking Light* magazine, or from cookbook

authors such as Sheila Lukins. Plus, with built-in links to Sierra's cooking website (www.sierra.com/cooking), and with many more free recipes to download, it is guaranteed they will never run out of ideas or inspiration.

The program is loaded with simple-to-master features. It allows the recipe collector in all of us to go wild. The Internet is becoming an incredible resource for cooks and lovers of food, and with *MasterCook Deluxe 5.0*, you can drag and drop

A brilliant feature is the update-able Pantry list, which is connected directly to a "What Can I Make?" button.

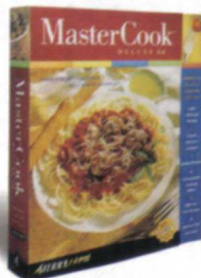


any recipes that you find on the Web directly into your cookbook via the ingenious Import Assistant. In addition, recipe management and use has never been easier. A brilliant feature is the update-able Pantry list, which is connected directly to a "What Can I Make?" button. A simple mouse click scans the cookbooks in the program and displays all the recipes you can make based on the contents of your cupboards. The same information aids you in the construction of meal plans and shopping lists. You can design and save them for a day, week, month or year! Create three or four distinct weeks' worth of meals and rotate them to vary your family's eating patterns. By maintaining the Pantry list, needed items are added to shopping lists whenever you print them.

buying tips to the managing of the charcoal heat (which, he tells me, is the key). These time-tested culinary triumphs can be shared with the younger members of my family with ease, thanks to *MasterCook Deluxe 5.0*. And by using photos to personalize recipes, children will know exactly which aunt made that pecan pie. Cooking traditions like these often define us as much as our place of birth or our last name, and now we can preserve our own unique culinary heritage.



WHAT'S COOKIN'? They easy-to-use browser lets you find recipes with corresponding photos to make meal planning quick and stress-free.



MASTERCOOK DELUXE 5.0

www.sierrahome.com

Developer	Sierra Home
Format	WIN95/98 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$29.95
Order #	70679
Phone	1.800.757.7707

Perhaps the greatest innovation in this version of *MasterCook* is the ability to incorporate scanned photos and PC-ready video into the recipes. My granny's technique for making dumplings and fried potatoes can be saved and shared with the family. My grandpa's secrets for perfectly grilled Porterhouse steaks can be captured in photo form, from his

generations grande suite: mappingyourpast

SINCE I WANT TO PASS FAMILY traditions on to our baby, my mom will be getting *Generations Grande Suite*. With Kaye's birth, I'm feeling the need to discover where we all came from, and my mom is the perfect person for this mission. She knows everything about everybody in the family! *Generations* will provide my mom with the tools to turn her knowledge of our relatives into a full-fledged family history. This program is an all-encompassing genealogical program for both beginners and experts.

The basis of any good genealogy software is the construction of family trees. *Generations* allows users to design a family tree suited specifically to their needs. From simple to elaborate, you control the size, colors, fonts, captions, and photos. You can also enter family information and personal notes in addition to

birth and death dates. The EasyTree feature is your electronic card file system that helps you easily index, organize, sort and store your family information. It's also the efficient way to track family medical histories and make personalized family calendars. Linking photographs and documents to anyone's name card is simple. You can even view three generations at a time on your screen. And all this information is automatically exported to Easy-

...[Generations] comes bundled with SnapShot SE. This comes in real handy if you need to repair any of your photos...

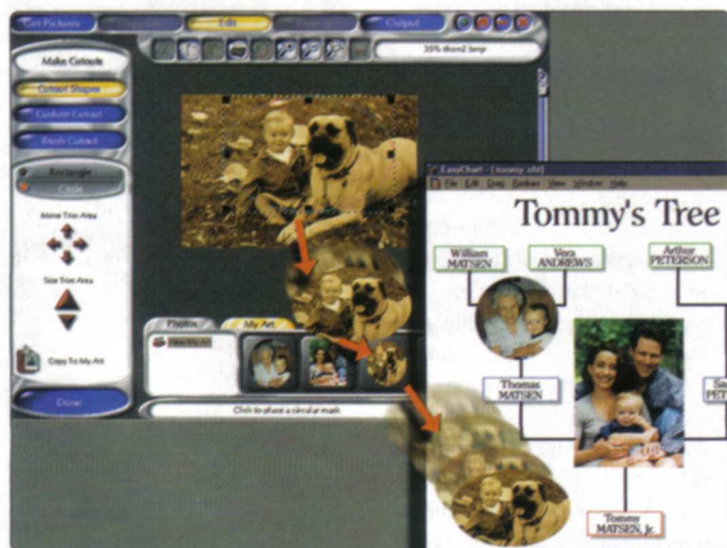
Chart so you can print it up as beautiful wall charts.

My mom is a wealth of information, but she doesn't necessarily remember everybody or how they're related. That's why it's so convenient that *Generations* has direct "one touch" links that take you to Sierra's *Generations* website (www.sierra.com/titles/generations). This site offers research advice, census surveys, and additional hints and tips to help you search for your ancestors. The Internet Detective is a veritable treasure chest of over 31,000 links to genealogical websites, and worth the cost of this package alone. Plus, several historical indexes come with the program, including an index of persons no longer living, arranged by Social Security number. If that's not enough, there's even a 200-million name index to help with your family quest. Information about our family's ancestors, even those who are distant or no longer with us, will be easy to track down with resources available in *Generations Grande Suite*.

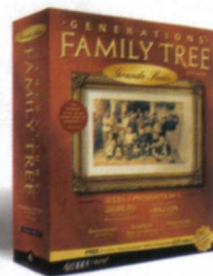
Generations Grande Suite also comes bundled with *SnapShot SE*. This comes in real handy if you need to repair any of your photos before you place them on a family chart. *SnapShot SE* is also the easiest way to create unique family scrapbooks. In addition to *SnapShot SE*, a free copy of *MasterCook Heritage Edition* is included with *Generations Grande Suite*. This is a perfect complement to the program because as you discover the unique and special stories of your family's history,



you will surely want to save the family-famous recipes as well. The *Generations* team thought of everything with this package. With this amazing program, my mother will be able to produce a very special family tree for our daughter and the family's future generations.



MAPPING THE PAST: EasyChart allows you to import photos to correspond with anyone on your family tree.



GENERATIONS GRANDE SUITE

www.sierrahome.com

Developer	Sierra Home
Format	WIN95/98 CD
Rating	Everyone
Price	\$69.95
Order #	70572
Phone	1.800.757.7707

completehome: the all-in-one homesolution

MY WIFE AND I MANAGE AN APARTMENT building, but soon we will be moving into our new home. This means we have lots of repairs to do, and soon we will have lots of indoor and outdoor designing opportunities. But with the exorbitant costs associated with moving and the most basic home repairs, we'll have to get creative. So, Sierra's *CompleteHome 2.0*, com-

Videos, step-by-step instructions, photographs and animations will demystify all of your home repair jobs.

prised of *Sierra Home Architect 2.0*, *Photo HomeDesigner*, *3D Deck*, *Electrical Wiring*, and the *Home*

Improvement Encyclopedia is going to be the present I give to myself.

I guess it should come as no surprise then that my toolbox is growing, along with my need to fix things. I got a battery-powered screwdriver last Christmas and now our apartment boasts the tightest screws in the Seattle area. I also got some pipe wrenches but I never use them because I don't know what they do! But with the clearly illustrated techniques in the *Home Improvement Encyclopedia*, I just might find the opportunity to become a bonafide pipe fitter.

Combined with *Electrical Wiring*, you have access to expert advice on hundreds of home projects. Videos, step-by-step instructions, photographs and animations will demystify all of your home repair jobs. Armed with the know-how and the right tools, you will be able to fix these problems yourself and save money by not having to hire expensive contractors. Do you want



to add wiring for lights right above the bathroom sink? Now you can get help on these minor additions as well. One-button access to the Sierra Home Center website (www.sierrahome.com/homedesign) guarantees you will always have the latest home improvement information on the Internet.

Designing your home is where *SierraHome Architect 2.0* comes in handy. This program offers endless opportunities to design houses from the ground up or remodel your existing home. The QuickDesign™ Wizard helps you create your floor plan onscreen quickly and easily. You can incorporate thousands of three-dimensional models of brand-name furniture, appliances and light fixtures. The program now boasts a split-screen view of 2D and 3D at the same time, allowing for a 3D walk-through as you view the floor plan. Experiment with millions of combinations of furnishings, styles and colors to decide what is right for your home.

An extremely helpful addition to the new version of *CompleteHome 2.0* is scale control. Now you can determine the scale to print your floor plan. Take these plans to your contractor to discuss building options. Avoid expensive architectural fees and discover money-saving ways to complete your project. This is the one tool you need to get you started on your dream home.

www.sierrahome.com



COMPLETEHOME 2.0

Format **WIN95 CD**

Rating **Everyone**

Price **\$49.95**

Order # **70591**



COMPLETE LANDDESIGNER

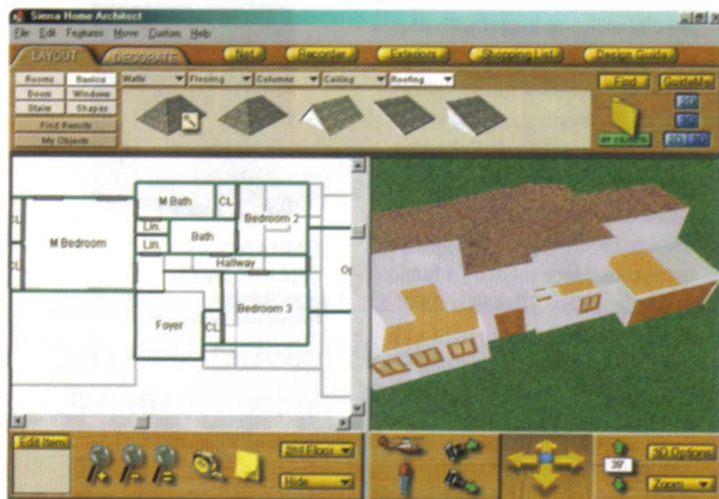
Format **WIN95 CD**

Rating **Everyone**

Price **\$49.95**

Order # **69988**

1.800.757.7707



HOME PREVIEW: See your dream home come to life as you create it on screen. Design your home in 2D and see the 3D results instantly.

complete landdesigner: gardener's delight

COMplete LANDDESIGNER IS the gift for my wife. She has visions of the famed gardens of Europe whenever she wanders through an open space of green. When winter rolls around, it is her time to plan for next year's gardens. With *3D Landscape*, *Photo LandDesigner*, *Garden Encyclopedia*, and *3D Deck* bundled together in *Complete LandDesigner*, planning is easy. Combined, they offer a comprehensive guide to gardening, a source of endless botanical inspiration, and the

"drawing table" for the garden of your dreams.

By taking a three-dimensional WalkAbout and using the "Automated Growth" and "Seasonal Change" features, she will be able to watch how all of our plants grow next summer and beyond. Years of gardening experience can be gained in hours as various plant and landscape combinations come to life. Will this plant crowd others? How do they look together? Will they bloom all at once or only in the spring? These are important

questions every gardener asks. In addition, the site construction can be done with the help of useful program wizards or through custom design.

Both versions utilize "drag and drop," making the whole process quick and easy. *Photo LandDesigner* allows you to import a photo of your own home and then plan your landscaping around its unique colors and design.

The Garden Encyclopedia aids you in choosing plants for your yard based on climate, light exposure and season. Tips on how to prevent disease and pest damage ensure your plants will remain healthy, and demonstration videos show topics like Starting Seeds and Choosing Plants. All of these tools combined will make any gardener ready for spring.

And that concludes my holiday



GARDEN ENCYCLOPEDIA: Browse and print complete info. for each plant.

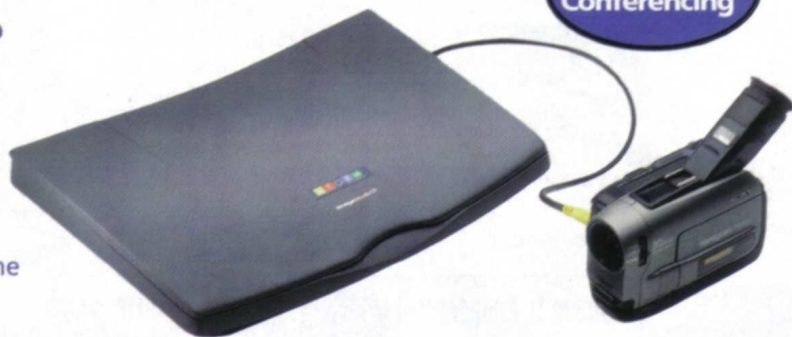
shopping list. Software is what brings magic to our computers. It helps us transform ordinary elements of our lives into something better. Happy Holidays.

J.R. Jenkins is a proud new dad and a Seattle writer.

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Battle across the universe as a Terran operative, Martian rebel or Cybrid death machine in the game that delivers the future of explosive mechanized combat! Deploy HERCs, tanks and fliers as you hunt your mechanized prey across the vast landscapes, fortified bases and war-ravaged cities of an engaging 3D world. Includes 45 highly detailed missions, explosive graphics, over 30 combat vehicles and advanced multiplayer options that let you create your own game server.



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Fly six civilian aircraft, each rendered with a photorealistic instrument panel and an absolutely lifelike flight model. Detailed texture-mapped graphics include dozens of cities and millions of elevation reference points throughout North America and Western Europe. Features all-new 3D accelerated graphics, a new pop-up operator's handbook, new instruction for novice pilots, interactive Air-Traffic Control and on-board GPS to make this the most realistic flight sim available.



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Master Sierra's Strategy Challenges



Caesar™ III

Build a better Rome! The sequel to one of the top-selling strategy games of all time challenges you to create, rule and defend a Roman city of your own design. Tackle specific goals and missions as you try to win the emperor's favor in the career mode, or build the next Eternal City with the City Construction Kit. A new, intuitive interface lets you command the entire game from a single screen. Features new graphics, new buildings and structures, plus new terrain sets.

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Get a taste of four adventure series in one box! Includes *King's Quest® VII: The Princeless Bride™*, the original *Police Quest® SWAT*, *Space Quest® 6: The Spinal Frontier™* and *Quest for Glory® IV: Shadows of Darkness™*.

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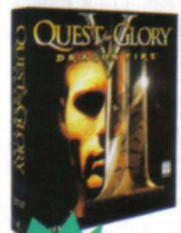


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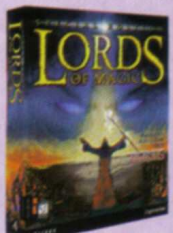


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see page 106 for details

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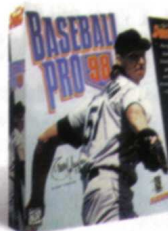


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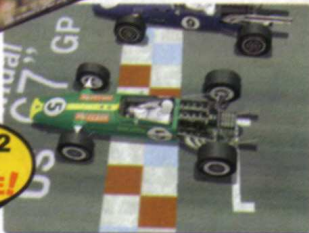
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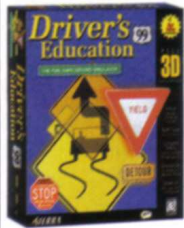
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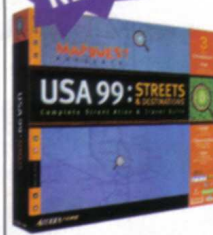
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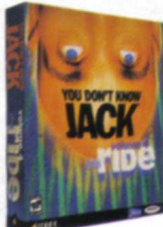


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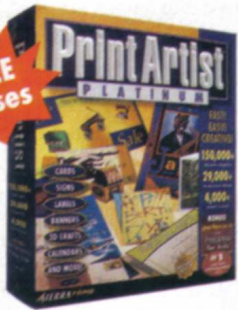
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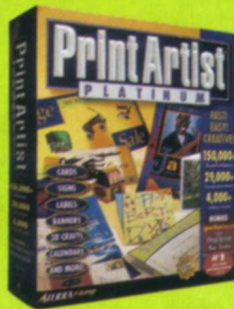


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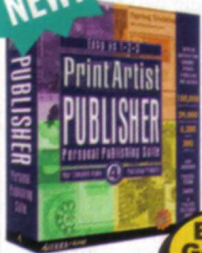
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Gaming on the Cheap

A LOW-COST GUIDE TO UPGRADES

Why spend thousands on a new gaming system every 18 months when an upgrade might be all that you need?

H EY, IT'S A TOUGH GAMING world. These days you not only have to shell out bucks for your most recent gaming addiction, but—if the pundits are to be believed—you also must buy a new gaming system, resplendent with every gaming gadget known to civilization, every 12 to 18 months.

The trick is, you don't have to believe those pundits, nor buy that new 450MHz Pentium II. Steam-powered 386MHz and 486MHz computers aside, most gaming rigs can be upgraded at a fraction of the cost of a new system. Here's a few ways I've found to ignore pundits, enhance performance, and save money.

When was the last time you



The cheapest, simplest, biggest, most notable help you can buy is Random Access Memory (RAM).

checked your hard drive for errors or defragmented it? These two no-cost steps can seriously improve performance. A friend I frequently

played *Quake II* with couldn't understand his 1,000+ ping rates. Nothing had changed with the server, his modem, or his connection; yet the ping times continued to rise. I suggested he defragment his hard drive, which he did. Next time online, he was killing us with mid-100 pings.

To defragment your hard drive (on a PC, that is) select "My Computer" and then your hard drive (usually the C: drive). Click on "Properties," select "Tools" and—after checking the drive for errors—tap the "Defragment Now" button.

Of course, a seriously underpowered computer will not run sophisticated software no matter how defragmented its hard drive. Sometimes you just need help. The cheapest, simplest, biggest, most notable help you can buy is Random Access Memory (RAM). Similar to the human forebrain, RAM handles the here-and-now stuff on your computer. RAM, in conjunction with your Central Processing Unit (CPU), is largely responsible for how quickly your computer opens programs, how many programs it can open, and how quickly the open programs run.

The RAM equation is simple: more RAM = faster gaming. RAM chips come in various sizes: 16 megabytes (MB), 32 MB, and 64 MB. Gamers really need about 64 MB. Installation is simple—just pop the computer cover, and snap your

new chip into a open slot using the directions supplied by the manufacturer. If the thought of opening your computer makes you nervous, have a computer repair shop do the work for you.

It's a three-dimensional world and hardware designers have wholeheartedly embraced the concept. 3D graphic accelerator cards are the rage, and it's a rage that will not soon abate. Plopping a 3Dfx card into your computer will not only produce the most beautiful images you've seen in your gaming life (in 3Dfx supported games, of course), it also significantly increases your computer's graphical speed. In general, installing a 3Dfx card increases your computer's display rate one "notch." In other words, a Pentium 133 with a 3Dfx card plays as well as a Pentium 166 without one.

Nevertheless, tuning and RAM/3Dfx card installation may not be enough. Unfortunately, if the box says you need a 200MHz Pentium, a 133MHz will not cut it. Luckily, you may not need a new computer, just a new CPU. The CPU sets the computer's speed. It is a small square (about 2" across) that snap-mounts on your motherboard—that big green card inside your machine. Most motherboards will support a CPU upgrade, and the cost for a new CPU (\$200-\$400, depending on type) is way less than that of a new computer.

Bottom line? Many Pentium computers in the 100-120 MHz range can be easily upgraded to play most of the current crop of software. A transformation into a 3Dfx accelerated Pentium 166-200 with 64 MB of RAM can give your computer a new lease on life, and your wallet a much-needed break. After all, wouldn't you rather spend your money on games than gadgets? **!**

Mark H. Walker is a noted electronic entertainment author whose How to Use the Internet is in its third printing.

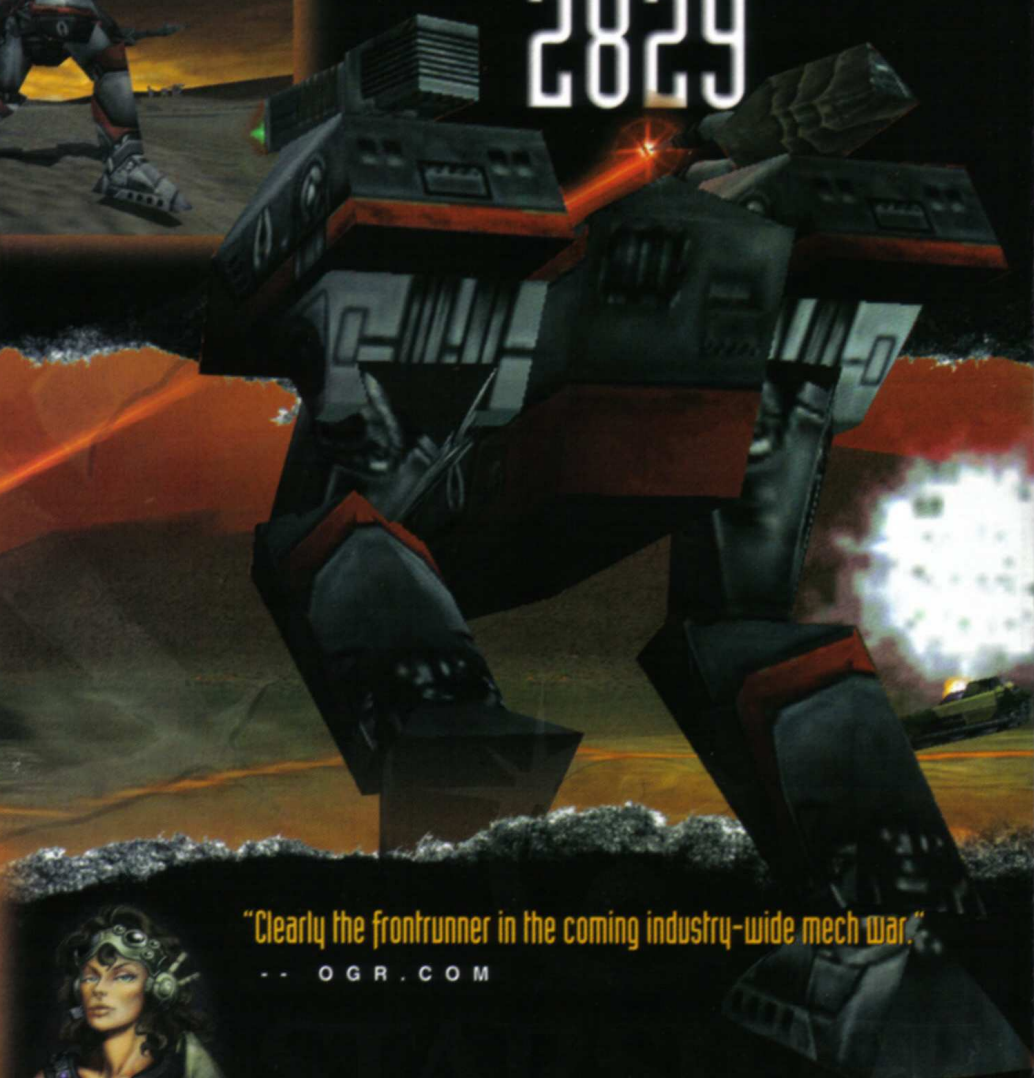
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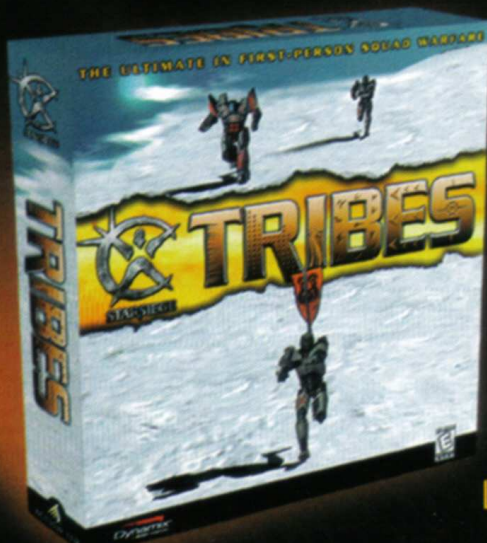
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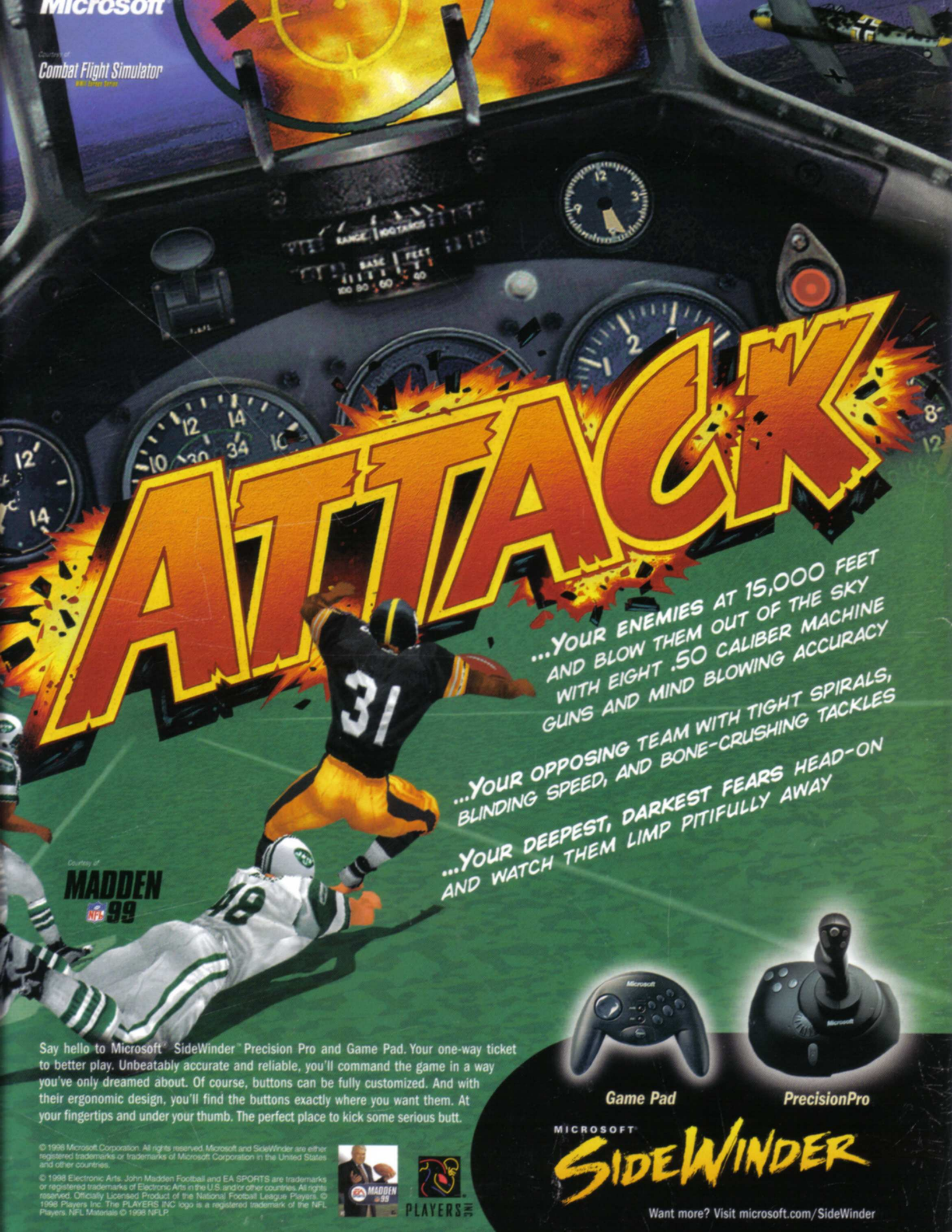


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