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interaction

MAGAZINE

Wheels of Fortune
Hardware Review

Get Some Goo!
with Print Artist Plus

Summer Sports Spectacular
See Page 55

Exclusive First Look:
Outpost 2

FPS: Golf—Nothing Compares

BETRAYAL IN

ANTARA

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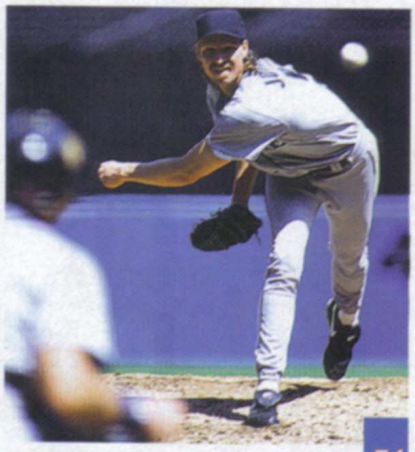

FPS: Baseball Delivers 51

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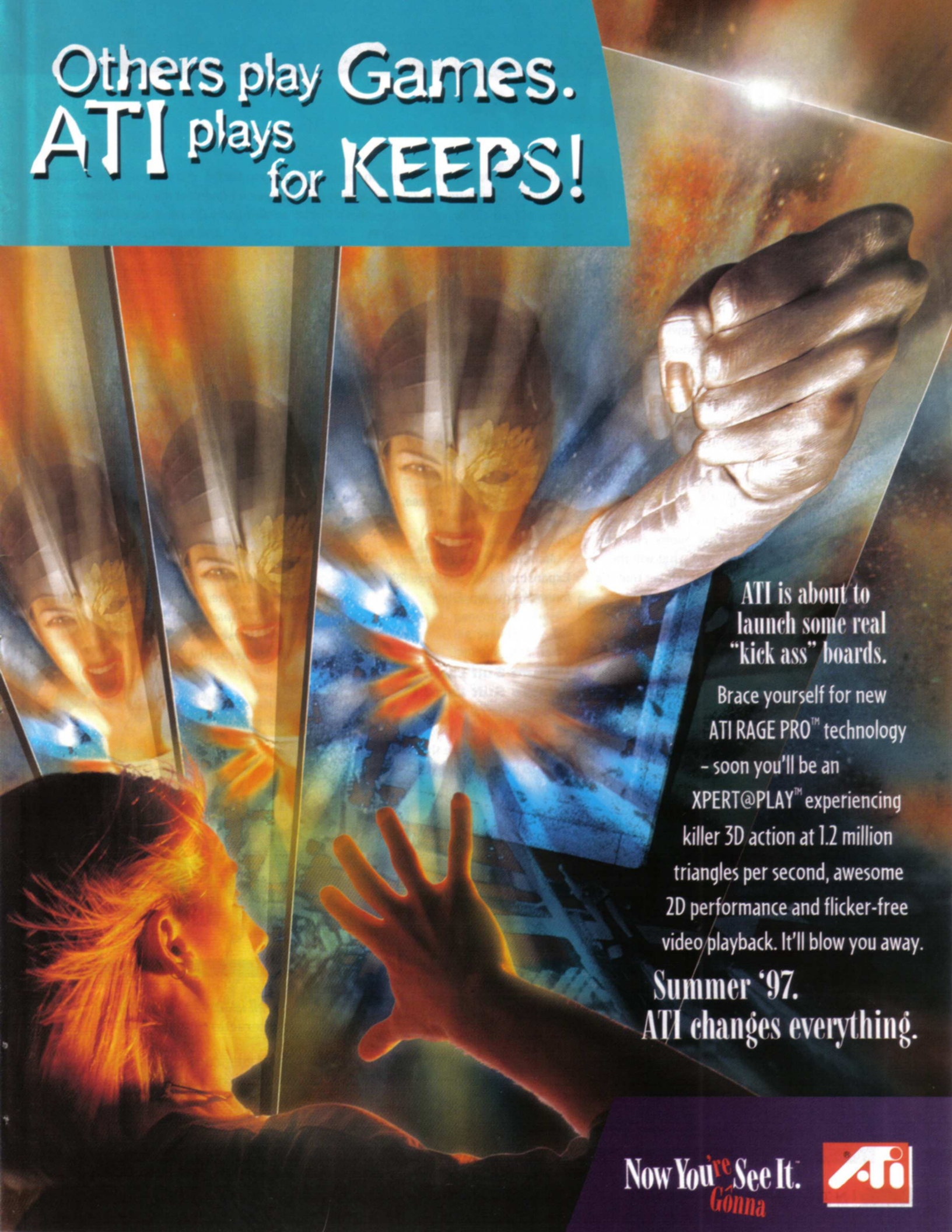
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Summer '97.
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Now You're Gonna See It.
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LETTERS

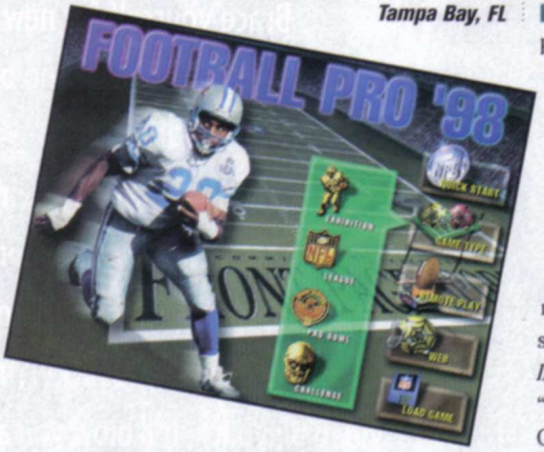
Sports Fan Needs Four Quarters (and a 12-Step Program)

Dear Sierra,

Okay, I admit it. I am an NFL addict. Since the pro football draft, I have been aching for gridiron action. I read the small print in the back of the sports pages for any tidbit of news concerning players, trades, and holdouts from the mini-camps. I have all ready gone out and purchased one of the new-style Tampa Bay Buccaneers team jerseys and have built a mini-shrine to new coach Tony Dungy. I am even checking my TV listings daily for the first formal announcement of the exhibition season. You've got to help me!

What I want to know is this: when will the new *Front Page Sports: Football Pro '98* be available and what will the new features be? Please tell me that it's been updated with all the new players and some new AI that reflects the winning attitude of our new coach. I just feel it. This is going to be our year.

A True Believer
Tampa Bay, FL



Dear Believer,

We just got our first look at the new FPS: Football Pro '98 *this week, and I've got to tell you, you're going to be impressed. But don't tear apart the magazine looking for a review of the new sim—that won't come until the fall issue.*

You'll be happy to know that, yes, the game will be updated with all the new stats, players, rules, etc. Being a traditionalist myself, I'm personally sorry to see the old Bucs uniforms go. I'll kind of miss those big orange jerseys with the cleat marks in the chest. Good luck with your team in the upcoming season!

A Few (Very Few) Words About Lords II

Hey Sierra,

Lords of the Realm II? Got it! Finished it! Loved it! More?

"A Knight to Remember"
San Ramon, CA

Hey Good Knight,

More Lords? Our pleasure! Lords II Expansion Pack*! See Page 29! Has Internet play, too. Enjoy!*

Leisure Suit Larry IV or Leisure Suit Larry Fore?

Hellloooo Sierra!

I'm not sure if it was my name or my fashion sense that led a co-worker to buy me a copy of *Leisure Suit Larry VII: Love for Sail!* as a gag-gift this Christmas, but it was a pretty good gag! I enjoyed it so much I finished the game sometime after midnight on New Year's Day, and have since enjoyed the *Leisure Suit Larry I, II, III, V,* and *VI* as well, thanks to your "Larry's Greatest Hits (and Misses) Collection."

Why wasn't *Leisure Suit Larry IV* in the collection, and is that crazy guy Al Lowe working on an eighth Larry game? If not, tell him to get off his can and go write one! Thanks a million!

"Larry from Lauderdale"
Fort Lauderdale, Fl

Hellloooo Larry!

You won't find your copy of "Leisure Suit Larry IV: The Case of the Missing Floppies" in your Greatest Hits Collection. Al Lowe insists that he really did make the game, and swears he left it right on his boss' desk—but we never saw it and Al stands by his story.

As for Larry VIII*, you might be waiting a while for that one. Get this, we just talked to Al Lowe and he says he's actually working on a golf game right now. To quote Al, "Yeah, Larry and I have always loved golf. It's the only game where the less you score, the more you win!" Watch for more about Al Lowe and his course endeavors in a future issue of* InterAction.

E-mail letters to the editor to:
interaction@sierra.com

Send your correspondence to:
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Bellevue, WA 98015-3008

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NEW **Rama** DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb	Adventure	5092002
Front Page Sports Trophy Bass 2 WIN3.1/WC 486/66, 8mb	Sports	5093604
Power Chess WIN '95 Pentium, 12mb	Strategy Game	5092903
Freddi Fish 2: The Haunted Schoolhouse WIN3.1/WC 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Children's Enter.	5093406
King's Quest VII: The Princeless Bride WIN3.1/WC 486 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Adventure	5024401
The Complete Multimedia Bible WIN3.1/WC 386, 4mb	Bible	5031703
The Lost Mind Of Dr. Brain WIN3.1 486 or MAC LCIII, 4mb	Children's Ed.	5037502
Berlitz Live Spanish WIN3.1 386 or MAC Classic, 4mb	Language Tutor	5043401
Police Quest: SWAT WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 8mb or MAC PMAC,12mb	Adventure	5062500
Corel Gallery WIN3.1 386 or MAC LCII, 4mb, P	Clip-Art Library	5010301
Print Artist 4.0 WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 8mb, P	Home/Personal	5089305
Robert E. Lee: Civil War General WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 8mb	Strategy Game	5084009
Lighthouse DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb	Adventure	5090204
Turbocad Designer WIN3.1/WC 486, 8mb	Home/Personal	5084603
Toonstruck DOS 486/66, 16mb	Adventure	5104708
Trivial Pursuit WIN3.1 386/25 or MAC LCIII, 4mb	Strategy Game	5027404
Spycraft: The Great Game DOS/WC 486/66 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Adventure	5063201
WinDelete WIN3.1/WC 386, 8mb	Utilities	5084504
Shivers WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 8mb	Adventure	5058102
Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia '97 WIN3.1/WC 486/66, 8mb	General Ref.	5090501
First Aid 97 Deluxe WIN '95 486, 8mb	Utilities	5098306
First Aid 3.1 WIN3.1 386, 4mb	Utilities	5098405
Ultimate Doom DOS/WC 386/33, 4mb or MAC 68040, 8mb	Arcade Style	5044409
Final Doom DOS/WC 486/33, 4mb or MAC 68040, 8mb, J	Arcade Style	5083209
Doom II DOS 386/33, 4mb or MAC 68040, 8mb, J	Arcade Style	5021506
Zork Nemesis DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb or MAC PMAC, 16mb	Adventure	5065602
Hoyle Casino WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 4mb	Strategy Game	5093109
Command And Conquer: Red Alert DOS/WC Pentium, 8mb	Strategy Game	5105101

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Each selection includes the following important information: minimum system required, minimum CPU required, minimum amount of RAM required, and required peripherals in addition to a mouse and keyboard (J=joystick, P=printer).

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Age Of Rifles: 1846-1905 DOS 486/66, 8mb	Strategy Game	5097803
Timelapse WIN3.1/WC 486/66 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Adventure	5095005
Oil Change WIN '95 386, 8mb	Utilities	5097407
NEW **NASCAR Racing 2** DOS/WC 486/66, 16mb	Driving Sim.	5104609
Resume Maker Deluxe CD WIN3.1/WC 386/33, 8mb, P	Home/Personal	5050703
Command And Conquer DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb or MAC 68040, 16mb	Strategy Game	5050208
TerraNova: Strike Force Centauri DOS Pentium, 8mb	Arcade Style	5066600
Beavis And Butt-Head In Virtual Stupidity WIN '95 486/33, 8mb	Adventure	5075007
Star Trek Deep Space Nine: Harbinger DOS 486/66 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Adventure	5072608
Caesar II DOS 486 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Strategy Game	5068606
Jumpstart Pre-K WIN3.1/WC 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5091400
Jumpstart Kindergarten WIN3.1/WC 486, 1 mb or MAC 68040, 4mb	Children's Ed.	5027701
Jumpstart First Grade WIN3.1/WC 486, 4mb or MAC 68040, 8mb	Children's Ed.	5045901
Home Phone DOS/WC 386 or MAC 68030, 4mb	Home/Personal	5090006
Compton's Complete Street Guide WIN3.1/WC 386/25, 4mb	Travel	5065909
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The 7th Guest DOS/WC 386 or MAC LCIII, 4mb	Interact. Game	5004700
Phantasmagoria DOS/WIN3.1 486/66 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Interact. Game	5004502
Nickelodeon: Director's Lab WIN3.1 486, 8mb	Children's Enter.	5081005
Mission Critical DOS/WC 486/33, 4mb	Adventure	5062807
Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within WIN3.1/WC 486/33 or MAC 68040, 8mb	Adventure	5060405
Mechwarrior 2 Mercenaries DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb, J	Arcade Style	5091905
Hexen DOS 486/33, 8mb or MAC 68040, 12mb, J	Arcade Style	5056403
Mechwarrior 2 DOS 486/66, 8mb or MAC PMAC, 16mb, J	Arcade Style	5043609
The 11th Hour DOS/WC 486/66, 8mb	Interact. Game	5054309
Aces Collector's Edition DOS 486, 4mb, J	Flight Sim.	5037908
Silent Thunder: A-10 Tank Killer 2 WIN '95 486/66, 8mb, J	Flight Sim.	5080908
Flight Unlimited WIN '95 486/66, 8mb, J	Flight Sim.	5076203
Duke Nukem 3D: Atomic Edition DOS 486/66, 8mb	Arcade Style	5105804
3D Ultra Pinball: Creep Night WIN3.1/WC 486/33, 8mb or MAC 68040, 12mb	Arcade Style	5088208
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KEN WILLIAMS

Who is CUC and why is Sierra a part of its family?

Ken Williams, Co-Founder
Sierra On-Line

Some of our fans literally grew up with Sierra and are panicked that this means the end of Sierra, at least as we know it today. Let's discuss our future.

This past year, Sierra merged with another company. Although this came as a surprise to many people, what surprised them most was the identity of our new parent: CUC International. Odds are you're thinking, "Who is CUC International?" Most people have no idea who they are, or what they do. My goal with this article is to give you a quick snapshot of CUC, talk about why the merger occurred, share how I think the merger will affect Sierra in the future, and, most importantly, explain why this is a big event in your life as well.

I haven't mentioned this topic previously because I didn't think *InterAction's* readers would find it interesting. However, the steady stream of customers' questions shows I was wrong. Inside the industry, people want to know more because CUC has suddenly become the number-two publisher of PC software behind only Microsoft. People are confused. They have heard of Microsoft, but "Who is CUC?" Some of our fans literally grew up with Sierra and are panicked that this means the end of Sierra, at least as we know it today.

When I was approached by CUC about the possibility of merging, it caught me totally by surprise. One reason that the discussions continued so swiftly and smoothly was my excitement about CUC and their future. CUC is a hard company to understand, but once you do, you will see why I was eager to "join up" with them. I first became aware of CUC through CUC Chairman Walter Forbes, who joined Sierra's board of directors a little over six years ago. Sierra's board was composed of some of the finest business leaders in the world. Sierra has had a huge amount of success, and Sierra's board of directors played a key role in making this happen. Roberta and I always had a sense of how to build great games, but running a successful business is something you can only learn from those who have done it before.

CUC's products are in two major groupings, software and membership services. CUC's family of software companies also includes the best educational software companies, such as Davidson Associates (makers of *Math Blaster*), Knowledge

Adventure (*Jump Start*), Educational Resources (a distributor of school software), and another entertainment software company, the enormously successful Blizzard Entertainment (*Diablo, Warcraft*). Recently a couple of additional companies have been added: Books that Work (*Visual Home, 3D Landscape*) and Berkeley Systems (*You Don't Know Jack, After Dark*). Even though you may not have heard of CUC, you probably own several CUC products. Unlike Microsoft, CUC Software is sold under several different brand names, reflecting the groups that are creating the products, rather than the overall enterprise.

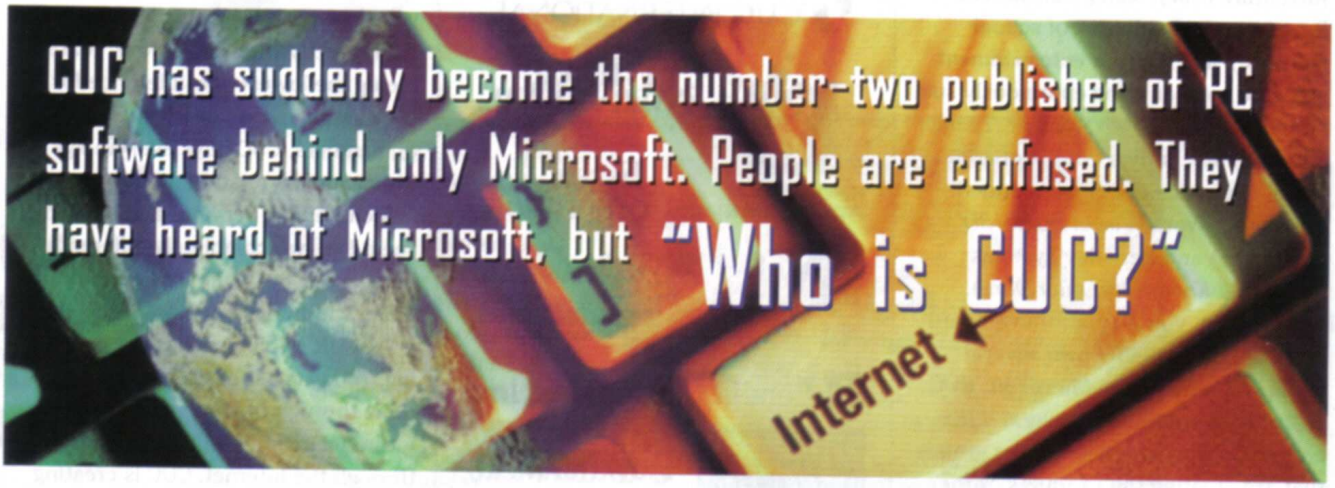
Most of CUC's revenue comes from the membership services area. CUC has over 60 million members for whom they provide services of one sort or another. Just as in software, CUC does business under many different brand names and, here again, you may already be a CUC member. Some of CUC's business is "private labeled," meaning that CUC does business under someone else's brand name. For instance, your local bank may offer some extra services, such as insurance, along with your checking account. CUC provides these extra services. Some of CUC's own brands you may be familiar with are: Welcome Wagon (welcoming families to new neighborhoods), Entertainment Book (the familiar white books which offer local discounts), Interval (timeshare exchange), ShoppersAdvantage (discount shopping), Privacy Guard (access to information about you), TravelersAdvantage (discount travel), AutoAdvantage (saving you money on auto-related expenses), and many others.

As complicated as all this sounds, CUC's business revolves around one simple concept—groups can frequently accomplish what an individual can't. For instance, let's imagine that you want to buy a television. If you enter a store alone, you represent a possible $200-$300 to the retailer. Imagine instead that if millions of individuals banded together to attempt to negotiate a better price on the same television. Guess who the retailer is going to give the better price to? In fact, when millions of people band together, it is possible to bypass the retailer and deal directly with the factory, guaranteeing the lowest possible price for the customer. On behalf of its millions of members, CUC buys everything from cameras to automobiles.

Membership services and software seem like two completely different businesses. So, what are they both doing within one company? The answer is that the two industries are converging. Today, most of CUC's shopping is done through the telephone. In the future many of us will do our shopping through the Internet. CUC is creating an enormous shopping mall, which exists only in cyberspace, called NetMarket (www.netmarket.com). Soon, you will be able to buy just about anything you want on NetMarket—whether you are looking to plan your next vacation, find a new refrigerator, or just pick up a new music CD without leaving home—and know you are getting a bargain. CUC's goal is to redefine how consumers shop, worldwide.

This is an incredible vision, and one I personally want to be a part of making happen. Now, in addition to my duties at Sierra, I am also working with CUC on NetMarket. In fact, I have a new title, as vice chairman of CUC. For Sierra, I am continuing to work with our developers to build great games, and for CUC I am working with the NetMarket team to try to define, and build, the future of shopping. CUC is known for low prices, but I believe our Internet site can offer much more value to our members than just price alone. Shopping via the Internet can be a far superior experience to visiting a store. On the Internet, there are plenty of advantages that don't exist in a store. For instance, we can "carry"

CUC's products are in two major groupings, software and membership services. Even though you may not have heard of CUC, you probably own several of its products.



far more inventory than any normal store. Our bookstore has more books than any bookstore I ever imagined could exist. In our music store, you can listen to CDs before making your selection. Last week, we announced another cool feature: our cyber-store is intelligent. While you are browsing the shelves in our book section, we "learn" what kinds of books you like, and automatically recommend books that match your interests. These are only a small sampling of the ways we are going to improve the way you shop. Check back with NetMarket frequently, as we are regularly upgrading the service.

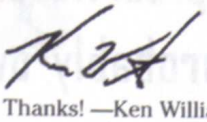
Earlier, I promised I would share with you CUC's vision for the future of Sierra. This is simple. CUC wants Sierra to continue to do what we have done for the past 18 years—focus on building products that are the best on the market. Sierra's developers work extremely hard to try to understand what kind of products you want us to make. CUC doesn't guide Sierra's product strategy, you do. We listen hard to what you want, and then try to build it. If we do this to your satisfaction, we get to continue in business, and continue to build the products we love so much. Nothing about our relationship with CUC changes this simple equation.

This acquisition is an important event in your life as well. With Sierra being part of a larger organization, we are able to accomplish things that weren't possible before. To help you understand what I mean, I'd like to make a comparison to Microsoft. Each year Microsoft spends billions creating products, and hundreds of millions on pure research. They have projects going which do not need to be successful in the market for many years. Their size allows them to take a longer-term look at the market and to study new, evolving technologies and how they can be used to enhance our lives. Microsoft is a success because its products tend to be the best in their categories. Microsoft's size, distribution, and heavy investment in new technologies allows them to build better product than they could as a small company. Through Sierra teaming together with other leading consumer software companies, our common goal is to create a company that can build products which are better than any of us could have built on our own. We want to do for consumer software what Microsoft has done for business software and operating systems. And, guess who wins when product quality and innovation take an enormous leap forward? You do!

CUC wants Sierra to continue to do what we have done for the past 18 years—focus on building products that are the best on the market.

As you look through the rest of this magazine, you will see with your own eyes the great things that this means for you, our customer. Sierra's products this year are awesome. We have taken huge leaps forward in several areas. Here's just a small list of what we have done. Many of the products now ship with the level editors built in, so that you can expand the products yourself if you like. Most of the products now link easily to the Internet. Frame rates and 3D have been a major focus this past year, and our attention in this area really shows in the products. Our biggest area of focus is tough to show in screenshots, but we stepped up tremendously our beta test effort this year. We wanted to make sure that plenty of actual users tested each product, and that we had the time to reflect their comments before release.

Our goal is to have the best product in each category that we participate in, and our new increased size helps make this dream possible. Thank you for your support as we work toward this, our common goal.



Thanks! —Ken Williams

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The Doctor Is In

Recently, the neurons were really buzzing at Seward Elementary School in Tacoma, Wash. At stake was the coveted title of "Dr. Brain Champion" sponsored by Sierra. Two representatives from Karen Curtis' and Kathy Georgetti's fourth-grade classes made up the teams. They competed in two of the game's puzzle areas: Spelunking and Lizards n' Eggs. Pictured here are the winners: Shavon Bradley, Christina Sinor, Jeff DuCharme, and Bryan Dukes with Dr. Brain himself (Rodney Sherwood, Dr. Brain's voice in **The Lost Mind of Dr. Brain** and **The Time Warp of Dr. Brain**). For all their brainpower, Sierra awarded the school a new Macintosh computer system and software.

Quest for Glory V Soundtrack

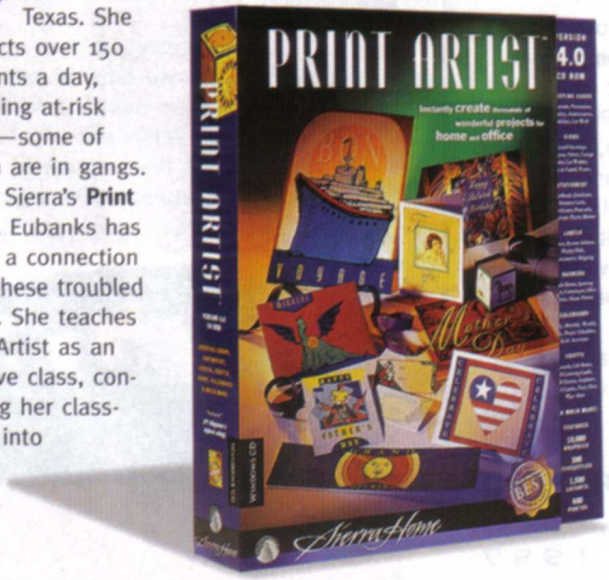
Emmy award–winning composer Chance Thomas is in the studio wrapping up the soundtrack to the much-anticipated **Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire** CD. "We hope with this (soundtrack) to raise interactive game music to a whole new level," he explains. "Our goal is to create a soundtrack that rivals the best movie scores," he adds. Filled with original songs, most cuts will include lots of live acoustic and orchestral overdubs.

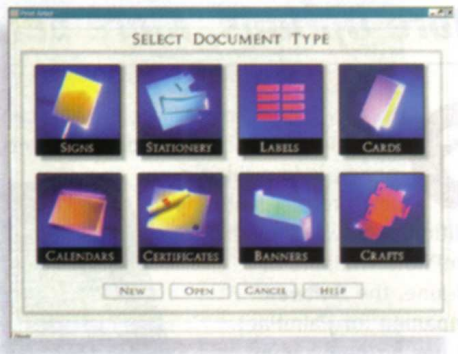
The soundtrack—available in September—will cost $12.95, but will deliver a lot more than just the music. You'll get a demo of the game and a $5 rebate coupon to use toward the whole game when it's released. Hop on the 'Net and access Sierra's website (www.sierra.com) and check out the Quest for Glory Music Gallery. The files you'll hear are only mixed sequences right now, but you'll get a good idea of where Chance is heading with the score.

Simply check out our website or call us direct at **(800) 757-7707** to order.

Print Artist Saves Kids from Gangs

Tish Eubanks is a teacher at Park View Intermediate School in Pasadena, Texas. She instructs over 150 students a day, including at-risk teens—some of whom are in gangs. Using Sierra's **Print Artist**, Eubanks has made a connection with these troubled teens. She teaches Print Artist as an elective class, converting her classroom into a design and print house. Teachers at Park View submit requests for creative services such as fliers, signs, banners, or crafts. Eubank's students design and produce these materials with **Print Artist**. They deliver the projects to the "clients" and receive credit for their work with a "designed by" line on every project. With the continued budget worries of the public school system, **Print Artist** has proved to be a cost-effective and highly productive tool for creating professional and expressive classroom materials. Moreover, **Print Artist** increases the students' self-esteem and self-confidence, while also helping them to achieve their goals.

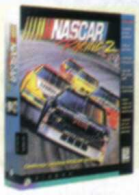




Sierra's Top Twenty Titles

1 **NASCAR® Racing 2**

"NASCAR® Racing 2 is one of the most thoroughly entertaining and believable racing simulations ever to grace the PC." –PC Gamer–90%



2 **Print Artist 4.0**

"Exquisite new graphics and an easier-to-use navigation interface give the new version a real edge over other graphics packages. –Computer Life

3 **Lords of the Realm II**

"Lords of the Realm II is fun, fast, and easy to learn but still challenging enough to keep strategy gamers occupied for many hours." ★★★★–Computer Gaming World

4 **Trophy Bass 2**

"Trophy Bass 2 isn't just a good fishing game, it's a good game, period." –Games Magazine

5 **LandDesigner 3D**

"If you love having a beautifully landscaped yard...this program will do everything for you–except dig the holes." –Home Office Computing

6 **Shivers Two: Harvest of Souls**

"Shivers Two transcends the groundbreaking magic of its predecessor with breathtaking artwork and slick puzzle design." –Computer Games Strategy Plus

7 **Phantasmagoria 2: A Puzzle of Flesh**

"Puzzle of Flesh is the most satisfyingly macabre software in years...a dead-on horror story... a psychological horror..." –Fort Worth Star-Telegram

8 **3-D Ultra Pinball 2: Creepnight**

"Creepnight is a pure and simple hoot, a computer creation that no earthly pinball machine can match..." –Fortune

9 **Police Quest: Swat**

"An intense and accurate depiction of life on the beat of a Los Angeles detective." –Computer Game Review

10 **Leisure Suit Larry: Love for Sail!**

"With the colorful new graphics and animations...and all the extra goodies, (it's) Larry Laffer's greatest adventure yet." –Online Gaming Review

11 **Hoyle's Classics**

"The name Hoyle (is)...synonymous with great card games enjoyed by generations of families." –PCTV

12 **Phantasmagoria**

"Hotly awaited and, well, just hot, Phantasmagoria lives up to the advance billing." –Billboard Magazine

13 **Caesar II**

"...by far the best thing Impressions has ever done, and is the best strategy game/builder since SimCity 2000." –Strategy Plus

14 **Robert E. Lee: Civil War General**

"...a campaign sim that's friendly enough to please novices and deep enough to satisfy most hard-core wargamers. Think of it as the Panzer General of Civil War games." –PC Gamer

15 **3-D Ultra Pinball**

"So intricately designed that it'll keep you entertained for weeks." –CD-ROM Today

16 **MasterCook Deluxe**

"Best Software for Cooks" –Bon Appetit

"★★★★" –Family Computing

17 **Power Chess**

Named 1996 "Traditional Game of the Year" –Computer Games Strategy Plus Magazine

"Sierra's Power Chess is easily the most challenging chess game to date and offers the best artificial intelligence." –Computer and Net Player

18 **Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within**

"...it's one of the best adventure games ever." –PC Gamer

Winner of the 1996 PC GAMER Award for "Best Adventure Game""

19 **The Time Warp of Dr. Brain**

"...weirdly hip (in its own educational, nonviolent sort of way), and...caters to younger gamers without insulting their intelligence." –Family PC

20 **Lighthouse**

"...a fantasy-horror adventure that's a cut above most post-Myst games." –PC Gamer

More Options, More Versatility, More Fun

SIERRA, IN CONJUNCTION WITH US Robotics and third-party developers, is launching a new product featuring additional software for the PalmPilot. Available in mid-June, the **Software Companion** for PalmPilot features 27 new games including Blackjack, Dell Crossword Puzzles, Poker, and Hardball. Additional utilities and applications offer an Alarm Enhance, Calculator, Spreadsheet, Four-Language Dictionary, and 10 other programs. The **Software Companion** for PalmPilot works with the Pilot 1000, Pilot 5000, PalmPilot Personal, and PalmPilot Professional. It's small enough to fit in your hand and powerful enough to keep your life organized and fun. The **Software Companion** is a handful of value for just $29.95.

www.sierra.com/pilotpages/

Upcoming Issues:

InterAction Profiles Sierra's Designers

STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING ISSUES OF **InterAction** when we catch up with all the designers in Sierra's family. Watch for future interviews with Gary Stottlemyer, the designer of Red Baron II, and Papyrus' head speed demon, Dave Kaemmer.

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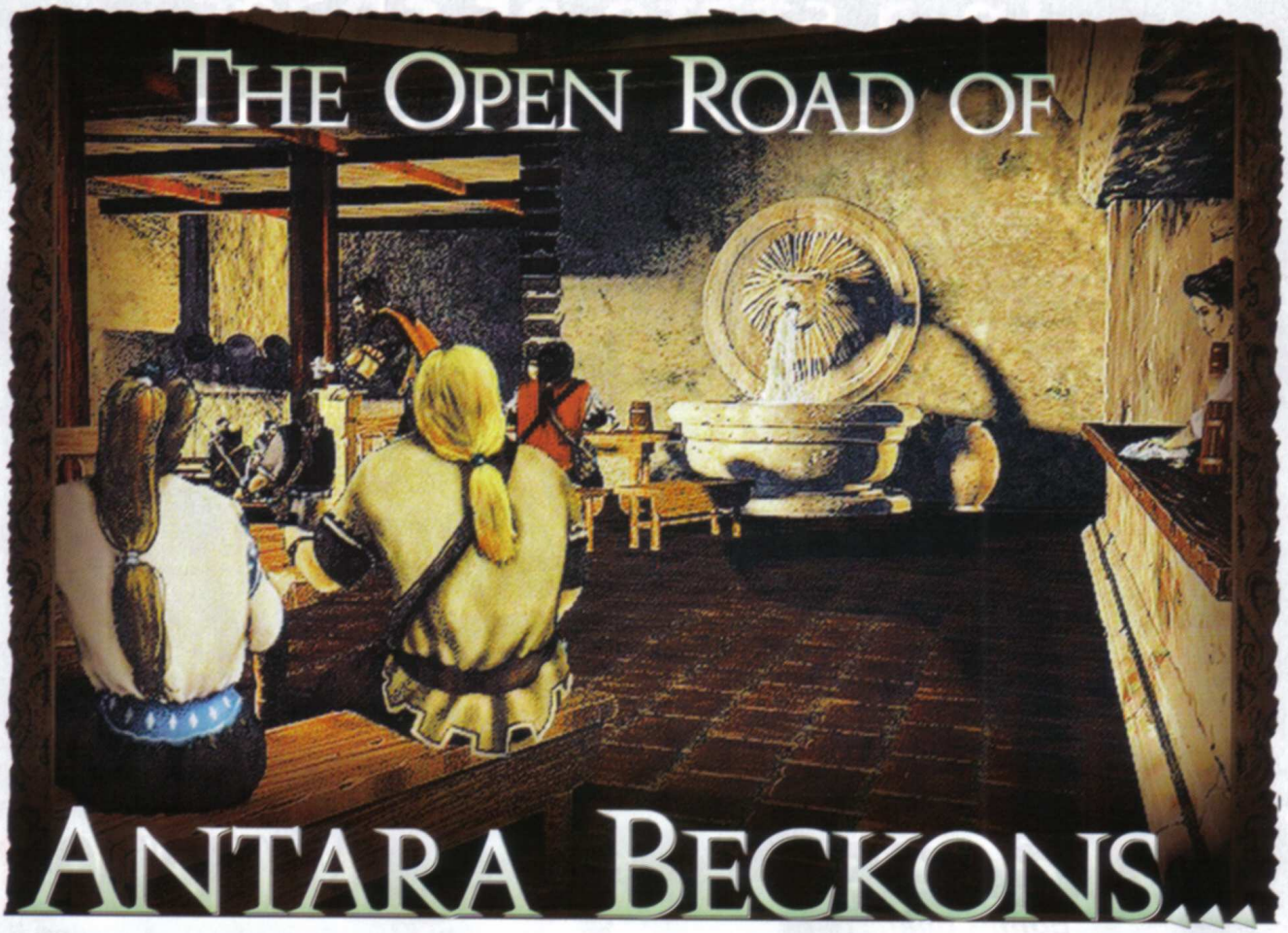
The Open Road of Antara Beckons...



Fantasy writer William Trotter embarks on a journey through Betrayal in Antara, and uncovers a unique new breed of fantasy role-playing adventure.

Betrayal in Antara

Available: Summer

Preferred System Requirements
Pentium 90+, 16 MB RAM, Windows

Format
WIN95 CD, WIN 3.1 CD

Price
$54.95
(Order #83674)

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▷ www.sierra.com/antara/

By William R. Trotter

In the mid-'80s, the fantasy role-playing obsession naturally migrated from classic books like *The Hobbit* to computers, and became one of the most popular genres in PC-gaming history. But by the mid-'90s, the genre was showing signs of near-terminal exhaustion—game after game followed the same predictable formulas with only the most cosmetic attempts to produce something "new and different."

But in the past few years, the FRP game genre has shown signs of revitalization: new graphics technology, CD-ROM storage capacity, and game designers eager to break out of the stale old cliches have all combined to produce a handful of outstandingly deep, rich, beautifully textured adventures. After spending the last three weeks exploring the world of Sierra's *Betrayal in Antara*, I've concluded that it's one of the best of this new breed of FRP games. What follows, then, is a fantasy writer's appraisal of the game and of the particular qualities that make it special.

Show Me the Wonder

First, though, I'd better tell you where I'm coming from—i.e., what I, as a passionate reader of fantasy for 40 years, look for in this kind of game as well as some of the things that turn me off:

Atmosphere—The game must give me a plausible illusion of spending time in a real, vibrant, interesting world. Good

graphics help, of course, but they can't compensate for weak design and threadbare ideas (indeed, some of the best FRP games, such as the delectable *Magic Candle*, had graphics that look positively primitive by today's standards). As with fantasy fiction, a good game must provide that crucial "willing suspension of disbelief."

Four friends driven by fate to pursue a dangerous quest they don't fully understand.

I want to feel that I can win—Death and failure must be ever-present possibilities, but so must an ultimate triumph, no matter how hard-won. Designing a game that strikes this elusive balance between too easy and too hard is damned difficult, but it should be the Prime Directive for any programming team worth its salt.

Freedom—I want freedom to roam, to make my own decisions and discover their consequences and, through that process, to acquire insights, skills, and artifacts that will make me and my in-the-game alter egos wiser, tougher, and more proficient. Don't strait-jacket me with predetermined paths.

Useful, intuitive puzzles—I don't want to beat my brains out trying to solve puzzles, mazes, and traps that are designed not to enrich the context of the world where the adventure takes place, but are thrown in gratuitously just to prove how much cleverer and more devious the designers are than the average person who plays the game. Exasperation is not entertainment.

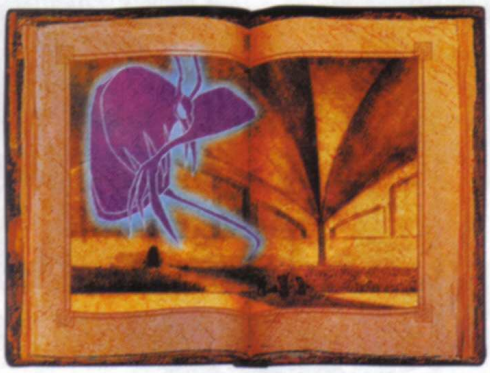
And for God's sake, *do not make me memorize* complicated spells in some kind of bogus runic alphabet!

Explore the many towns and villages of rural Antara in search of clues to your mysterious quest. Friendly residents may help.

Hitting the Road in Antara's Realms

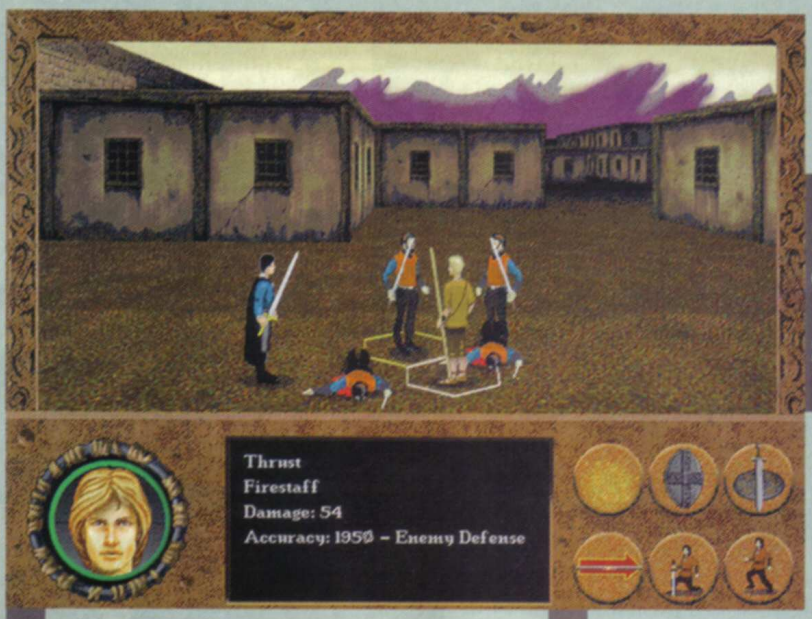
In terms of immersive atmosphere, *Betrayal in Antara* displays both strength and consistency. Its first-person "traveling" viewpoint provides a real sense of "being there" and the inclusion of an automatic road-following mode (so you don't need to make constant adjustments in direction) is a very thoughtful feature.

Its three-dimensional landscapes have a brooding, rather Nordic look (I once lived in Finland for a year, and was frequently reminded of the wild forested vistas of that ruggedly beautiful land): gloomy forests, frowning cliffs, cold-looking seas, dove-gray skies, exotic plants and flowers that add little splashes of color for contrast. When you're out roaming in the countryside and the sun starts to go down, you can almost feel a chill creeping through the air. Navigating is relatively easy, with no sacrifice in realism: you have a world map (your party's location is always clearly marked), and a very useful bird's-eye map of the terrain immediately surrounding your party. Every time you visit a tavern, a shop, or a temple, its location is marked for future reference with a distinctive "cartographer's seal." These are especially handy if you visit certain places early in the game before your party's properly armed and armored. If you find them inhabited by foes that are simply too strong to beat, you can bet they're guarding something you want. By marking their location, you can come back later, with good armor and better skills, and kick their butts.



Antara plunges you right into the main story line; there's no long-winded "back story" to wade through. The recent history and political situation in a make-believe world should become apparent by means of the story itself, not some bloated 20,000-word narrative padding out the game manual. Nor, praise be, is there any baroque process of "character generation" to endure.

New Hex System Prevents Grid Lock



Combat sequences in Antara revolve around a revolutionary hex grid system that allows your characters increased freedom of movement and more opportunities to attack their enemies. You can now

move characters diagonally within the grid, therefore battles will proceed a lot more quickly.

A portrait of the character from your party that's set to fight next shows up on the screen. His or her individual fighting traits and weapons that are available are enabled in the combat moves screen. This can vary from battle to battle depending on what that character may have acquired along the journey.

Combat Tips

At first glance, the battle sequences in *Antara* may look like simple hack-and-slash melees, but the system actually allows for some fairly subtle tactics. Obviously, you stand a better chance of hitting somebody if you attack from the rear, but ganging-up is even better. If the situation permits, have two of your party concentrate on cutting out one of the enemy while the third party member, preferably the one with magic or with a ranged weapon, holds the attention of the other foemen. If you kill one enemy quickly, it seems to shake the morale of the others (as well as evening up the numerical odds), and one or more of the remaining foes—especially after sustaining a wound or two—may simply retreat off the screen.

In the early chapters, have your weakest swordsperson attack with "thrusts"—these only do 10-12 points of damage, but they land more often than other types of blows. Thus, the weakest warrior accumulates experience while still contributing to your victory. Later in the game, when everyone has beefier skill-ratings, go for the hack or the swing.

I have seen some specimens so absurdly complicated that it takes hours to figure them out and, half the time, those picky little one-point-here, one-point-there choices don't amount to much in actual gameplay. You start with two characters and soon pick up a third. One has a talent for magic, one for swordplay, and one for archery—just normal folks who are smart enough and adaptable enough to pick up new skills and gradually improve old ones through practice and experience. No "Rogues," "Clerics," or iron-thewed Barbarians, and I didn't miss them for a minute.

Eventually, one of the three characters goes off on business and a new character joins the main party for a time, but otherwise the cast remains consistent throughout. I know there are some FRP game fans who enjoy a constant parade of new faces, but I rather liked this sense of focus: one gets to know these people well, a kind of virtual bonding occurs between player and party, adding yet another ingredient to the saga's immersive power.

Indeed, if I were to single out any one aspect of *Antara* that impressed me the most, it would be this strong, compelling sense of "human-ness." To be sure, there are monsters to be fought, but for the most part, the game-world is an environment populated with human beings, human institutions, and human-

...ONE GETS TO KNOW THESE PEOPLE WELL, A KIND OF VIRTUAL BONDING OCCURS BETWEEN PLAYER AND PARTY, ADDING YET ANOTHER INGREDIENT TO THE SAGA'S IMMERSIVE POWER.

scale challenges. The designers have wisely eschewed both the overworked trappings of Tolkienian fantasy and that hoary pseudo-medievalism that can be so yawn-inducing. Instead, we're invited to explore a land that seems more like a collection of colorful Renaissance states.

Towns and villages have a "lived-in" appearance, and the vast majority of NPCs (Non-Party Characters) live more or less ordinary lives. They travel about, perform their daily chores, and bend your ear at the tavern with stories about their lives. Of course, many of them do have essential information to impart, but even these clues and event-triggers are often embedded in a context of gritty reality: farmers worried about failed crops or sick livestock, merchant sailors on strike, local politicians on the take, feuds between two prominent families—some of your most interesting quests stem from such humble origins and then gradually expand into more heroic dimensions as you delve deeper into the matter at hand.

I have always been a firm believer in Edgar Allen Poe's dictum that, in order for them to have maximum impact, the fantastic elements of a story should be as firmly grounded in recognizable reality as possible. Certainly, that seems to have been one of the guiding principles of Lead Designer Peter Sarrett, who has woven a fabulously intricate skein of narrative threads and themes that whorl, loop, and intersect and expand into rich variations, making the game anything but lock-step linear. Gradually and subtly, as you travel and learn, the larger outlines of a web of intrigue begin to take shape.

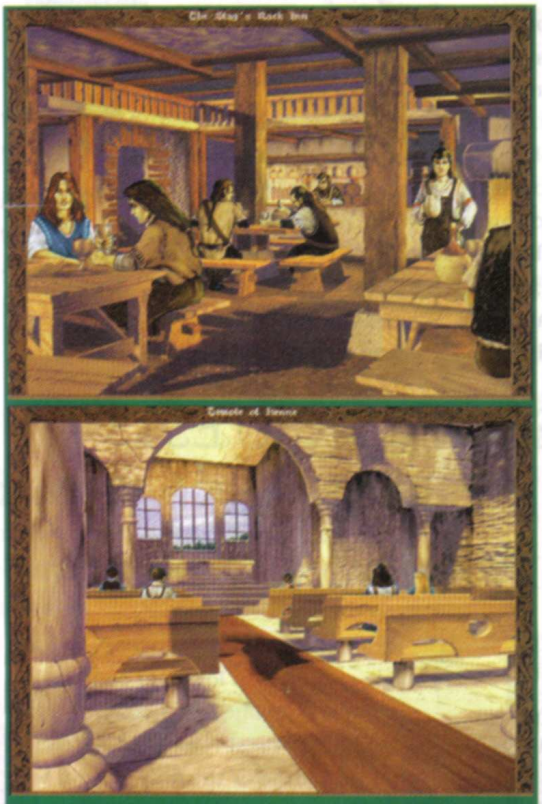
It is no mean feat of writing skill to devise a plot this elaborate and not overwhelm the player with the sheer mass of detail. Yet through skillful pacing and artful placement of incremental climaxes, Sarrett has pulled it off. While the larger themes come together and the game's ultimate objectives gradually become clearer, the day-by-day adventuring remains interesting enough in and of itself to hold your attention.

The Nuts and Bolts

The interface is smooth and friendly—it practically reaches out and takes you by the hand. Traditional chores such as inventory management and game-world interaction are handled simply, cleanly, and logically.

Skill development and improved magical prowess take place much more slowly than in most FRP games—you can't just bash through the first couple of levels and build up points as though you were on steroids. At times this can be a little frustrating (How many brigands *do* I have to kill before my "Melee" skill goes up by one measly point?), but the tradeoff is a real sense of progress when you *do* gain a point.

Spell-casting is not overly complicated (you can even set the magic-learning system to work automatically until you



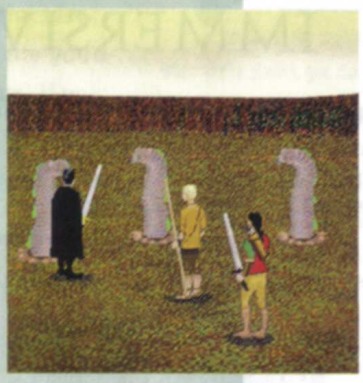
Shop for goods (and rumors) in the many stores and taverns. Or visit the temples to find healings and blessings—for a price.

Enjoy the Show

A lot of FRP games take themselves much too seriously. Part of the charm of *Antara* is that it knows when to lighten up. Sometimes you'll want to talk to everyone in a village, not out of grim determination to track down an elusive conversational clue, but simply because the game is populated with colorful, earthy, eccentric, and occasionally loony characters. Take your time; visit a while; chat with folks—you may not learn anything critical to winning the game, but you'll enjoy the encounters.

Worm Fights

From a distance, they look like bulbous, segmented plants; up close, they look like disgusting giant leeches. What they are is Field Worms, a common Antaran pest, and the first time you run into them, you'll find them very frustrating opponents—they can dive underground (like the critters in the movie *Tremors*) and suddenly pop up behind you or right in your face. They're also very good at avoiding your blows and thrusts. While they're not actually venomous, they can certainly kill you with repeated strikes of their sucker-covered heads.



Fear not: in one of the early villages you explore, you'll find a shop that sells what looks like a set of bongo drums. Buy them (even though you won't learn how to use them until you run into the proper NPC a bit further in the game). Next time you meet up with some Field Worms, have the party member with the drums play a little music (click twice on the drums in the inventory screen), and the creatures will instantly become hypnotized and docile. They'll either run away when you attack, or just stand around swaying to the music while you slaughter them. Piece of cake.

mechanisms on treasure chests (remember to save before you open one, because a lot of them are booby-trapped!), and most of them struck me as reasonably brain-teasing without being so arcane and stumping as to bring the action to a screeching halt for hours of head-scratching frustration. Again, it's a matter of balance.

In combat, the point of view shifts from first person to a top-down miniatures- style display, with movement and range based on the familiar hex-grid system. Fighters can choose to "thrust," "swing," or "hack" at their opponents. Thrusting has a greater chance of success, but inflicts fewer damage points than a swing or a hack. Very logical. Battle animations are colorful and satisfying, especially when a dying foe screams and crumples into a bloody heap. And, of course, there are various potions and powders that can make fighters thrive on constant battles), but there were times when it became a real chore. Sometimes I would dispatch one group of bad guys, search their bodies for loot, then resume my journey, only to see yet another bunch of enemies waiting just down the road... over and over again. *(Antara beta testers agreed with Mr. Trotter that there was too much combat in the game. So, the team cut about 15% of the combat sequences—Editor)*

That quibble aside, however, *Betrayal in Antara* scores big in the areas that matter most to this fantasy fan: it gives you a big, detailed, believable world to explore; it keeps the mechanics of play simple; it has a strong, clever, immersive story; it features believable characters in roles both large and small; and it looks great on your monitor screen. It also sounds great, thanks to some imaginative sound effects and a very effective musical score by David Henry. While playing a PC game and reading a novel are two very different activities, I got hooked on *Antara* the same way I can still get hooked by a good fantasy novel. *Betrayal in Antara* is a fantasy game crafted with love and consummate skill. Frankly, it delivers the goods.

SOME OF YOUR MOST INTERESTING QUESTS STEM FROM SUCH HUMBLE ORIGINS AND THEN GRADUALLY EXPAND INTO MORE HEROIC DIMENSIONS.

become comfortable with its conventions), and you can set the computer to allocate a certain amount of spare time for weapons and armor repair. Or, you can do it yourself, whenever you make camp or stay at an inn.

Puzzles usually appear as locking temporarily more lethal or bring them back from the brink of death with restorative powers.

If I have one criticism about the game's basic design, it is this: there's just too much combat. I know this is a very subjective area (many FRP gamers

And now, I must return to the realms of Antara to savor the final few chapters of the game—the sun is rising over a great forest, my companions are stalwart and true, and great deeds remain to be done. The open road beckons.

BIRTHRIGHT™: Gorgon's Alliance™ takes role-playing adventure games (and Ken & Roberta Williams' son, Chris) to places they've never been before.

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By Chris Williams

I've never been a big fantasy role-player—so when *InterAction* assigned me to review a new TSR™ title, I was a bit confused. After all, I've known TSR for years. Who hasn't heard about the *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® board and dice games? But strategy games are my passion—why were they handing me this game? Since I was short on cash and they were offering me a gig, I thought I'd give it a try.

The name of the game is *BIRTHRIGHT*. Until recently, it was only available as a non-computerized role-playing game. The folks at Synergistic Software have made a computer game out of it, and that's a good thing. This is one complex piece of work—you won't believe how many different variables there are in it. You see, *BIRTHRIGHT* is a role-playing game, but it's also an adventure game, an action game, a strategy game, and—yes—a war game. It's a little bit of everything, really. At first, I have to admit I was

a little overwhelmed with it all, but once I jumped in, it wasn't as hard as it looked. Before I knew it, I was having the kind of fun I usually have only when I'm playing *Lords of the Realm II*.

Since *BIRTHRIGHT* is all-encompassing, the designers decided to divide the game into three parts, which I think was a great idea.

The Adventure portion of it plays similarly to the original *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* game. You control a small band of characters who travel through dungeons and forests in an exploration party. Your band is portrayed in an actual 3D space, evading visible goblins, jumping over pits, fighting, and generally having a good time.

There have been computer games out there for years that feature this kind of play, but the way it's presented in *BIRTHRIGHT* is much more true to the original *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* role-playing game. You can practically hear the dice being rolled, deciding the fates of your actions. The player tables, attribute charts, etc., of the board game are all actually here for you to look at. I get the feeling I'd have had a distinct advantage if I'd ever bothered to read the directions and figured out what all this stuff actually meant.

The enemies you encounter in *BIRTHRIGHT* are nothing compared with your ultimate enemy—the evil Gorgon.

"The really great thing about having three parts to this game is you can play each individually, or you jump into Combine Mode where all three sections work together."

(Note: I really don't recommend you try Combined Mode right off the bat. This is a very "deep" game.)

The Tactics section is my favorite part of the game. You play the role of Commander of the Troops and get to invade other countries or defend against invasions—which happens a lot too. You make the decisions on troop movements, attack formations, etc. Though this section links in with the other parts of *BIRTHRIGHT*, making it one unified game, I found I enjoyed this part the most, and played it as a stand-alone game. It was fun to "tinker around" with it. I got to the point where I could successfully take out up to three units of enemy troops with just a single group of archers—sheerly through evasion!

The Strategy section of the game is where the challenge of *BIRTHRIGHT* is really won or lost. Have I mentioned that the real goal of *BIRTHRIGHT* is to crush the Gorgon Alliance and earn the right to the Iron Throne? Probably not.

In the Strategy section, you take on the role of the real "Supreme Commander" of your country and get to decide the overall foreign policy of your country. You decide where to go to war, where to make alliances, etc. Assassinations, curses, and subterfuge are part of it. It's a fun little romp if you're one of those types that likes to fight dirty.

The really great thing about having three parts to this game is you can play each individually, or you jump into Combine Mode where all three sections

***BIRTHRIGHT* features a new twist to traditional FRP games: real-time combat sequences.**

Chris Tip:

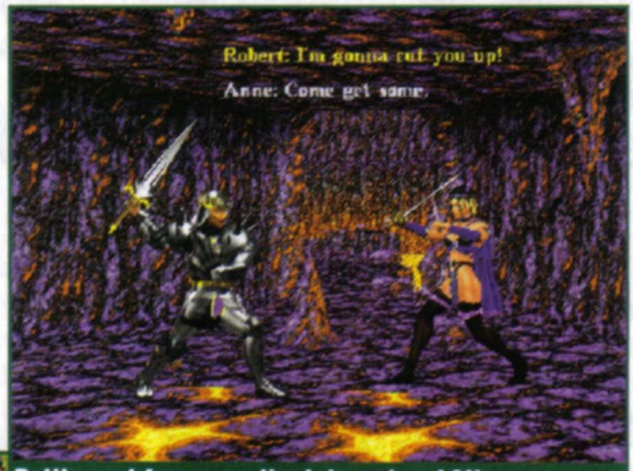
Whoever said "money can't buy friendship" never played BIRTHRIGHT. You can "buy" allies throughout the game—so have plenty of cash available. I've found that giving allies a lot of gold up front is better than paying allies a tribute each turn. It seems that to get a country's attention, you need to offer more in tribute each turn than you'll likely receive back in taxes. There's no profit in that!

work together. (Note: I really don't recommend you try Combined Mode right off the bat. This is a very "deep" game. Slide in a little bit at a time or you'll be over your head in a hurry.)

I also like the multiplayer options. Frankly, the only person I really ever play multiplayer games with is my Dad, and I know I'm going to get really good at *BIRTHRIGHT*. I plan to turn the big guy into a greasy little smudge on the carpet next time I get the chance. I might also "reach out and crush" my brother DJ in Vail if I can get him to take some time away from his new job.

***BIRTHRIGHT* comes loaded with all of the magic, intrigue, and suspense of the popular board game.**

saying they combined game genres. Well, there is a reason why they're in the bargain box. Basically, they just couldn't do it right, while *BIRTHRIGHT* treats each genre with the respect it deserves. You really do have three different ways to address the challenge of the game. *BIRTHRIGHT* isn't just three games in one box. It's actually three very involved gaming experiences that combine to make an absolutely colossal gaming experience. In my book, that makes it worth the shackles—even on the pittance that I get paid.

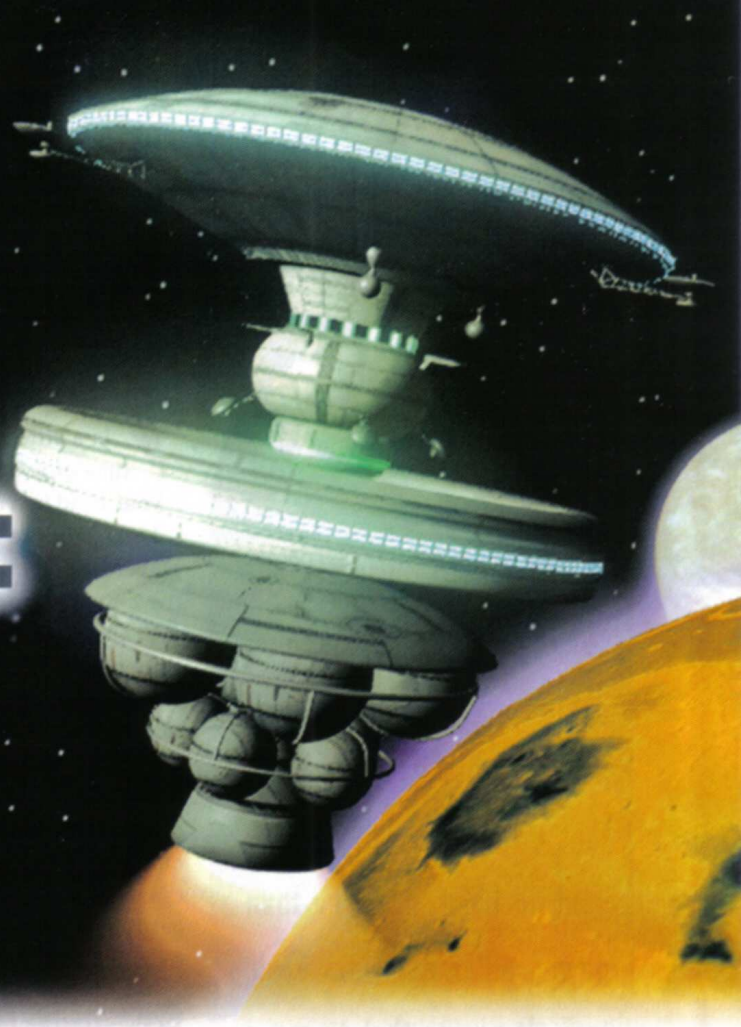


Battle real foes over the Internet or LAN.

The campaign map interface lets you keep an eye on your enemies while you establish yourself.

Bottom line: *BIRTHRIGHT* isn't just another fantasy role-playing game. It's a very different gaming experience. It does encompass role-playing, but it also includes some other forms of computer gaming. You've probably noticed other games on the shelf

GETTING INSIDE Outpost 2: DIVIDED DESTINY



"Commander, a volcanic eruption is imminent. Evacuate the colony and rendezvous at the mining beacon north of our location." *–The Eden Savant Computer*

Outpost 2: Divided Destiny

Preferred System Requirements
Pentium 60+, 16 MB RAM, WIN95

Format
WIN95 CD

Available Summer

Price
$49.95
(Order #83726)

RP

▷ 1•800•757•7707
▷ www.sierra.com/outpost2/

By John Sauer

Take a city-building game with a military edge such as *Caesar II*, combine it with the ability to research a la *Civilization II*, and add the real-time intensity of *Warcraft*. Put a wicked science fiction spin on the gameplay and you have *Outpost 2: Divided Destiny*, the long-awaited sequel to the original *Outpost*.

If there was ever a Sierra title that begs for close scrutiny, this is it. *Outpost 2* follows an original that established both the very best and worst of what colony-building sims can be. Hundreds of thousands of gamers and magazine editors are waiting for *Outpost 2* to either shred it—or praise its virtues to all who will listen. There's a lot riding on the success of *Outpost 2*, including Sierra's ability to learn from the past and release strategy titles that deliver on every level.

Developed at the Dynamix division in Eugene, Oregon, *Outpost 2* features colony-building strategy and a mission-based, real-time, active environment that allows players to find many paths to one common goal. That goal is to build a spaceship and escape from New Terra, a planet beset by a terraforming microbe gone rogue.

Us Against Them

Outpost 2 is set against a hard science fiction background with a story worthy enough to be included with the game as a separate novella, written by Oregon-based writer J. Steven York. View the expertly

A twisting, terrifying funnel of wind, the vortex wipes out anything in its path.

Encounter a variety of natural disasters across an entire planet.

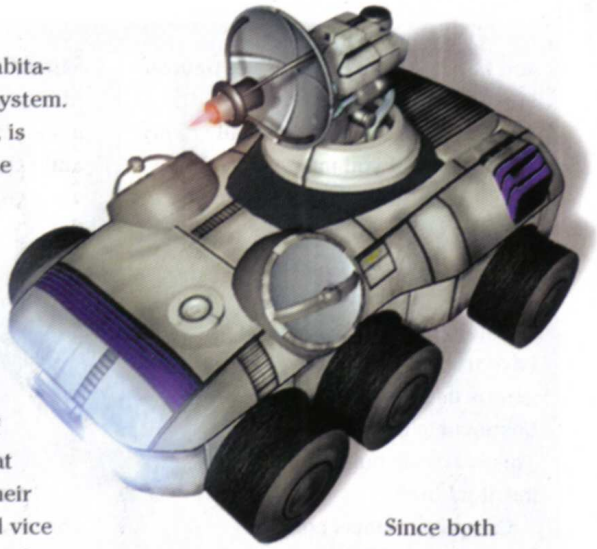
Quality factory production is critical to your colony's ultimate success.

crafted AVI introduction, and you see a spaceship fleeing Earth—as our very own "third rock from the sun" is pounded into smithereens by a gigantic asteroid with the daunting name of Vulcan's Hammer. The ship orbits around New Terra, the only planet suitable for human habitation in a binary star system. Eden, the first colony, is founded. But when the Edenites begin terraforming the planet with a bioengineered microbe, a group of dissatisfied colonists break off and form Plymouth, the second colony. Of course the colonists at Plymouth blame all their troubles on Eden, and vice versa, building plenty of conflict into the game.

That's where you enter the picture. In single-player games, you can play as either colony, with a full set of buildings and vehicles to control. But that management is all too fleeting. And that's where the fun begins.

Disasters, Naturally

Almost as quickly as you begin playing, your colony is basically destroyed by a cataclysmic disaster. The Eden terraform microbe, it seems, has decided that it's more fun to take the planet apart than to make it into a carbon copy of Earth. Sooner or later, the microbe is going to win. "The ultimate goal of *Outpost 2* is 'fleeing from the microbe'," says designer Allen McPheeters. "It puts a unique perspective on colony games. The little microbe causes all kinds of havoc by destabilizing fault lines. Earthquakes, volcanoes, and vortexes—supertornadoes—are just part of the fun. Instead of just trying to build a new supercolony, you must deal with the ever-growing effects of the microbe and with the potential conflicts and hostilities of the other colony—and still develop the technology necessary to get off the planet."



Since both Eden and Plymouth are hit with disasters, you're lucky if you can manage to escape with a few vehicles, personnel, and building kits. Essentially, you are knocked back to square one. Then you must take what you have and build anew; exploring, exploiting natural resources, building colonies, and occasionally kicking the tar out of your neighbors.

Mission Possible

Instead of offering just a relatively static game environment as was found in the original *Outpost*, in *Outpost 2* you can play two types of games: Colony Games

Morale Majority

IF YOU WANT TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL COLONY, you need happy colonists. The best way to judge their happiness with you is by checking the Morale Report. The colonists' morale can range from 0 (which means you are in deep trouble) to 99 (which means you are something close to a deity). Some of the conditions that can affect morale are:

Net Food Production–this indicates the difference between the food produced and the food used. Food surpluses are good for morale–food shortages are not.

Labor Shortages–when scientists have to be pressed into service as labor, morale drops.

and Campaign Games. Colony Games are reminiscent of the original *Outpost*—you are given a small colony as a start, and you may proceed in any manner you wish. There are no mission objectives except, of course, to keep your colonists alive. In this mode, you do not have to deal with dangerous microbes or hostile neighbors. This is colony-building at its best.

Campaign Games consist of a series of missions, each with a number of mission objectives that must be successfully achieved before you can move on. While this is reminiscent of military strategy games, accomplishing each objective and subobjective can be more rewarding than the traditional Colony Game mode of play.

Head to Head to Head...

Multiplayer LAN and Internet play in games is an absolute must these days, and *Outpost 2* has more than enough going for it to become an office after-hours favorite. You can begin the game at virtually any point with up to six players and custom-tailor the victory conditions. So, you have the potential to have games that range from mild group colony sessions to heated battles of destroy-thy-neighbor as you compete for the best mining and building sites.

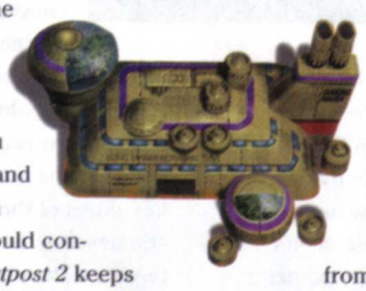
Your success hinges on such measures as the amount of ore mined, being the first to reach a certain level of technology, or wiping out your neighbor's colonies before they get you. This opens the doors to virtually endless gaming possibilities. Still, there is one consideration to be aware of when planning war, or any other decisive strategy, in single-player or multiplayer games. Your colonists—those little unseen New Terra dwellers who are the key to your success—have their own code of ethics. Try to annihilate your opponents' dwellings, schools, and nurseries, and your colonists' morale will drop and they'll abandon you. They want a savior, not a butcher, to lead them off-planet. Their morale is important and will directly influence your success or failure.

Eden—The Promised Land. The beginning of all that's good and bad.

Satellite surveillance monitors ever-changing volcano activity and lava eruptions.

Structured Play

One of the most appreciated features of the original *Outpost* was the beautiful buildings you could erect, and the ease with which you could control them. *Outpost 2* keeps the same graphic feel of the original, but adds animation to the buildings. The game also gives you complete directional control over the various types of vehicles in the game. In fact, in some instances, the game requires you to directly control the path of a vehicle, as in when you try to outrun a moving sea of molten lava.



The structures range from factories and smelters

Outpost Controversy

When the original Outpost first hit the streets five years ago, it did so with a press buildup that left everyone salivating for what was predicted to be the best resource management game ever. It almost hit the mark. But a couple of fatal omissions caused the product to fall a bit short. The game suffered because the omissions proved critical to gameplay.

While Sierra released patches, the damage was done. Few critics gave the game the credit it deserved–the interface was very intuitive, the graphics superb, and the overall gameplay a heck of a lot of fun. Even though Outpost was flamed by the press, the game still attracted legions of fans–which just goes to show that good gameplay always triumphs. Here are some of the differences between Outpost 2 and the original:

Outpost:	Outpost 2:
Turn-Based	Real-Time
Single-Player	Multiplayer: Modem/LAN/Internet
No Combat	Combat
4 Types of Terrain	Over 2,000 Types of Terrain
256 Colors	Over 65,000 Colors
Open-ended Play	Open-ended or Defined Missions

Outpost 2: Divided Destiny **Interface Reference**

Mini Map

Here you can Zoom in or out, or view your outpost from the Globe, Birds Eye, or Flat Map view.

Selection

Clicking on an object in the Detail Pane brings up a strength bar and info in the Command Pane.

Report Displays

Factories
Labs
Resources
Communications
Space
Game

Detail Pane

Here you will oversee and command your colony. This is where the action is!

Status Bar

The status bar gives you real-time data like Cursor Coordinates, Hot Key information, incoming chat and chat entry.

Metal storage indicator shows metal units available for colony.

Command Pane

Your primary source of information about what is going on in your colony.

Clicking on objects in the Detail Pane brings up Unit, Structure, and Report Displays in this window.

Commands

Stop
Attack
Stand Ground
Guard
Set Route/Patrol
Self Destruct
Transfer

Colony Game Mode

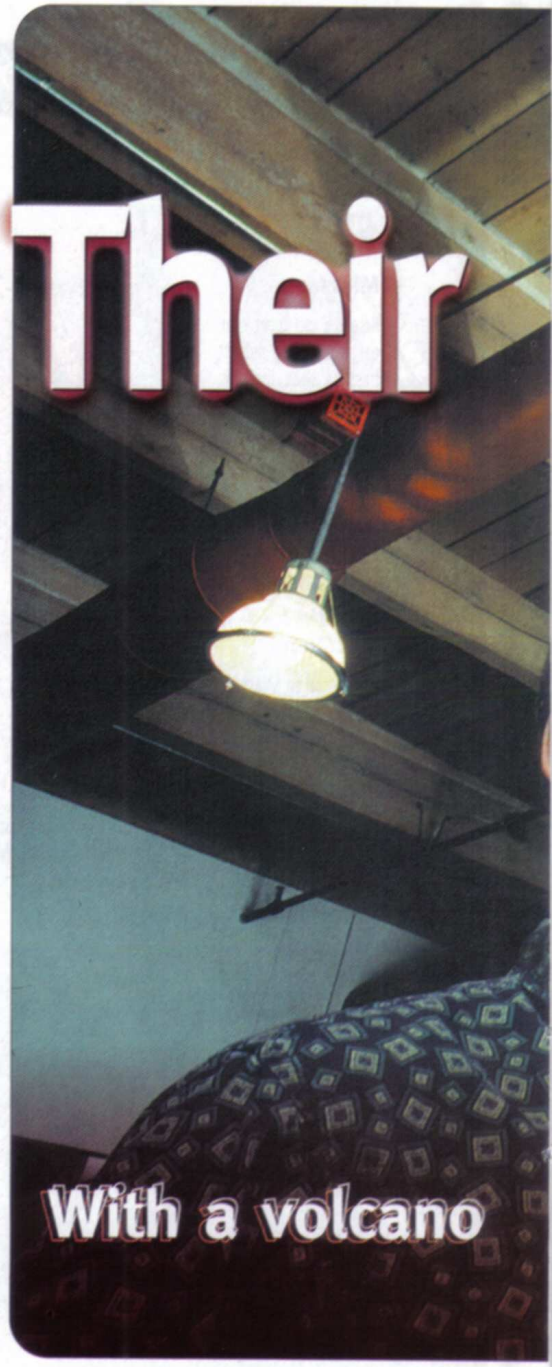
Outpost 2 features a Colony Game mode that gives gamers the option of engaging in straight-forward colony building–from the ground up–without having to worry about any us-versus-them conflicts.

Here you begin a colony from the ground up–placing buildings, scouting for ore, researching and developing new technologies, and evolving your colonists. Your greatest enemies are volcanoes and meteor strikes, and disasters you cause through mismanagement.

Since this mode is not timed you can build your colony for thousands of years, until you cover the planet or run out of resources–whichever comes first.

to housing and command centers. When you make your escape from Eden or Plymouth, make sure that one of the kits you evacuate is a basic factory. This allows you to create base structures necessary for survival and advancement. Some structures are necessary, such as nurseries if you want to increase the size of your population, and universities if you want to train scientists so that you can research new technologies and create new types of buildings. Okay, we know that *Outpost 2* is rolling out with bold plans. But will it deliver on the promise of challenging, real-time colony-building, resource management, and the opportunity to wage a little deep-space warfare? Sierra would be just tooting its own horn if we simply said yes. What we will say, though, is that *Outpost 2* is worthy of having you check it out. Judge for yourself by taking a look at the *Outpost 2: Divided Destiny* demo on the *Outpost 2* page on Sierra's website: **www.sierra.com/archive/demos/**.

Lords of Their With a volcano



By David Senan

Nestled somewhere in the holy land of academic excellence, between the hallowed halls of Harvard University and the legendary laboratories of M.I.T., lies Impressions Software. Some have said the name Impressions is synonymous with its founder and strategy-game design legend David Lester. Very, very true. But with David returning overseas to establish Impressions U.K., Impressions Software (U.S.A.) is undergoing a face-lift. A face-lift not to its focus of designing innovative games that challenge the very definition of the strategy game genre, but rather to the pool of talent lending itself to the look, feel, and enjoyability of these games. In close collaboration with Creative Director Chris Beatrice, four young designers are paving a path onto your PC and into the consecrated corridors of the Strategy Hall of Fame.

To describe these designers as young is accurate; to assume that youth means inexperience is a big mistake. Fact is, Gregor Koomey, Jeff Fiske, Doug Gonya, and Steve Serafino have a wide range of experience that most of us will never achieve. All four have served many roles in the development process at Impressions. Starting as either Technical Support or Quality Assurance representatives, all possess an inside knowledge of not only what features define a great game, but also how gamers themselves define a great strategy game experience.

Impressions designers Doug Gonya (above) Jeff Fiske, Steve Serafino and Gregor Koomey.

"I spent a couple of years in Tech Support, where I made lots of suggestions and complaints about the games we were working on," says Koomey, who is designing *Lords of Magic*, a dynamic fantasy game riding on its promise to deliver a delicate balance between resource management, exploration, and real-time combat. "Strategy games involve decision making and position building...they reward intelligence over brute force," Koomey explains. "Resource management is the primary source of enjoyment and pain in gameplay, and it's the most difficult thing to properly balance."

Lords of Magic is just one of Impressions' upcoming titles that offers users choices. Choices, at the outset of a game, make for unlimited replayability and a unique campaign every time you sit down and boot up your computer. "Great strategy games are compelling because you know that the decisions you make involve several levels of depth," suggests Fiske, who was lead designer on *Robert E. Lee: Civil War*

Own Destiny

of ideas erupting from their heads, Impressions' designers make their careers morphing concepts into code.

General—a unique fusion of historical simulation and strategy game with enough mass appeal to outsell every other war game in 1996. "The choices you make in the game *now* will affect you hours later."

With all of the accolades and fan loyalty that *Robert E. Lee* received, it must be a great comfort to Doug Gonya, the man assigned to design its sequel, *Civil War Generals II: Grant, Lee, Sherman*, to know that Fiske is just down the hallway, ready to help out.

Gonya was a "no-brainer" when the team looked for a designer for *Civil War Generals*. "I was the scenario designer for *Robert E. Lee*," Gonya explains. "This entailed an enormous amount of historical research for creating the unit/weapon/leader databases, the maps, and the scenarios themselves. My educational background is in engineering and history. I have always been interested in games and I've gained an ability to analyze the underlying mechanics of them. The combination of these three abilities makes me well suited to designing historical computer games," he concludes.

All of the designers at Impressions agree that the future of strategy games—of all PC games—lies in the Internet and the advent of multiplayer games and real-time virtual worlds.

"The Internet will play a big role in the future of strategy games," explains *Captives* Designer Steve Serafino. "Game developers will someday create a virtual reality for players to link into. This is happening somewhat now, but as the technology increases, the complexity of these gaming systems will vastly improve."

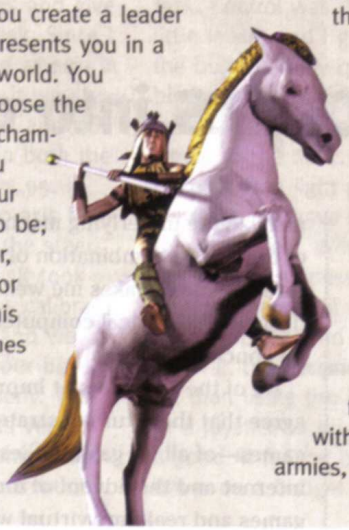
"Once the Internet works at reasonable speeds, we'll be able to have huge real-time worlds where games won't be limited to a few players or a few hours," adds Koomey. "Imagine a game where you could play for a while, then come back a week later and pick up where you left off, while the game has progressed without you."

This infatuation gamers have with the Internet stems from their desire to compete against real people, rather than just computer-controlled enemies whose every move and reaction is predetermined by the game's AI (artificial intelligence). Competing against real people from all over the world makes games a lot more fun. "Already I can find human opponents at 11 p.m. and have a much more stimulating gaming experience," Fiske explains. "And in

LORDS OF MAGIC

Lords of Magic isn't your typical strategy game. It builds on the dramatic features that made both **Lords of the Realm** and **Lords of the Realm II**, two of the most talked-about games in the strategy genre since there was such a thing. But don't be fooled—**Lords of Magic** (**LOM**) is not a sequel to **Lords II**. **LOM** combines turn-based exploration and resource management with real-time combat. It's the number of choices in **LOM** that set it apart from other strategy games. More choices mean more possible outcomes and unlimited replayability.

At the beginning of each game, you create a leader who represents you in a fantasy world. You must choose the type of champion you want your leader to be; a Warrior, Wizard, or Thief. This determines the way you will manage your empire throughout your quest. If your leader is a Warrior, the cities you establish will yield strong warriors and armies. Wizards are cool because their most powerful weapons are spells, some of which can transform the very makeup of the land. Thieves are equally resourceful because they can become invisible, making them awesome spies—strong in the areas of surprise attacks and captive rescue missions.



With such varied traits for each champion type, you're probably wondering how you can succeed without all of these traits. Simple answer: **alliances**. You can win the game by conquering the world yourself or in alliance with other players. When you encounter other races and champions, you can either fight them or attempt to **parley** with them—a risky yet often effective means of forming alliances with other players, armies, or cities. Here's a little hint: your quest to save the realm stems from the fact that your archenemy, Balkoth, has formed an alliance with the Barbarians and is storming across the countryside taking anything that isn't nailed down. The Dark Lord isn't fighting alone; what makes you think you should? Alliances are often another name for temporary truces. Not true in **Lords of Magic**. While strong alliances aren't essential for success, they sure are a good place to start.

LEVEL-HEADED: Create worlds in the included scenario editor. Lords of Magic combines turn-based strategy with the adrenaline rush of real-time action battles.

the future, it's only going to get better."

Doug Gonya believes the future of strategy games lies in creating more detailed and sophisticated back ends, while making the user interface easier to use. "Games are getting bigger—instead of portraying a single battle, games now include all of the battles in the war," he explains. "The complexity of games continues to rise but the ease of use has more than kept pace. People want games to be all-encompassing, but they don't want to have to fight the game's interface in order to play," Gonya concludes.

Impressions' Creative Director Chris Beatrice (top) and General Manager Peter Haffenreffer.

But before addressing the future, the designers at Impressions are focused on inventing unique fantasy worlds that literally immerse gamers in distant worlds and force them to adhere to an alternative set of rules. Serafino offers a simple definition of what successful game design means. "If you can successfully take players out of their reali-

LORDS II: SIEGE PACK

When Impressions Founder David Lester decided that real-time combat was the missing link in strategy games, he revolutionized the genre. Previously, old-school strategy gamers considered themselves above engaging in hand-to-hand combat, writing it off as more muscle than meat. Lester proved them wrong with **Lords of the Realm** and **Lords of the Realm II**, a pair of classics that set a new standard for strategy games and attracted numerous new fans to the strategy arena. The real-time combat in these games not only attracted legions of new fans, but also left hardcore strategy gamers aching for more. The time for more is now.

The **Lords II Siege Pack** is an add-on that every **Lords** fan has been waiting for. The **Siege Pack** features a new battle mode which allows you to play just multiplayer sieges and battles, without having to play an entire campaign. Other features of the **Lords II Siege Pack** include:

- All new modem and Internet support so you can conduct full-scale campaigns or just real-time battles and sieges with multiple players anywhere in the world. **Lords of the Realm II**, with support from the **Siege Pack**, will be the first game of its kind capable of playing over Sierra's Interactive Gaming System.

SIEGE AT ONCE!: The Siege Pack allows you to play quick multiplayer sieges or battles on the 'Net without having to play an entire multihour campaign.

- Twenty new Battle Maps and a Battle Map Editor so you can create your own battle scenarios and trade them with other gamers over the Internet. You can test your battles in single-player mode against the computer or battle head-to-head with gamers from all over the world.
- Twenty new country maps that will work in both the multi-player and single-player modes.
- Adjustable difficulty levels to offer gamers more choices and more flexibility.

Civil War Generals II: Grant, Lee, Sherman

Although it's the follow-up to **Robert E. Lee: Civil War General**, to call **Civil War Generals II: Grant, Lee, Sherman** a mere sequel is far from doing it justice. **Robert E. Lee** was really two games in one. To some it was a tactical strategy game filled with many of the principal battles that defined the Civil War. To others it was really a game-based simulation of the most gruesome war in our nation's history—loaded with the real leaders, troops, and battles that defined the Eastern Theater of the war. **Civil War Generals II** promises to offer campaigns of both the Eastern and Western theaters, and a "monster" campaign that covers the entire war.

Civil War Generals II also promises more "flexibility" when choosing which battles to fight and in what sequence to fight them. A smoother interface will make the game even easier for players to get into. Perhaps the most intriguing new feature is best left to Designer Doug Gonya himself: "A powerful Editor will be included as part of the game," says Gonya. "Using the Editor will allow players to create their own scenarios and link them into branching campaigns." The game will also feature Internet, modem, and LAN play. "People will be able to create their own battles and campaigns, exchange them over the Internet, and play each other in a broad variety of multiplayer modes, including the Sierra Interactive Gaming System," he concluded. **Civil War Generals II: Grant, Lee, Sherman** will be available this fall.

MAKE YOUR OWN: The new Editor allows you to set up your own scenarios and play them over a modem, network, or the Internet. Generals' improved interface will make it easier to get into strategies and war.

ty and put them in the game, you have done your job well," he concludes.

For these four designers, doing their job well also means perpetuating Impressions Software's reputation of creating innovative strategy games that set the standard by which others are judged. Impressions is not undergoing a period of rebuilding—but rather a period of creative growth and evolution. What's happening is a rite of passage for some people who have paid their dues, played a major role in establishing Impressions Software as one of the leading strategy game developers in the world, and learned a thing or two in the process. But as the captain of the ship charts a new course into unknown waters, it's up to the designers at Impressions to make sure their titles don't just stay afloat, but rather maintain their position—always two or three steps ahead of the competition.

Chris Beatrice and Gregor Koomey collaborate on Lords of Magic.

CAPTIVES

One thing the world probably doesn't need is another "stop thinking and shoot anything that moves" type of game. They can be fun, but sometimes the attention-starved, proactive side of your brain gets jealous of the reactive side. Designer Steve Serafino and the **Captives** development team are currently working on a solution to that dilemma. **Captives** is an arcade-paced action-strategy game that judges your success by how many lives you **save**—not take.

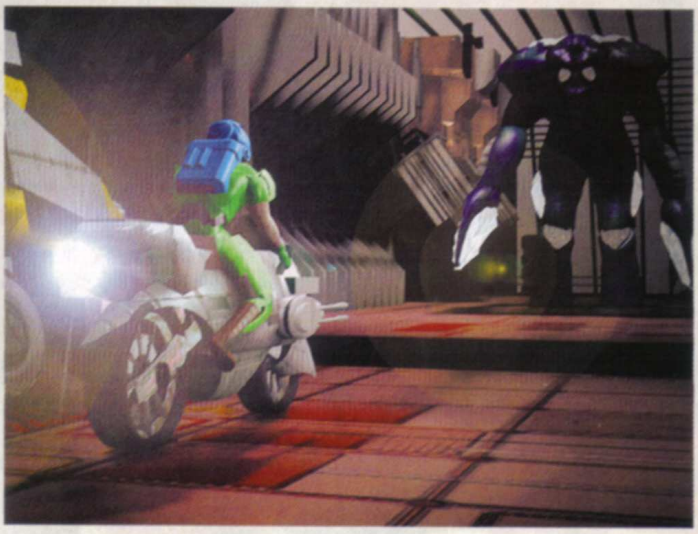
NICE RIDE: You must find vehicles along the way and upgrade them to beat the powerful aliens–or you won't make it.

The game takes place in the future on the distant planet of Rubicon. Rubicon is frequently hit by mineral-rich meteors that have left the planet dented with deep, dark craters. Many of the craters have been domed in by human colonists who call these craters home. But Rubicon is also home to evil aliens who thrive in the fissures far beneath the planet's surface. The human colonization and construction on Rubicon bring the evil aliens to the surface.

Many of the human colonists are killed instantly, while others are taken prisoner or go into hiding, waiting to be saved from their deadly fate.

Enter Daak Ransem—a renegade cargo pilot and hero for hire—your on-screen alter ego. Your (uh...Ransem's) mission is to search Rubicon for human survivors and evacuate them as quickly as possible. Ransem is a cargo pilot, not a mercenary, so your arsenal (if you can even call it that) is limited. Your most powerful weapon is your tactical mind. You must use vehicles such as helicopters, motorcycles, Hum-vees, trucks, and droids to move around the planet and transport captives to telepads that can send them to a waiting spaceship and safety. The human captives must also help you in your mission. Scientists, for example, are helpful in unlocking doors and figuring out certain mechanical devices such as complex switches. Engineers are useful for upgrading and repairing the vehicles you find and must use. Just ask **Captives** Designer Steve Serafino: "The captives are all different and have unique abilities you must use to your advantage," Serafino explains. "Some can upgrade vehicles, some can research technology, and others can jump into unoccupied vehicles to help defend you and the captive colonists. It's very different from anything else out there," he concludes. **Captives** asks you to use your mind to come up with clever strategies to make the most of the limited resources around you and save lives—all as fast as you can.

KNOW YOUR PEOPLE: The captives on Rubicon have different skills that you need to utilize to upgrade vehicles and solve complex mechanical puzzles.



Captives will feature multiple puzzle-oriented levels, gameplay that requires you to rescue rather than kill, and multiplayer capabilities that allow you to play with or against other would-be heroes-for-hire. Challenge other gamers via modem, LAN, or the Internet. Your success hinges not on the size of your arsenal, but rather the strength of your mind. Good news for strategy game fans. Good news for fans of action games. Good news for your brain.

Evil Awaits!

Introducing the most technologically advanced, multiplayer action game yet

Set in a dangerous, medieval time, Demon Isle features a state-of-the-art 3-D engine with a first person perspective to tempt your waking hours. It incorporates Fantasy Role-Playing elements into an action-oriented environment that is not for the weak of heart.

You are called upon by the ruling powers that be to save the people from the evil, demonic creatures that are invading their town. Explore the surface of an entire island and battle the evil that lurks in temples, caves, and the caverns below. Improve your skills and build up your character, and you may just find yourself in an all-out demonic war.

And if you thought demons were enough to keep you up at night, your on-line warriors will keep you goin' until breakfast. Play head-to-head or cooperatively with up to 16 players over a LAN or the Internet and battle for fame and glory.

Evil awaits. And so do 15 of your most demented friends.

Battle alone or with up to 15 of your friends.

Hordes of evil creatures never looked so good.

DEMON ISLE

Coming this Fall

www.sierra.com/demonisle

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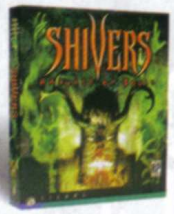
Shivers Two: An Adventure Game with a Soul

...spiced to the nines with atmosphere, intrigue, and player anticipation, the three hallmarks of a well-crafted game.

Shivers Two



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Preferred System Requirements
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4X CD-ROM, Windows

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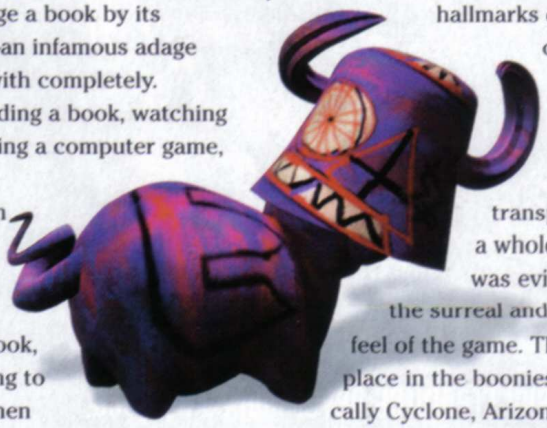
▷ www.sierra.com/shivers2/

By Geoff Keighley

"Never judge a book by its cover"—an infamous adage I agree with completely. Whether I'm reading a book, watching a movie, or playing a computer game, what separates the sublime from the mundane is atmosphere and suspense. When I read a book, I want to be dying to flip the page. When I play a game, I want to be eager to click the mouse and see what develops. Without a sense of suspense and anticipation, I often find games to be monotonous, lacking any real sense of vibrancy or spirit. For Sierra's newest adventure game, *Shivers Two: Harvest of Souls*, designed by Marcia Bales, the environment is spiced to the nines with atmosphere, intrigue, and the feeling of anticipation—three hallmarks of a well-crafted game.



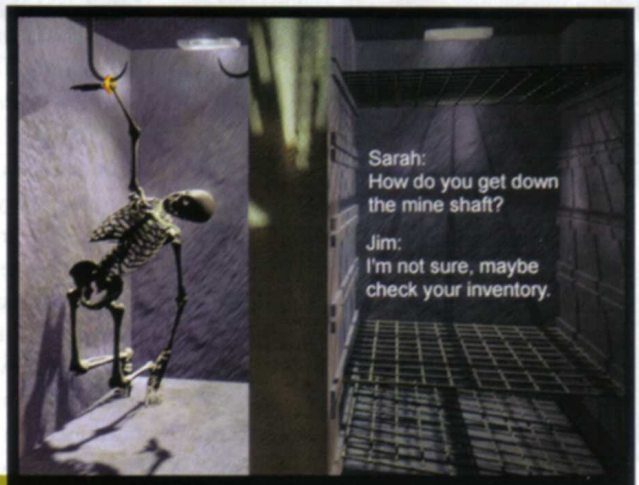
Right from the start, the feeling of being transported to a whole new world was evidenced by the surreal and artsy graphic feel of the game. The story takes place in the boonies, more specifically Cyclone, Arizona, named after a great windstorm that wreaked havoc on the land hundreds of years ago. Now, Cyclone is practically a ghost town, with a large cemetery as its

The four corners lie in a five alarm fire– and six feet under is my heart's desire

major landmark. One single neon sign left standing makes the main street look like a poor man's Las Vegas. That neon sign belongs to the Cyclone Motel.

I quickly discovered the town isn't quite your run-of-the-mill burg. Mysterious videos provided a stark contrast to the solid architectural look of the buildings that make up the landscape. Native American masks basked in the light of a rock band named Trip Cyclone. These quick, quasi-MTV segments began to unveil a story that weaves its way through the entire two CD-ROM compilation. It soon became apparent the band members, my friends, had vanished somewhere in or near Cyclone. My only communication with the band was through the music videos that were played on several different televisions around town. Some suspected the work of evil spirits in the disappearance of my friends. My worst fear was confirmed when a note appeared on the screen in pithy prose stating, "I have your friends."

As is always the case in top-notch suspense-filled games, *Shivers Two* kept me guessing about what would happen next. The plot began to unfold as a routine crime drama, but in the end, layers of mystery were added as Native American spirits started to creep out from the woodwork revealing the workings of an evil nemesis.



Chat on the Internet with other players during your game. Redesign puzzles and share them with others online.

Shivers Two Jacks into the Internet

A few years ago if you needed a hint for a game, chances are you'd have to call a special 900 number. Now with the advent of the Internet, a hint is just a few bytes away. For *Shivers Two*, Sierra built an entire Internet backbone, including online chat rooms to discuss hints and tips, as well as a special in-game mode with a chat window so you can talk to players as you explore the world of Cyclone, Arizona. Better yet, the entire Internet support for *Shivers Two* is built right into the game, and it's completely free of any special sign-up fees or charges above your regular Internet connection.

If you have access to e-mail, then *Shivers Two* has an added bonus. Users are able to e-mail puzzle files between friends and totally change the logic of their *Shivers Two* experience. *Shivers Two* is only a sample of Internet support to come in future Sierra products, but if you truly want to catch the wave of gaming on the Web–*Shivers Two* and the Internet are a perfect fit!

Going to Town

After being jettisoned into the lobby of the Cyclone Motel, the first character I met was Charles, a down-to-the-penny businessman who appeared spooked by the whole string of strangeness that has hit the town. He was suspicious of my sudden appearance in Cyclone but was still willing to rent me a room for only $37.50 a night. (The game's inventory system just happens to put $40 in your wallet at the beginning of the game.)

I soon discovered the world of *Shivers Two* is laced with intrigue. Usually a service bell on the motel's front desk summoned Charles, but as I panned around in the 360-degree environment and clicked on the bell, I heard the rustlings of gears in a jack-in-the-box to my left. All of the sudden, it popped open and revealed a strange inventory item. Unaware of its importance, I picked up the Prayer Stick and noticed that it started to deplete my life essence bar. I wondered what should I do with this item that was draining the life right out of me.

A Harvest of Souls

As my life essence continued to dwindle down, I was in desperate need of a solution. Thankfully, one click of the Map Button helped me discover Devil's Mouth Canyon, just beyond the path beside the library and Phil's Market. Once at the canyon, a sign came into focus stating, "Hazardous Conditions May Make Rescue Impossible." Somehow I knew things weren't right—I had too many questions and not enough answers. It was too late to turn back. Any minute I expected to feel a hot breath on my neck or to see a dark figure lurking in the shadows. Unfortunately, I soon found Cyclone lives up to its tumultuous name—an array of petroglyph spirits crept out from behind the canyon walls and propelled circles of fire in my direction.

This offensive maneuver by the spirits made me believe there was some-

A virtual environment that scrolls to allow 360 degrees of viewing.

thing at the end of the canyon they didn't want me to see. Indeed, I found a stone altar. As I clicked the Prayer Stick on the altar, the terror seemed to ease. Then, a strange image appeared on the screen followed by a puzzle of divergent shapes. It was the perfect contrast to a terror-filled journey through the canyon. Now, I had to use my wit to fuse all of these shapes together to create one larger pattern. In fact, *Shivers Two* appealed to my emotions and my intellect by intertwining this mystic story with various tests of logic and intuition.

But the terror at Devil's Mouth Canyon was only the beginning. There were more evil spirits, and also a ringleader presiding over the evil—an ominous creature named Darkcloud. Unfortunately, he seemed to have a trap set for me in every corner of the town. Darkcloud never really communicated with me, except for one terse remark, "Know your enemy." As I continued through strange environments such as the local Sheriff's office, I began to learn about Darkcloud's mentality. I also learned more about his army of petroglyphs—Indian spirits frozen in stone. The plot thickened when I learned these spirits could be thawed and released from their stony prison. All they had to do was capture a human and.... I immediately thought about my *human* friends in the *human* band, Trip Cyclone. Then I thought about Darkcloud, who was obviously annoyed by my persistence to discover the truth.

Next, I visited the bakery in the town, with the strange motif of deadly sea creatures painted on the walls. The store seemed vacant, until I found a hidden rattlesnake in the bakery—undoubtedly a trick devised by Darkcloud. The doughnut machine in the bakery seemed rather useless too, until I discovered it was another brainteaser. The goal was to form five stacks of two doughnuts by jumping doughnuts from stack to stack in a checkers-style puzzle environment. However, after a few of these puzzles, including guiding a spider through a twisted maze to her eggs and rearranging a series of marbles in the city warehouse, I began to think I would never see my friends again.

I began to think I would

Just in the nick of time, I unearthed another videotape from the band. Surprisingly, the song on the video, "Warm Places to Hide," brought forth the memory of an oven in a house in town. I soon ventured over to the dwelling, opened the oven, and discovered a girl's diary that could definitely help in my quest. Yes, the music videos in the game had clues embedded in

Search for clues in all of Cyclone's mysterious buildings. There's adventure and danger lurking throughout the town.

The locals in Cyclone aren't your typical townsfolk. Something's not right here.

them to help solve many of the adventure elements, but I still had to haul around a barrage of strange items such as bubble gum to use in vintage McGyver-esque ways. The music videos provided useful hints when it seemed like my friends would never be found. Though they say music soothes the soul, this was the first time I actually used it to help me recover lost souls.

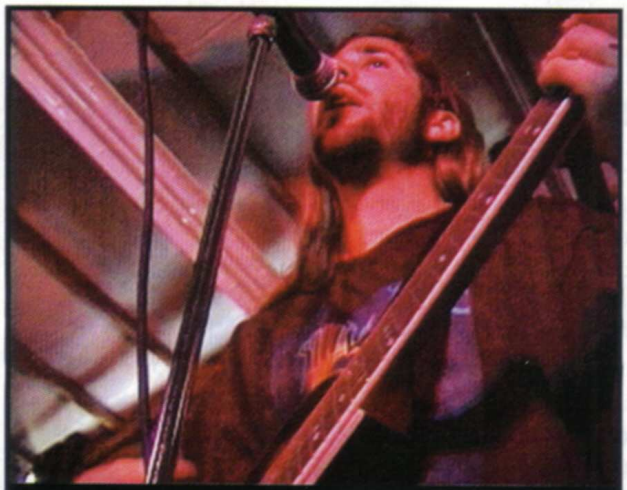
Help During the Harvest

Speaking of lost souls, I was amazed by the innovative way this game gave me the power to communicate with other wondering souls in search of answers to *Shivers Two's* many mysteries. No, the game didn't give me magic powers, but it does provide a spiffy Internet client that allowed me to contact other *Shivers Two* players while I was playing the game. This feature had a number of uses and demonstrated just how much care the designers put into making a unique, majestic game.

At its simplest, the *Shivers Two* Internet connection acts as a large chat room for swapping hints and tips. When I first logged in, I was surprised to see so many avid gamers prodding their peers for clues to the puzzles in the game. Another feature of the Internet connection allowed me to create a special scrolling window in the game so that other players could "walk me through" a particularly tough puzzle or just share the experience with me as a team. I found the camaraderie unique and reassuring.

Finally, the designers went the extra step of actually providing a puzzle builder within *Shivers Two,* so I could rework any *Shivers Two* game puzzle and e-mail it to friends. You just can't find that kind of interactive experience in other adventure games.

never see my friends again...



The videos of the rock band Trip Cyclone provide clues to their whereabouts.

Class and Consistency

While I found the large number of technological feats and other bells and whistles to be of high merit, the graphic look and feel really does deserve high praise. The core essence of the game revolves around its feeling of mystery and suspense. The puzzles, plot, and technical pizzazz all work together brilliantly.

As I played the game, the class and consistency of the art direction and design amazed me. *Shivers Two* manages to successfully mesh a very compelling and revealing tale of human nature with a series of taxing brainteasers. I enjoyed the game thanks to its multiple levels of complexity, and its ideal of giving gamers a solid and vibrant adventure game with a soul.

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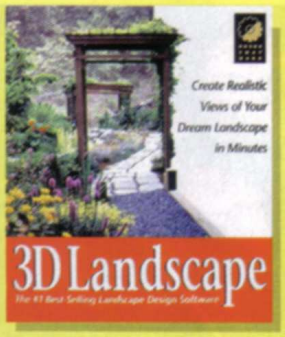

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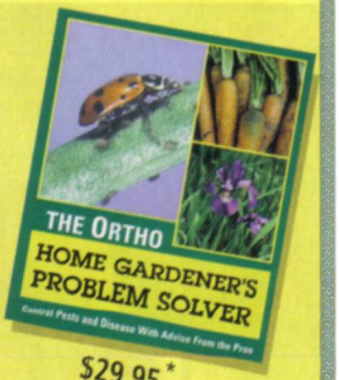

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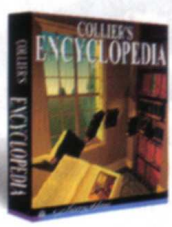

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By Nancy King

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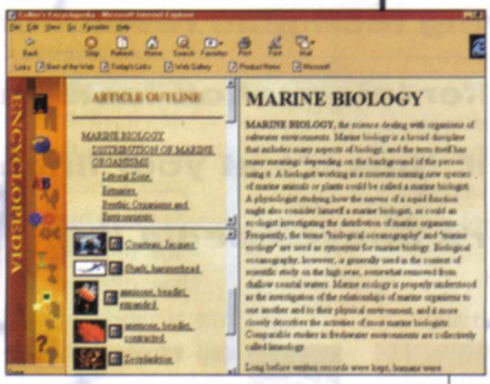

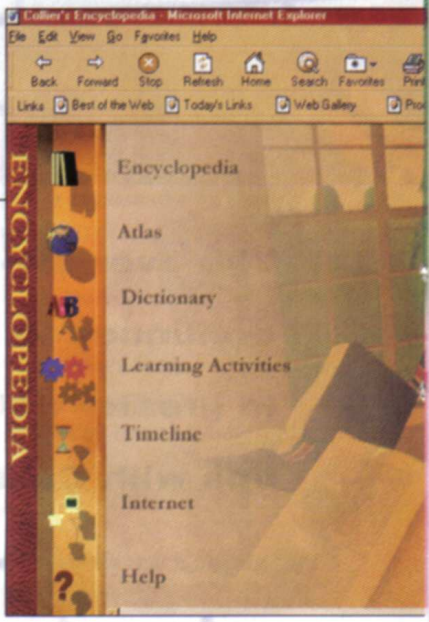

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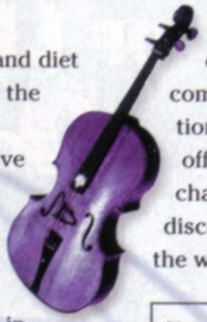
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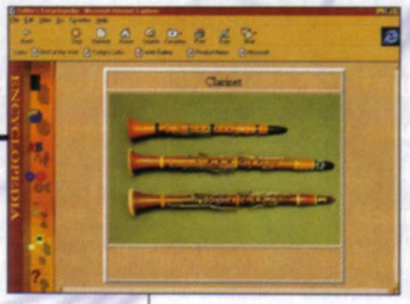

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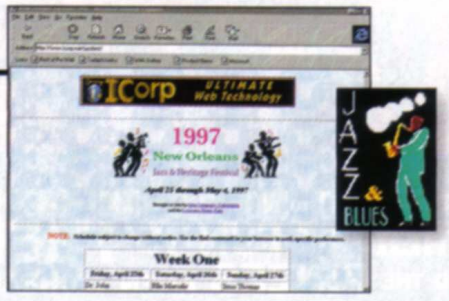

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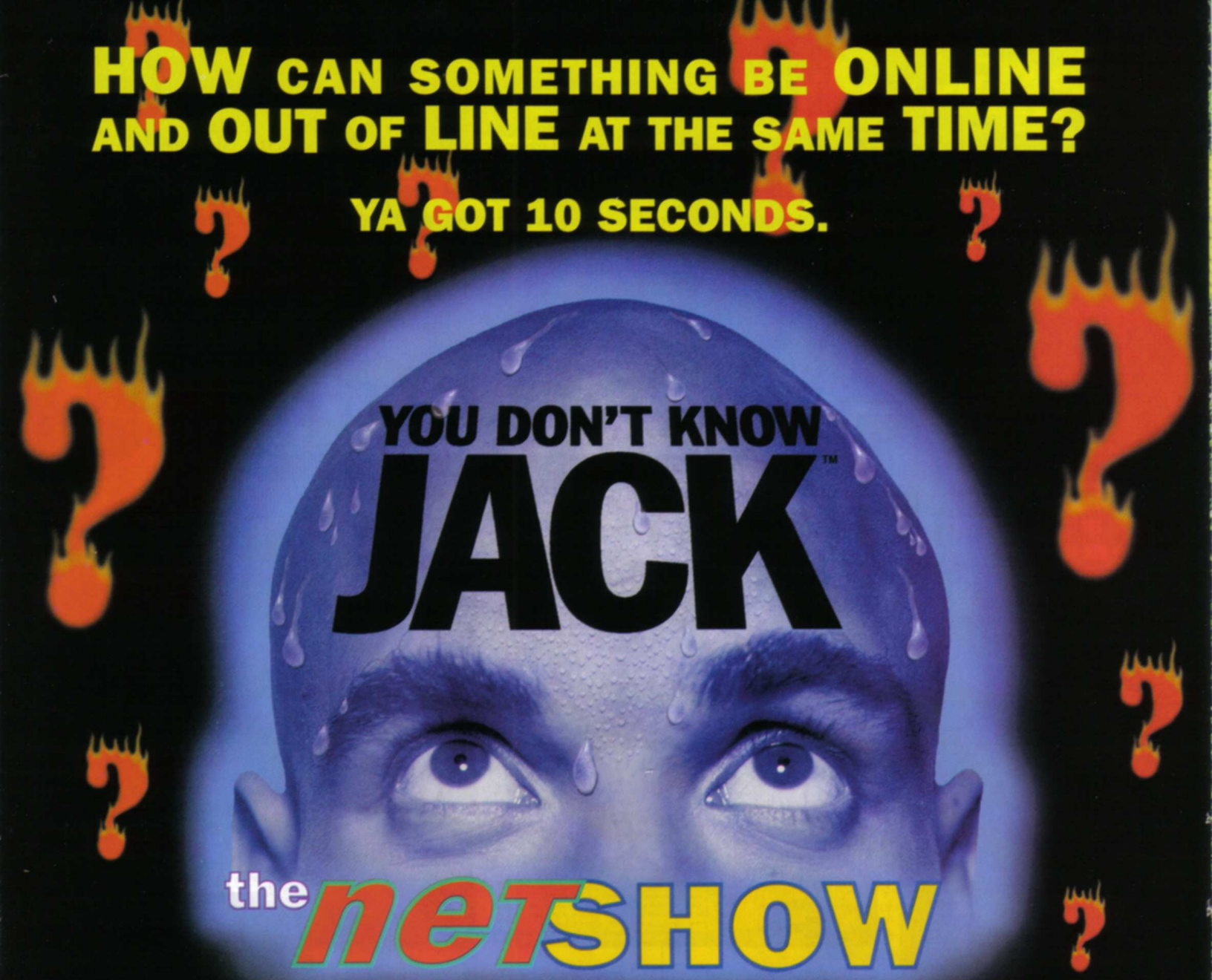

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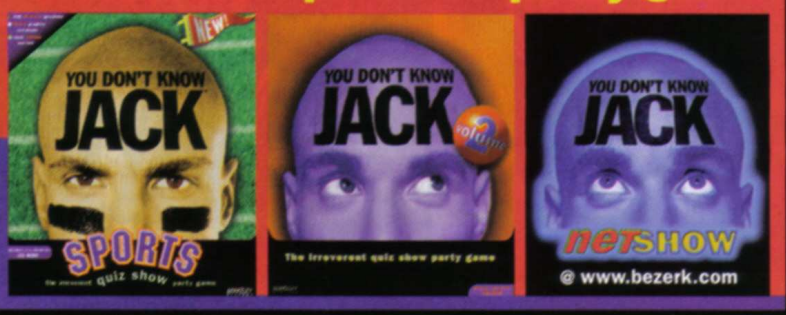

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By Nancy King

Sometimes making a home utility product better means making it even more fun to use. It was this thinking that led the *Print Artist* team to come up with the idea to bundle an updated *Print Artist 4.0* with Ulead's *iPhoto Express* and Kai's *Power Goo SE*, two photo manipulation utilities that anyone can use. In one move, the team has greatly enhanced *Print Artist*'s graphic capabilities—making it not only a lot more fun, but also one of the best values on the market today.

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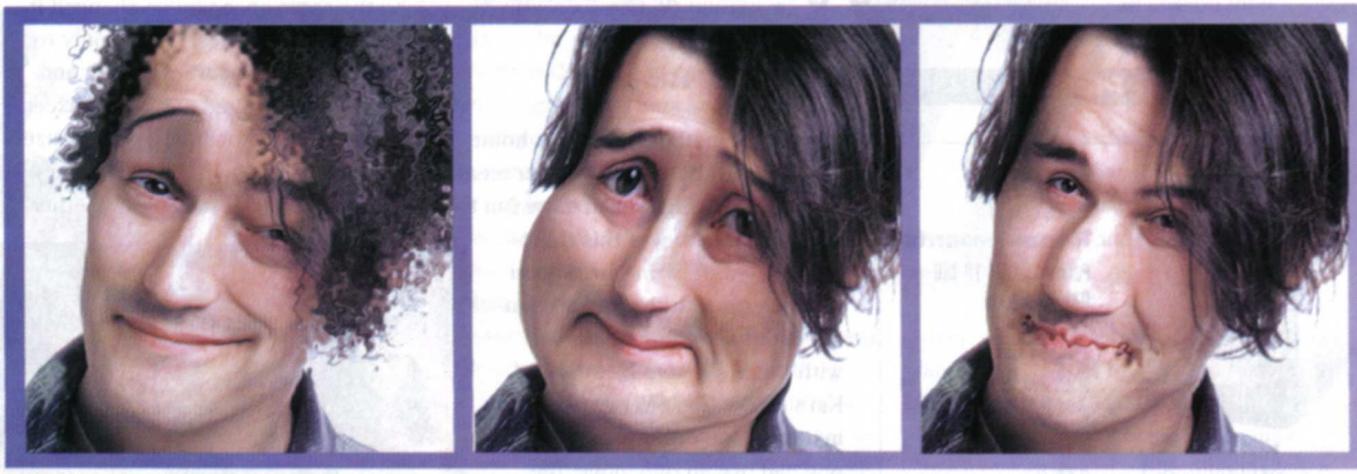

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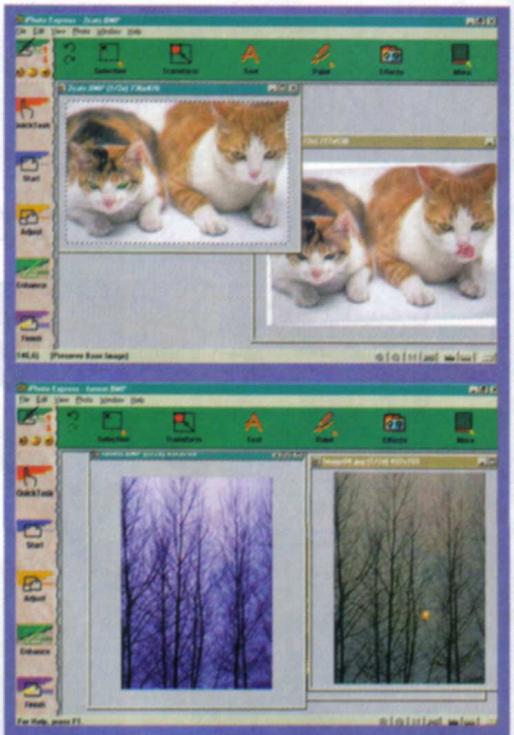

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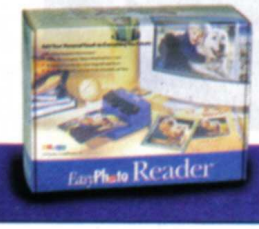

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FREE BONUS

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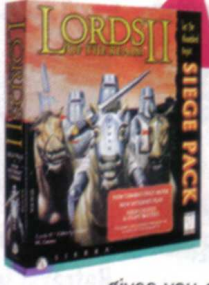
#83710 Win 95/DOS CD **$54.95**

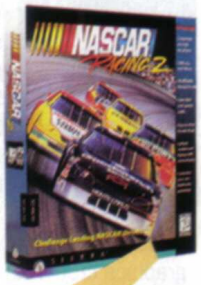


New!

Lords of The Realm II Siege Pack

Medieval conquest just got a lot tougher! The new Siege Pack for Lords of the Realm II gives you an all-new combat-only mode that lets you jump right into battle. Plus, you get 20 new battle maps and 20 new single or multiplayer countries that will test the mettle of even the most seasoned warlord. Also includes head-to-head Internet combat on the Sierra Internet Gaming System. (Requires full version of Lords of the Realm II.)

#77100 Win 95 CD **$29.95**



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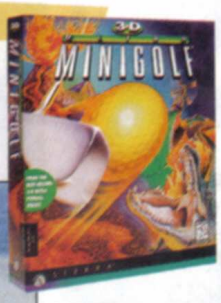
Get behind the wheel of a 700-horsepower stock car and race against the actual cars and drivers of the NASCAR® Winston Cup series. The new Rendition-Ready NASCAR® Racing 2 now includes 16 different NASCAR® tracks, all featuring incredible realism. You control all the options that real-life NASCAR® teams use to squeeze out every last ounce of speed. Also features faster frame rates, exclusive spotter/crew-chief audio, 1996 cars and drivers, plus modem and network play.

#83553 Win 95/DOS CD **$49.95**



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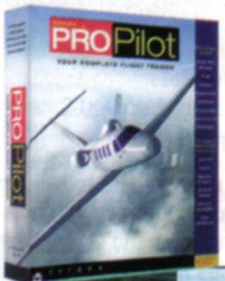
3D Ultra Mini-Golf

This isn't some walk in the theme-park mini-golf! It's 18 holes of out-of-control fun that takes the wacky world of miniature golf to a whole new level that's way beyond windmills and waterfalls. Make no mistake, 3D Ultra Mini-Golf has all the classic features you expect – the Windmill, the Big Shoe and all the rest – plus a bunch of new holes you won't believe!

#83609 Win CD **$44.95**



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Sierra Pro Pilot

Fly five popular civilian aircraft in the most complete 3D flight sim ever created. Pro Pilot takes you from initial flying lessons to solo flight and private license certification. It even includes training to qualify for a commercial pilot's license. The ultra-realistic 3D texture-mapped graphics include 29 cities across North America, over 2,500 different airports and more than 27 million coast-to-coast height references.

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(see page 48 for descriptions)

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The Antaran empire has fallen prey to corruption and decay. Now, you control the destiny of four young Antarans chosen to restore the balance of power in the ultimate fantasy role-playing adventure. Interconnected story-chapters provide visual progress markers that make each episode richly rewarding. A dynamic third-person 3D tactical system brings to life a world where magic and battle mean the difference between life and death.

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Leisure Suit Larry: Love for Sail

Al Lowe's loveable, laughable singles-scene stealer sets sail on another hilarious miss-adventure. The world's gaudiest cruise ship is the setting when the most famous character in computer gaming history sets his sights on the gorgeous Captain Thygh and a shipload of other beauties. This is the most hilarious Leisure Suit Larry yet!

#83320 Win CD **$54.95**
#13320 Mac CD **$54.95**

Birthright

Every moment is a monumental struggle for survival as you take on the role of heir to the Kingdom of Cerilla. Expand your realm through conquest and alliances in the newest fantasy world created for TSR's ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS™ game series. Features network, Internet and modem play!

#83324
Win 95/DOS CD **$29.95**

Phantasmagoria: A Puzzle of Flesh

Curtis Craig's greatest desire is to maintain the status quo, but nothing works out as he wishes when you follow him through the inexplicable, terrifying events that fill this dark tale of psychological horror. It's up to you to guide Curtis through this nightmare, uncover the secrets that haunt him, and prove his guilt or innocence. The sequel to last year's biggest hit thriller is definitely designed for mature gamers only. Play at your discretion!

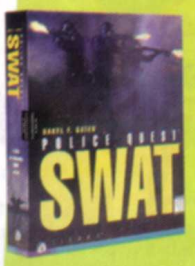
#83288 Win 95 CD **$54.95**

FREE BONUS

RAMA

Explore a mysterious world of alien wonders as part of a team of astronauts sent to explore a strange craft on the far boundaries of the universe. Features an innovative 3D environment unsurpassed in its intricacy and beauty. From the creators of 2001 and Cosmos.

#83692 Win 95/DOS CD **$29.95**
#13692 Mac CD **$29.95**



Police Quest SWAT

Daryl Gates, former head of LAPD and originator of the SWAT concept, takes the Police Quest series to new levels of realism. You'll learn what real SWAT officers learn as you advance from the academy to the mean streets.

#83274 Win/DOS CD **$29.95**
#13274 Mac CD **$29.95**

Shivers

Venture into a spine-tingling first-person mystery. Shivers finds you trapped inside the long-abandoned Museum of the Strange and Unusual. Ghostly live-action and 3D graphics create an adventure that changes every time you play.

#83154 Win CD **$14.95**
#13154 Mac CD **$14.95**

Hoyle Blackjack

Realistic casino Blackjack comes alive in multimedia, with three playing modes to challenge you. Go one-on-one with the dealer or choose up to three interactive opponents for fast-paced casino play. You can even play over the Internet!

#83740 Win CD **$14.95**

CyberGladiators

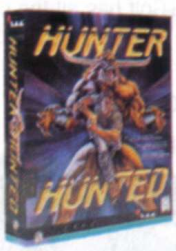
Warriors reborn as hardware from hell wage combat in a death match that can only end in victory or annihilation. Nothing less than a master's combination of skill, speed and power will keep you alive.

#83693 Win 95 CD **$19.95**

EarthSiege 2

The future of human existence rests squarely on your shoulders and the metal shoulders of your fighting HERCs. Battle enemy Cybrids over 50 rivet-wrenching missions – all with explosive action and incredible 3D graphics.

#83671 Win 95 CD **$29.95**



Hunter Hunted

Battle head-to-head as Jake or The Beast in a desperate attempt to survive and escape a deadly labyrinth filled with hidden danger and explosive weapons. Features incredible Z-plane scrolling action that lets you move right into the battle, plus exclusive split-screen head-to-head action.

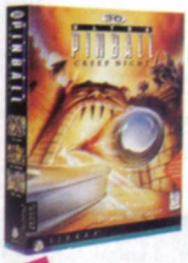
#83600 Win 95 CD **$19.95**

MissionForce Cyberstorm

Take control of the future in the ultimate battle strategy game as you fight for the future of mankind. You command genetically engineered Bioderms, the most destructive warriors in the history of Cybrid confrontation.

#83683 Win 95 CD **$29.95**

3D Ultra Pinball: Creep Night



Get the incredible features of the original 3D Ultra Pinball with three creepy new tables straight from the graveyard. Features more targets, tighter play areas and faster action. Plus tons of bonuses, trick-shot tips and haunting original music.

FREE BONUS

#83696 Win CD **$44.95**
#13696 Mac CD **$44.95**

Power Chess

The world of computer chess now features the most human-like competition ever developed for the PC. Power Chess actually adjusts to fit your playing style, making every game a challenge while still giving you a chance to learn and win.

#83123 Win 95 CD **$29.95**

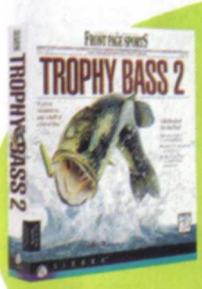
Front Page Sports: Golf

Tee it up with the next big star on tour! Features TrueSwing for the most realistic swing control ever offered in a computer game. Play medal and match play, skins and more. Includes 3D graphics from the world famous Pete Dye Golf Club and The Prince Course in Kauai, Hawaii. Plus, for a limited time, get the beautiful Coeur d'Alene Resort Course Add-On (a $24.95 value) for no extra charge!

FREE BONUS

#FPSG9 Win 95 CD **$54.95**

Trophy Bass 2

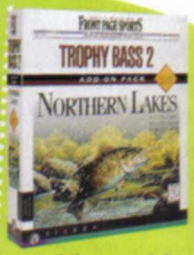


The new bass fishin' sim now features five new lakes (ten in all!), more rod and lure options and more fishing tips from bass fishing pros. Plus, now you can hook up on-line with your fishin' buddies via Internet, network or modem.

FREE BONUS

#83695 Win CD **$54.95**

Trophy Bass 2 Northern Lakes Add-On Pack



More lakes, more fish, more fun! The Northern Lakes Add-On Pack brings five new lakes and five new kinds of fish to the excitement of Trophy Bass 2. Battle Northern Pike, Muskie, Walleye, Sauger and Rock Bass on new waters from Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and more! (Requires full version of Trophy Bass 2.)

#56950 Win CD **$19.95**

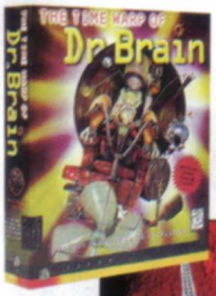
Sierra Home 2.0

New! Combines the best home-productivity software in one value-packed bundle to help you get the most out of your home PC. Includes Print Artist 4.0 creativity software, MasterCook Deluxe for recipes, nutrition and cooking, LandDesigner to help you realize the landscape of your dreams, CustomHome design and remodeling software, and Collier's Unabridged Encyclopedia (text version). It's the ultimate home software collection.

FREE BONUS

#83098 Win CD **$74.95**

The Time Warp of Dr. Brain

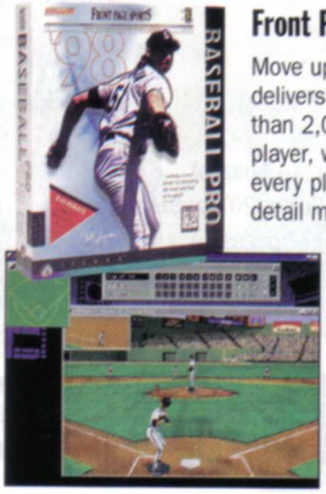


The incredible Dr. Brain has somehow sent himself careening through time, and 600 brain-busting puzzles stand in your way as you help him find his way back. Includes 10 brain-flexing puzzle areas, each designed to bring minds of all ages to new levels of mental fitness. And it's fun, too! Plus, good old Dr. Brain has discovered the Internet in his time travels, so now you can challenge friends online in two new puzzle areas.

FREE BONUS

#93118 Win/Mac CD **$39.95**

Front Page Sports: Baseball Pro '98



Move up to The Show! Baseball Pro '98 delivers complete, up-to-date stats in more than 2,000 categories for every MLBPA licensed player, with unique individual player AI that makes every play realistic. The unrivaled accuracy and detail make this the perennial winner among baseball sims. Now features an enhanced Arcade Mode to let you choose between ultra-realistic simulation and swing-for-the-fences fun. Also includes free game utilities, adjustable realism, exclusive career play and much more!

FREE BONUS

#70045 Win 95 CD **$29.95**

Cooking Light 4.0

Prepare nutritious, great-tasting food with more than 1,250 delicious, low-fat, low-cholesterol recipes from the pages of Cooking Light, America's number one food magazine! Includes complete nutritional analysis for everything from snacks to complete meals.

FREE BONUS

#93013 Win/Mac CD **$34.95**

Graham Kerr's Swiftly Seasoned

The author of 22 cookbooks and star of 1,323 television programs comes to your computer with 140 delicious recipes that take less than 20 minutes to prepare! Includes video clips from Graham Kerr's weekly television series "Swiftly Seasoned."

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#93010 Win/Mac CD **$34.95**

MasterCook Deluxe 4.0

MasterCook Deluxe 4.0 makes it easy to analyze recipes for calories, fat levels, and other nutrition information. Includes more than 2,000 recipes from America's most prestigious chefs. It will even simplify your grocery shopping!

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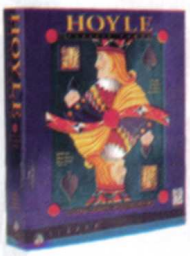
#93012 Win/Mac CD **$34.95**

Hoyle Classic Games



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70045	Front Page Sports: Baseball Pro '98 (Win 95)	$29.95
83610	Black Diamond Ranch Add-On – for FPS: Golf (Win 95)	$24.95
83726	Outpost 2 (Win 95)	$49.95
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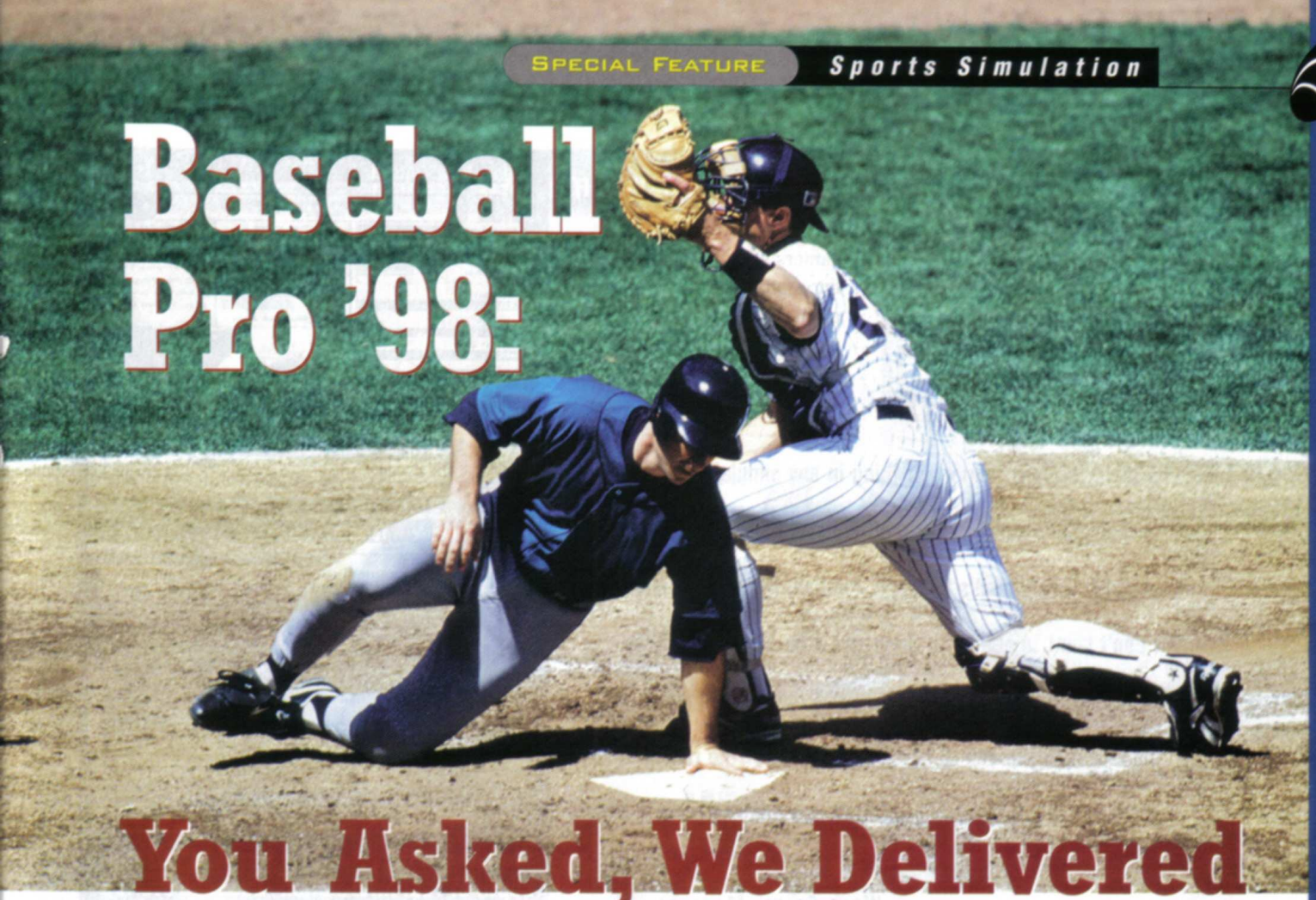
Screamin' 3D graphics accelerator requires Pentium CPU, Windows 95 8 MB RAM, PCI bus, CD-ROM. Full Rendition-Ready versions of IndyCar Racing II, Cybergladiators and Silent Thunder shipped in promo packaging.

Baseball Pro '98:



You Asked, We Delivered

When designing FPS: Baseball Pro '98, we asked one very important question:

What do people really want out of a baseball simulation?

Baseball Pro '98

Preferred System Requirements
Pentium 90+, 16 MB RAM, Windows 95

Format
WIN95 CD

Price
$29.95
(Order #70045)

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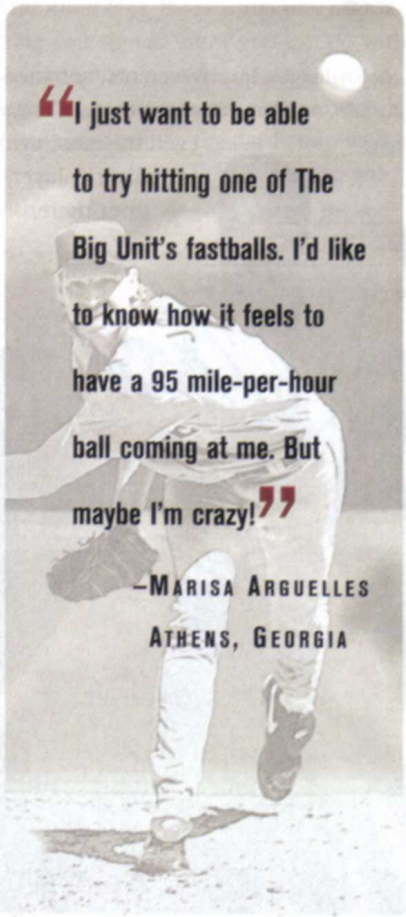
▷ www.sierra.com/bball98/

Available: Now
See Page 68 for Special Offer

By Christa Phillips

Front Page Sports: Baseball Pro '98 is the latest installment in Sierra's award-winning sports simulation series. Summertime is here again and summer means three things: sunshine, barbecues, and baseball. The folks at Dynamix spent the winter holed up in their cubicles working to enhance the sim that asks you to put a bat on Randy Johnson's 100+ mph fastball and test your curve ball on Mike Piazza. Rumor has it, the Dynamix team has been working double overtime on *Baseball Pro '98.* They want to deliver exactly what every sports fan wants to see in a



"I just want to be able to try hitting one of The Big Unit's fastballs. I'd like to know how it feels to have a 95 mile-per-hour ball coming at me. But maybe I'm crazy!"

–MARISA ARGUELLES
ATHENS, GEORGIA

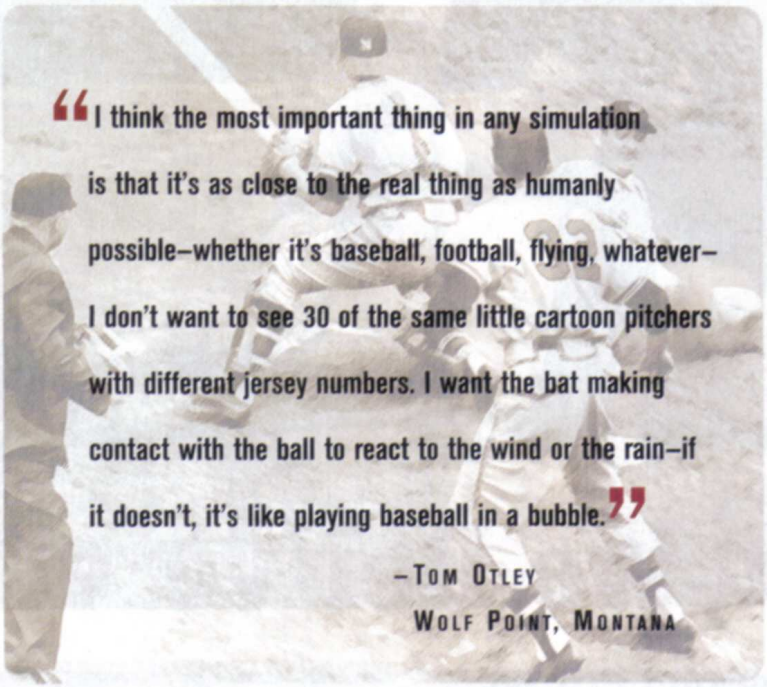
PHOTOS BY LARRY LAMBRECHT

baseball simulation—a delicate balance between sophisticated realism and simple fun.

Taking customer requests and suggestions into consideration, the *Baseball Pro '98* development team at Dynamix has come up with some major-league improvements, enhancements, and new features that will satisfy even the most cynical sim player out there.

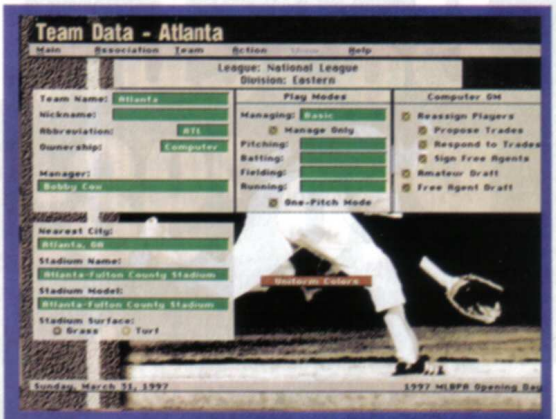
What's New?

For starters, the Arcade Mode is completely new. Some gamers said that it was nearly impossible to hit any ball pitched their way—big-league pitchers throw big-league pitches. We listened and made the new Arcade Mode feature easier. Not that we doubt your ability, of course, but for those few of you who were having trouble making contact with the ball, this improvement will make it fun to get out on the field and knock the ball around without stressing over the details.

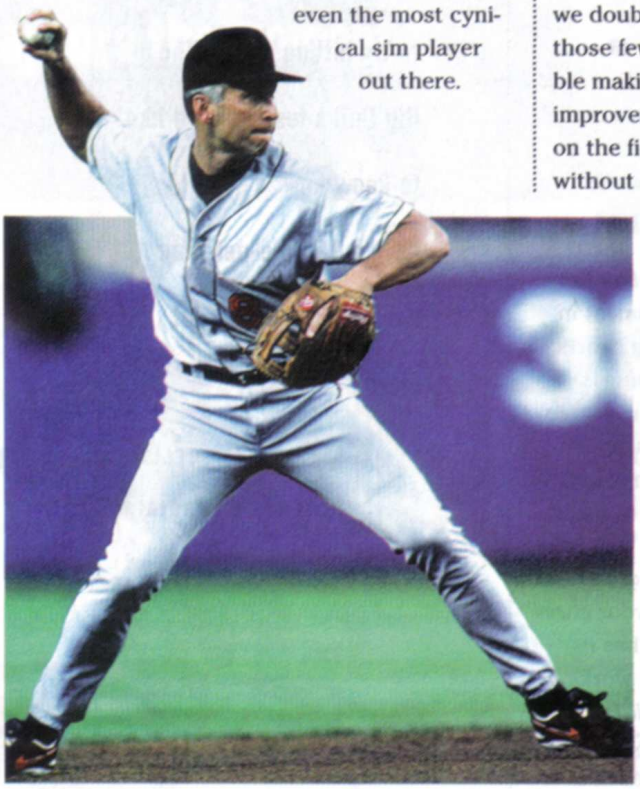


"I think the most important thing in any simulation is that it's as close to the real thing as humanly possible–whether it's baseball, football, flying, whatever–I don't want to see 30 of the same little cartoon pitchers with different jersey numbers. I want the bat making contact with the ball to react to the wind or the rain–if it doesn't, it's like playing baseball in a bubble."

–TOM OTLEY
WOLF POINT, MONTANA



Statistics: *FPS* sims are renowned for their depth of real information–*Baseball Pro '98* is no exception.



You Asked.

We Listened.

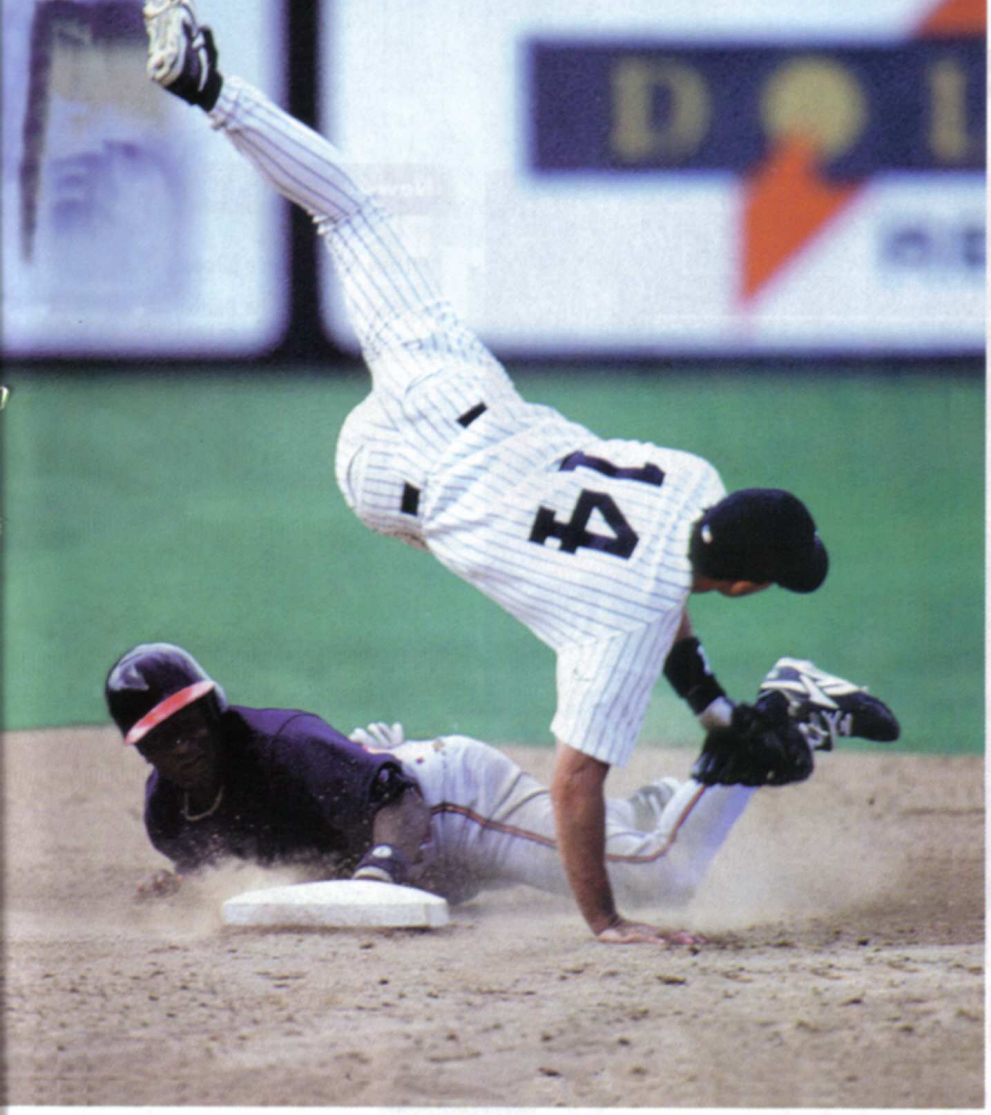
Here are the new features in Baseball Pro '98:

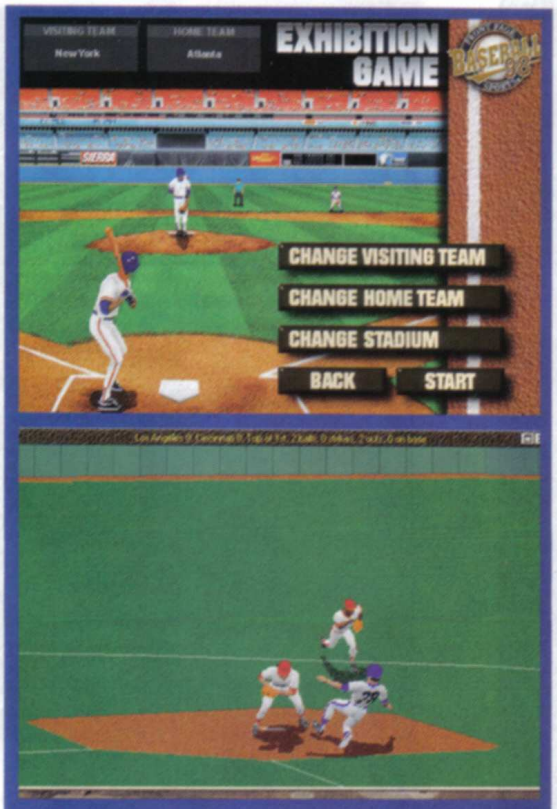
- Arcade Mode play
- SmartMove
- Intellipoint
- SmartThrow
- Updated Stats, Teams, Players, & Ballparks
- Interleague Play

Baseball Pro '98 also has some player cursor features to make it easier to field the ball. SmartMove enables you to more accurately point your player in the right direction to field the ball. IntelliPoint is the interface graphic that shows not only the direction a player in the field is facing, but also the direction the player needs to move to field the ball. SmartThrow allows you to rely on the accuracy of your arm rather than always second-guessing it. When you want it, we've certainly got hard-core realism. But if you're just goofin' around and want to have some quick fun, then the Arcade Mode is just your style.

Realism Realized

Speaking of hard-core realism, ours is the hardest. Nothing else out there even comes close to our physics model. The reason why is because the baseball guys at Dynamix are total freaks about realism. We're talking "fanatics" here. Maybe you've never wondered what the result would be if a curveball was





Interleague Play: Now you can pit the National League against the American League–any time of year.

"What I really want is to play baseball 'god.' I want to mix up AL and NL teams, I want to send screw-ups back to the farm league. I want to control every little detail. And then, I want to put my ultimate team on the Internet and watch them kick some butt."

–John Bishop
Newark, New Jersey

Interleague Play

At last, the big boys at Major League Baseball have given the green light to Interleague Play. *FPS: Baseball Pro '98* is no exception. Now you don't have to wait for the World Series to see the American and National Leagues duke it out on the diamond. Put Randy Johnson up against all the NL big hitters and see how they fare against that fastball. Start a rumble in the Bronx when the New York teams meet at Yankee Stadium. Interleague play is big, big news, and opens up a world of possibilities.

hit with an ash bat at a 15-degree angle on a sunny, but slightly humid day at high altitude, but these guys have not only wondered, they've found the answer. Although reading over the mathematical formula used to arrive at that answer is about as exciting as watching the grass grow in left field, you'll feel the impact of the physics engine when you play the game, simply because the ball will not move in weird, unnatural ways. You'll never look at your computer screen and remark sarcastically, "Yeah, right." *Baseball Pro '98* looks and feels so authentic because the physics and math behind it are based on the laws of nature.

Then the baseball guys figured, "Hey, as long as we busted our humps on all this math stuff, we might as well make the rest of the game authentic!" So, they threw in completely updated statistics in 2,000 categories, 28 major-league ballparks, and every single MLBPA player—even the slumping ones (we're not naming names). And just to

Arcade Mode: *Baseball Pro '98* makes it easier to jump in and play ball.

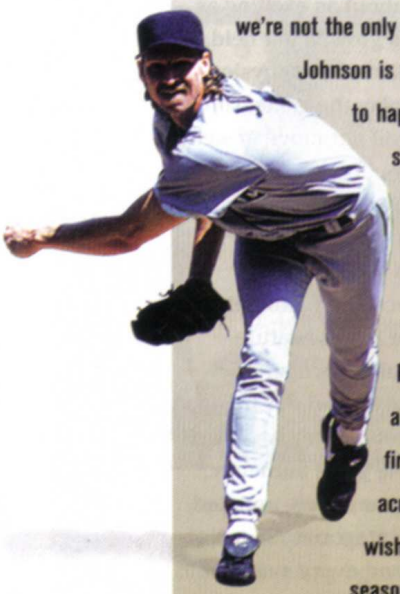
New Ways to Play

Pit any major league pitcher against any batter in Batting Practice and watch the sparks fly. Or try one of these other great new game modes: Exhibition Play, Single-Season Play, and Remote League play. Plus, check out a new convenient game utility called Remote Manager. This program will automatically send and receive league data every day over the Internet, keeping your team in The Show.

make sure that the All-Stars behave like stars, each player has his own individual Artificial Intelligence and player rating. That makes each athlete's performance consistent with his real-life counterpart. It's sort of another math and science thing, but what it means is that you won't see a big-time base-stealer lingering on first base, or a junkball pitcher trying to overpower Mark McGwire with some heat.

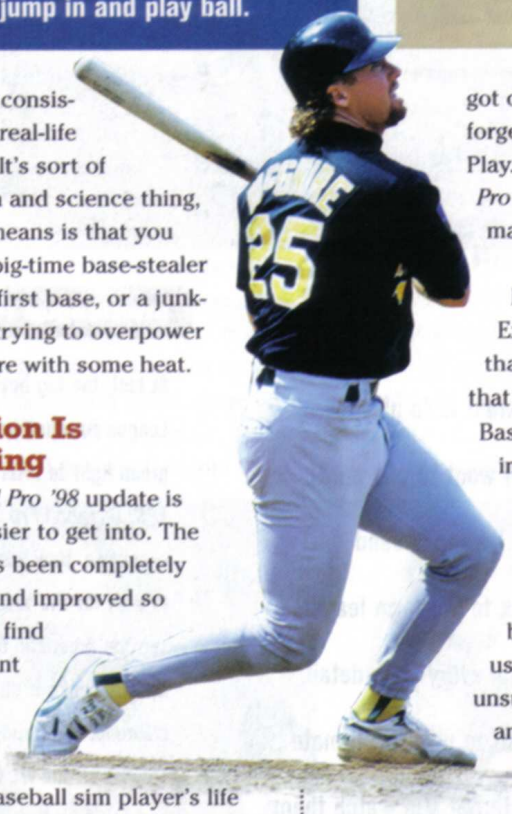
Randy Johnson's Back At It

The Big Unit is making a second appearance on the cover of *FPS: Baseball Pro*. He's also been on a recent cover of *Sports Illustrated*. Coincidence? Hmmm.... Well, we're not the only ones who think Johnson is the greatest thing to happen to baseball since the athletic supporter. After sitting out most of last season due to a back injury, Randy is fired up and ready to start firing those fastballs across the plate. We wish Randy the best season yet.



Navigation Is Everything

The *Baseball Pro '98* update is also a lot easier to get into. The front end has been completely redesigned and improved so that you can find what you want quickly and easily. One feature that makes the baseball sim player's life easier are the adjustable realism levels. You can tweak the levels for hitting, pitching, fielding, and baserunning—making these activities comfortable for you, whatever your ability. The brand-new Fast Sim feature lets you play a full season in a third of the time it used to take. You can also choose to play Short, Half, and Full Season schedules depending on how much time you've got on your hands. Don't forget about Interleague Play. In past *FPS: Baseball Pro* games, you could match up the American League with the National League in Exhibition Play. Now, thanks to the powers that be at Major League Baseball, you can play interleague games all season long.



Front Page Sports: Baseball Pro '98 is a sim every baseball player can use. The game features unsurpassed graphics and realism, motion-captured player movement, ultra-deep stats, and the full cast of ballparks and athletes that the *Baseball Pro* player expects. Add that to some great new features designed to make the game easier to get into, experience, and enjoy—and you've got something for every fan of realism in PC baseball simulations. And at a heck of a lot less than most baseball sims, the price is definitely right.

Sports Spectacular

Buy 1 Get 1 Free*

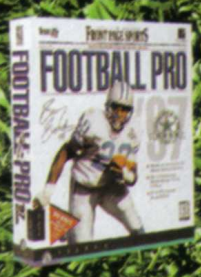
Buy One of These

Get One of These Free!

Front Page Sports®: Trophy Bass™ 2 (WIN 95/WIN 3.1)
NASCAR® Racing 2 (WIN 95/DOS)
Front Page Sports®: Golf with Coeur d'Alene Add-On Course (WIN 95)
Front Page Sports®: Football Pro™ '97 (WIN 95)
Front Page Sports®: Baseball Pro™ '98 (WIN 95)
You Don't Know Jack®: Sports (WIN/MAC CD)

OR

Buy One of These



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Pick Your Free Game!

Buy One of These:

- Front Page Sports®: Trophy Bass™ 2
- NASCAR® Racing 2
- Front Page Sports®: Golf with Coeur d'Alene Add-On Course

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- ❑ NASCAR® Racing 2 (WIN 95/DOS)
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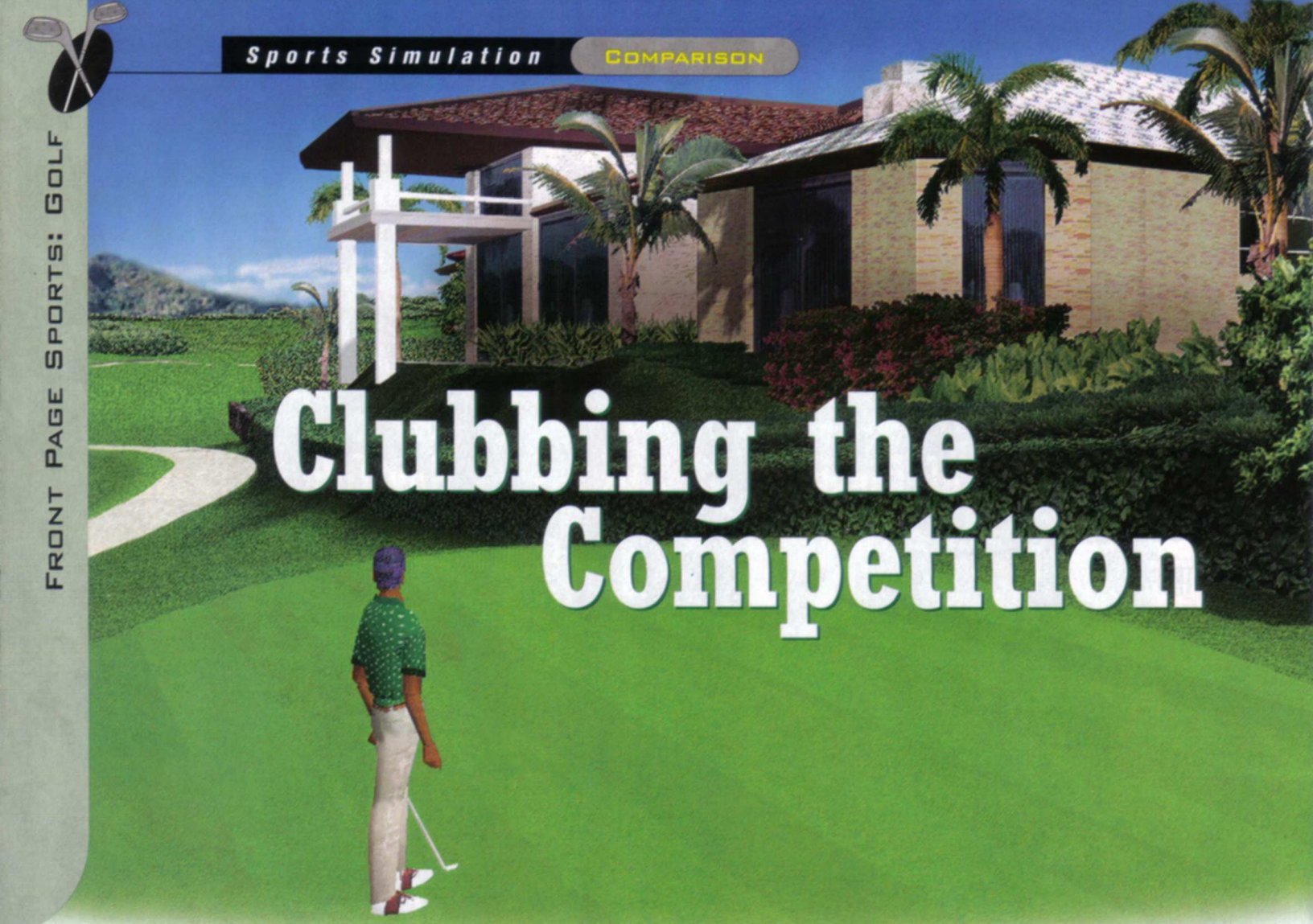
Sports Simulation | COMPARISON



Clubbing the Competition

In a market cluttered with sub-par golf games, Front Page Sports: Golf climbs to the top of the leaderboard.

Front Page Sports: Golf

Preferred System Requirements
Pentium 90+, 16 MB RAM, Windows

Format
WIN95 CD

Price
$54.95
(Order #FPSG9)

1•800•757•7707

www.sierra.com/golf/

Available: Now
See Page 68 for Special Offer

By John Zhaski

For those who don't play the game of golf, the idea of hitting a ball with a club seems relatively easy. But take those same people out for a round of golf, and they'll probably change their tune. Golf is about much more than making contact with the ball. Each shot has an infinite number of outcomes, depending on the quality of the hit, spin, strength of the shot, quality of the lie, etc. Imagine if there was a computer golf game that actually puts players on the course and forces them to think through every shot. A game where players feel the familiar pangs of uncertainty during every approach to the ball. Well, good news, golf fans, *Front Page Sports: Golf* has arrived, and it's ready to change everything you thought a PC golf game should be.

With a wealth of golf games on the market, Vance Cook, designer of *FPS: Golf*, knew he had to come up with something different and unique. As a former director of the *Links* golf project for Access Software, Cook made the move to Sierra and built a brand new golf engine from the ground up. *FPS: Golf* offers gamers an unparalleled trip into the science and art of golf.

Using several renowned courses throughout the United States, rendered and replicated down to the tiniest detail, everything the player can see is a part of the playfield. Garbage cans, golf carts, and sticks and stones are all capable of blocking or deflecting the ball. Realistic sounds from sprin-

The Leaderboard: How the Competition Stacks Up

Features	Front Page Sports: Golf	Links LS	PGA Tour '96	Jack Nicklaus 4	Microsoft Golf 3.0
Advanced Mouse Golf Swing	●				
3D Golfers	●				
3D Landscapes Effects	Atmospheric effects with real texture mapping	Atmospheric effects with real texture mapping	No atmospheric effects–limited texture mapping	Atmospheric effects with real texture mapping	No atmospheric effects–limited texture mapping
3D Course Structures	●				
Re-creates/Renders Entire Course	●	●	One hole at a time	One hole at a time	●
Number of Types of Play	12	4	5	7	4
Tri-Click/Duo-Click	●	●	●	●	●
LAN/Modem/Serial–No. of Users	64+	2	None	4	4
Internet Play	Free Internet play	Kali	No	If IP address is known	Free Internet play
Course Creator				●	
Internet Lobbies & Tournaments	●				●

klers, birds, and low-flying aircraft immerse the player within the course environment. As if this weren't enough, the high-end 3D technology behind *FPS: Golf* has made possible the revolutionary TrueSwing™ method of swinging.

TrueSwing: The Art of Innovation

Like its name implies, TrueSwing puts the player in complete control of every shot. Drawing the mouse back, pausing momentarily, then pushing forward, building momentum, following through after contact is made, watching on-screen as the golfer moves with every touch of the mouse—this is what TrueSwing is all about. *SimGolf* from Maxis offers what they call MouseSwing, but the shot variables are noticeably limited. *SimGolf's* length of swing is much shorter, there is little sense of follow-through, neither the hips nor shoulders adjust on-screen, and the shot commences shortly after the mouse stroke is completed. Also, *SimGolf* uses many different view windows to create the illusion of 3D, but these windows don't add much to gameplay. *FPS: Golf* is the first PC golf game to feature a one-of-a-kind, revolutionary swing technology set within equally impressive 3D-rendered environments.

TrueSwing prevents having to set up—from a menu—the parameters of each and every shot. Take *Links LS* for example. *Links LS* is a good "looking" game, but its shiny graphics are at the expense of gameplay. In addition, *Links LS* offers only three-shot animations per golfer, one for hitting, one for putting, and one for chipping. These animations begin after the player is done clicking the mouse. *FPS: Golf*, on the other hand, offers as many player animations as there are ways to move a mouse, and it's even possible to force the player to lose his/her balance during a poor backswing (they'll actually fall over). If users want to employ the old tri-click swing method, *FPS: Golf* is

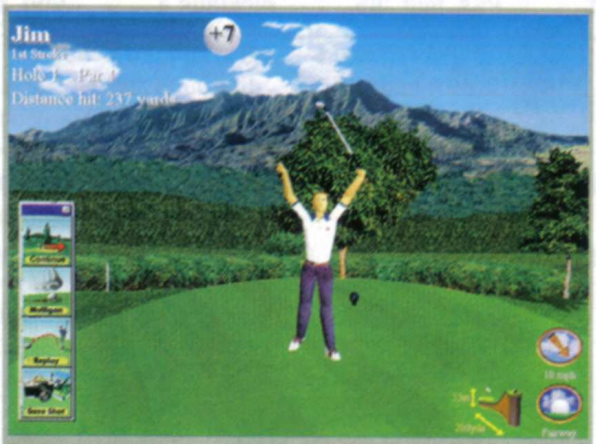
Three Things to Consider When Judging a Golf Game:

1 Does the golfer swing in time with my actions?
There is no reason a game should have to "load" a shot animation. *FPS: Golf* lets the player swing away.

2 Can I rotate the golfer and aim quickly?
Many game don't want the player to do this because the calculations are too difficult. In *FPS: Golf*, use the arrow keys or the mouse to instantly aim in any direction.

3 Can I get a distance and terrain reading off any point in the landscape?
FPS: Golf features its comprehensive terrain and distance guide box at the click of a button.

Whether it's off a tree limb or bouncing across a cart path, FPS: Golf's ball dynamics are just like the real thing.



Long tee shots seem much more exciting with true-to-life gestures and realistic 3D animation.

the only game to feature real-time, tri-click golfer animations, as well. Ball contact occurs on-screen just as you finish the last click. Newcomers to *FPS: Golf* should play their first few rounds as a twosome, controlling both a tri-click and TrueSwing player. Immediately, players will notice the greater shot control, shortplay, and game speed of the TrueSwing golfer.

One game that features a unique swing technique is *PGA Tour '97* from EA Sports. Users looking for an arcade-styled golf game may find some things to like about *PGA Tour '97,* but as for its status as a "simulation," the shot mechanics are noticeably lacking. In *PGA Tour '97,* players click and drag the flight arc to anywhere within shot range. Users will find that employing this flight arc is like playing god with a golf ball—slices and hooks suddenly become beautiful drives.

TrueSwing is not as forgiving. With its sensitivity, players will soon find that before each shot, their mind will wrestle with the usual insecurities...How hard should I swing? Remember to follow through...Rotate your shoulders...Move straight through the ball. Nowhere is this more evident than in the short game. In and around the greens, TrueSwing is at its best. With *FPS: Golf,* it's now possible to chip just to the fringe, blanketing the ball as it rolls gently onto the green. Putting relies equally upon finesse. Putt with care and you will be rewarded.

If there is a way to sum up the experience of TrueSwing technology, it is to say that each shot is both a mental and physical exercise; players must plan both the shot and swing correctly. Just like in real life, it can be difficult to concentrate on each and every shot. Let your attention slip, and TrueSwing is anything but forgiving. By now, it should be obvious that *FPS: Golf* is the most playable and realistic golf game available for the PC. But games still need great environments, and *FPS: Golf* has that area covered, as well.

Modes a la Mode

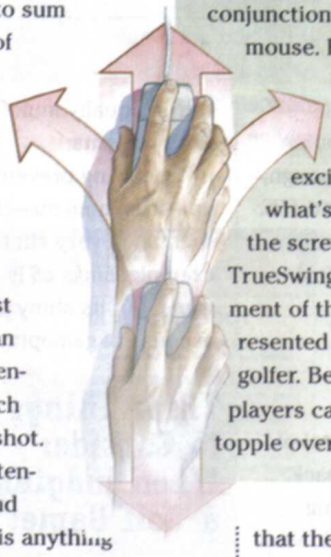
FPS: Golf offers 12 different modes of play to keep your golf games exciting:

Medal	4 Ball Medal
Match	4 Ball Medal
Stableford	4 Ball Stableford
Best Ball Ryder Cup	Scramble (2 Person)
Best Ball Greenstone	Scramble (4 Person)
Best Ball Bloodstone	Skins

Dissecting a 3D Engine

FPS: Golf's engine renders its landscape "on the fly." Saving vital memory space, this method of rendering fills the screen with a texture-rich landscape, all loaded in the blink of an eye. This saved memory can then be devoted to sustaining the interaction between the player, the ball, and the landscape. This interaction, also called the "collision" or "physics" model, is *FPS: Golf's* basic foundation. Think about a tree, its trunk, and the number of ways in which a ball might bounce off of it. Then calculate in ball speed, spin, and trajectory—all a function of the 3D golfer's swing. Factor in wind speed, air density, etc., and it's clear that the calculations reach up into the millions. Maybe you can't do the math, but *FPS: Golf* can, and everything in the landscape, from the golf cart to the garbage can, are "in play."

3D-Rendered Golfer

Of all the golf games on the market, there are only two types of swing interfaces. One is the old tri-click method, the other works in conjunction with the mouse. Because golf demands time and patience, players need to be excited about what's happening on the screen, and with TrueSwing, every movement of the mouse is represented by the 3D-rendered golfer. Be careful; during a poor swing, players can even lose their balance and topple over.

Questions Lead to Answers

Some people searching for a realistic golf game are easily tricked. Many games successfully hide an inferior 3D environment. Therefore, there are three simple questions to ask when assessing the quality of a 3D engine:

QUESTION #1: "Does the on-screen golfer swing along with my actions?"

FPS: Golf features the only real-time, 3D-rendered golfer. Since TrueSwing is the marriage between a revolutionary

Getting out of the woods is a lot easier with the overhead view.

control interface and the latest in 3D technology, *FPS: Golf's* players swing in time with the user's movement of the mouse.

Question #2: "Can I rotate the player and aim quickly?"

Other games simply cannot create this type of 3D golfer. *Links LS's* golfer is photo imaged, but with the pre-rendered animation, there is no spontaneous 3D movement. Likewise for *Microsoft Golf*—the most two-dimensional golf game on the market. *Microsoft Golf* is a bare-bones, desktop-styled golf sim. Also, aiming and alignment can be very frustrating in *Microsoft Golf*. Players should immediately become suspicious of any golf game that does not allow the golfer to instantly rotate into any position. In *FPS: Golf*, the golfer can move both 360 degrees and slightly right or left at the touch of a button.

Question #3: "Can I get a quick distance and terrain reading by the yard?"

Another problem with many golf games is the distance gauge. Along with aiming, players should always be able to get a distance reading off any point in the terrain. Games with an imperfect 3D engine, such as *PGA Tour '97*, *Jack Nicklaus 4*, or even *Links LS*, make it difficult to read the terrain. Of course, there are overhead map views, and the aiming arc may tell you how far it is to the tree line, but only *FPS: Golf* offers a terrain and distance guide box.

Courses of Course!

For a limited time, FPS: Golf comes loaded with the Coeur d'Alene, ID add-on course. The Black Diamond Ranch add-on course is now available with other courses on the way.

And...

Be sure to download our three-hole playable demo of FPS: Golf at: www.sierra.com/demos/

Only One Choice

Ultimately, there are many golf games to choose from, and every title has its merits. But none really compares to the back-end complexity and front-end ease of use of *FPS: Golf*. With three immediately available world-class courses, additional course disks on the way, Internet and LAN play, and beautifully 3D-rendered golfers and landscapes, Sierra offers the only definitive golf simulation experience. *Front Page Sports: Golf* is one round of excitement you won't want to miss.

On the Lighter Side...

Are you looking for a change of pace? Do you want to trade in hazards like doglegs, sand traps, and cart paths for Earth-bound rockets and ball-snatching pelicans with really bad attitudes?

It's time to turn in your four iron for some unadulterated fun. Dynamix—creators of the bizarre and extremely popular *3-D Ultra Series*—is bringing you *3-D Ultra MiniGolf*. That's right—*MiniGolf*—and it's nothing like any computer golf game you've seen before.

Combining advanced TruePutt™ technology developed for golf sims with freakishly fun twists and turns, gadgets and gizmos, *MiniGolf* immerses you in 18 holes of addictive 3D entertainment. Each individually designed and thematic hole allows you multiple options–play it safe or take riskier (but more rewarding) shots. With single- or multiplayer options, you can challenge yourself or play a tourney with friends. Packed full of humorous references to other hit games from Sierra, strange creatures, and a funky soundtrack—*3-D Ultra MiniGolf* is nothing short of a good time—every time you play. To hear from someone who is completely addicted to *MiniGolf*, see page 96. Or go check out the free demo at *www.sierra.com/demos/*.

SPORTS news notes

Tom Lehman Gives a Face to FPS: Golf

Tom Lehman, 1996 PGA Tour Player of the Year and 1996 leading money winner, has just inked a contract with Sierra endorsing **Front Page Sports: Golf.** In addition to lending his face to thousands of Sierra golf game boxes, Lehman is currently busy co-designing two new golf courses in Minnesota and Arizona. Go check out the **FPS: Golf** demo at: **www.sierra.com/archive/demos/**

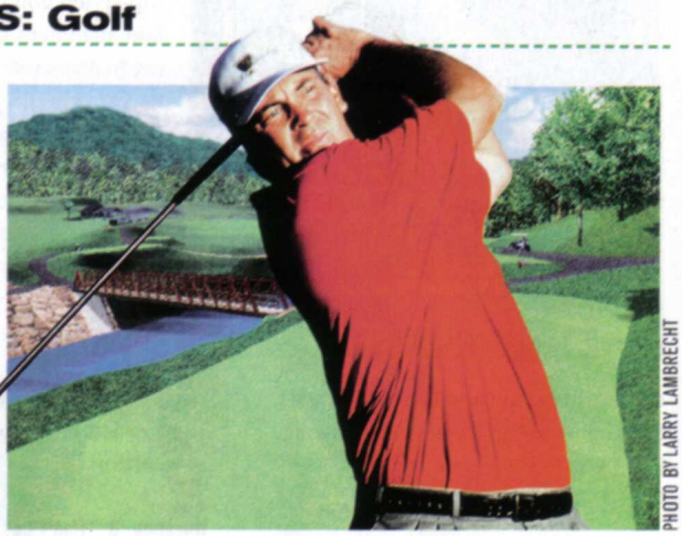
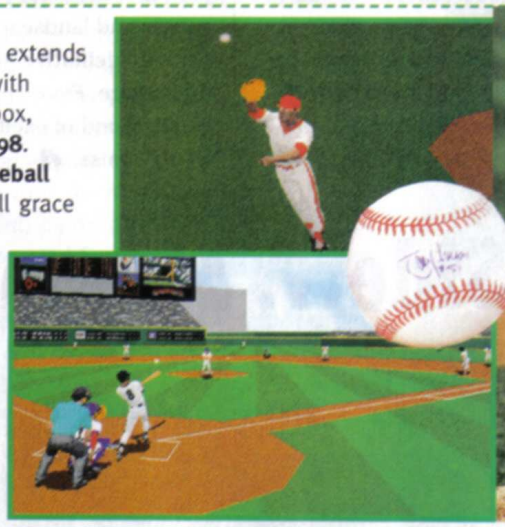


PHOTO BY LARRY LAMBRECHT

Randy Johnson Signs for Another Season

Randy Johnson extends his contract with Sierra for another box, **FPS: Baseball Pro '98.**

As with **FPS: Baseball Pro '96,** his face will grace the cover of this anticipated sequel. Joining Randy on the box are other all-stars, Wade Boggs, Jay Buhner, Cal Ripken Jr., Mike Piazza, and Barry Bonds.



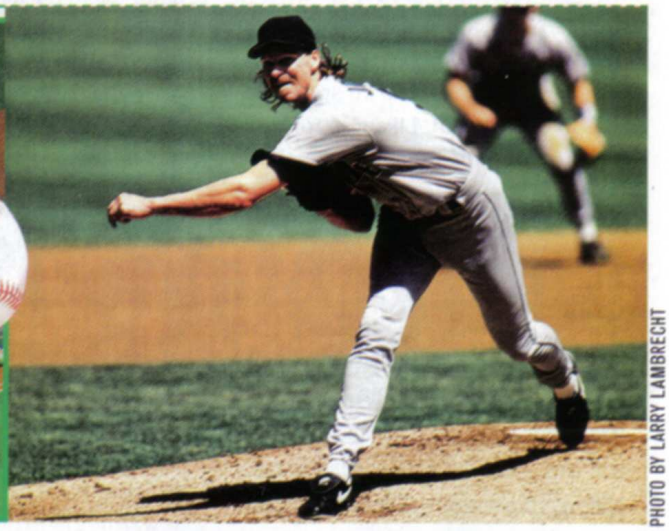
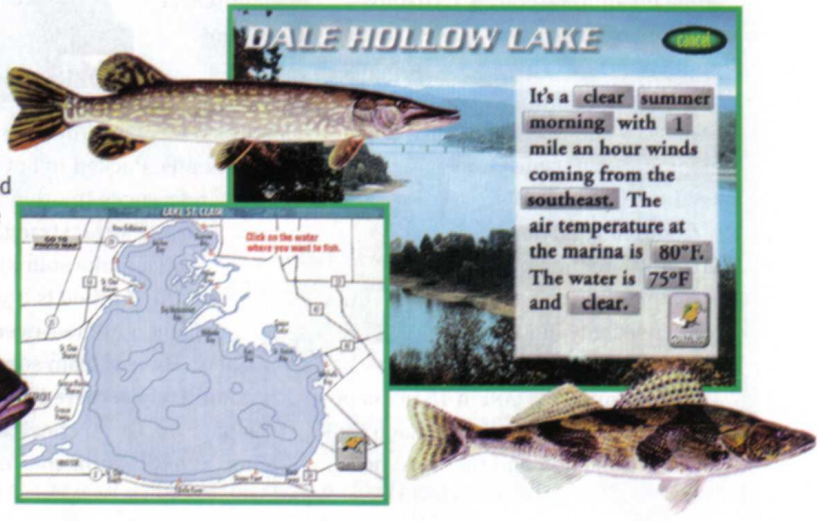


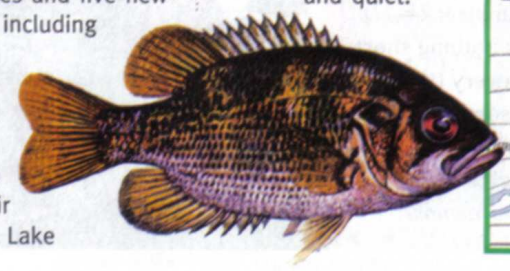
PHOTO BY LARRY LAMBRECHT

The Northern Lakes Beckon

FPS: Trophy Bass 2 adds to its ever-growing collection of outstanding fishing holes. **The Northern Lakes** add-on offers five new lakes and five new fish species including Northern Pike, Tiger Muskie, and Rock Bass. Cruise up to Lake St. Clair in Michigan, Lake Winnebago in Wisconsin, or Mille Lacs, Minnesota for some excellent fishing and genuine peace and quiet.

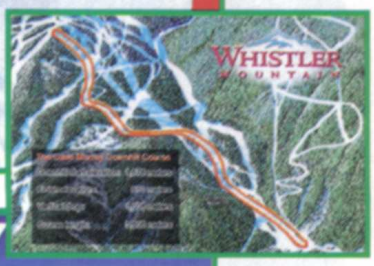
TROPHY BASS 2

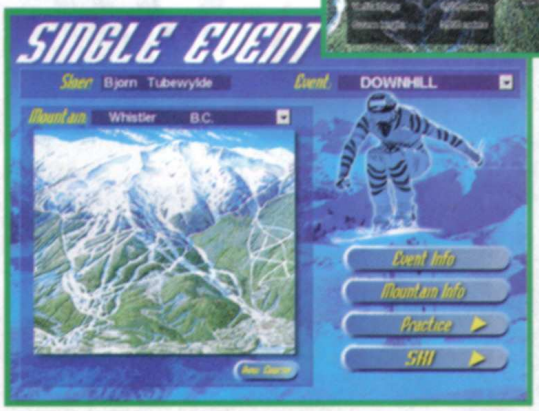




Gear Up and Head for the Slopes

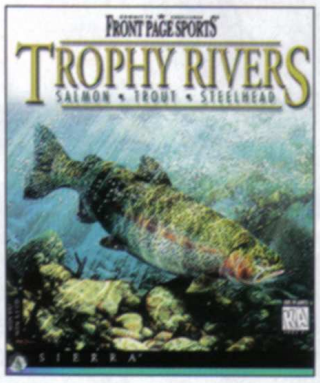
Watch for the latest **Front Page Sports** title this fall—**FPS: Ski Racing**. It takes you to six world-class runs, including four here in North America: Whistler, BC, Vail and Aspen, Colorado, and Park City, Utah. Choose the first-person view and witness the action from behind the goggles or third-person view to watch from behind the skier. **FPS: Skiing** will also let you test your skills on all five major course types— Slalom, Giant Slalom, Downhill, Super G, or Combined. The game will be realistic down to the types of gear you choose to wear. You pick from sponsors such as K2, Spider, and Scott. Hey—it's only a game, so don't start counting on those sponsorship checks. Racing the clock is fun, but nothing beats racing against real people. So, **FPS: Skiing** will be Internet-ready so you can challenge your friends to some high-speed, downhill action. Sharpen those edges, wax those boards, and point 'em toward the finish line. **FPS: Skiing** is going to be fast—real fast!

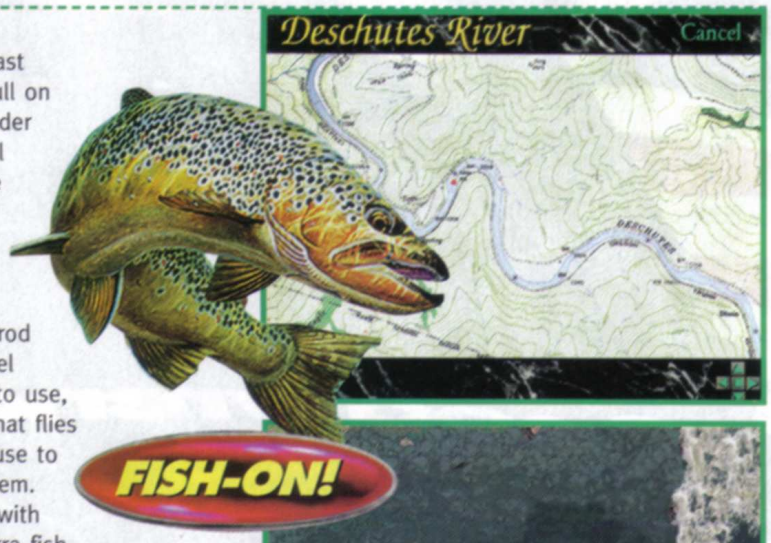




It's All in the Wrist

With so many people writing us to say how much fun they have playing **Trophy Bass** and **Trophy Bass 2**, we felt we should invite all kinds of fishermen into the boat. Fly-fishermen will be happy to learn that Sierra plans to release **FPS: Trophy Rivers** in mid-November. Devoted exclusively to the art of fly-fishing, it will feature five rivers, each famous for salmon, trout, or steelhead. You'll be able to cast from several different positions. Go trolling in a boat or canoe, cast from the banks, or pull on your waders and wander into the current. You'll choose which fish to go after, which rod and reel setup to use, and what flies you'll use to catch 'em. As with all Sierra fishing products, **FPS: Trophy Rivers** will be playable through a modem, over the Internet, or over a LAN. You'll also be able to enter online tournaments to show off your technique. **Trophy Rivers** will immerse you in the art, beauty, and challenge of fly-fishing.



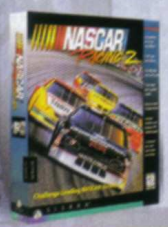


Conquering the Road Courses of NASCAR 2

NASCAR Racing 2 comes packed with 16 racetracks. Most drivers eventually become proficient at 14 of them...

Now NROS drivers Doug Thompson and Lonnie Larkan provide concise tips for tackling the Sears Point and Watkins Glen road courses so that every new driver can make the full NASCAR circuit.

NASCAR Racing 2



Preferred System Requirements
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They're called road courses. They strike terror into the hearts of many NASCAR drivers, on and off the professional racing circuit.

Yes, it really is possible to make it around these tracks enough times to see a checkered flag. You just need to know the winning secrets to prepare yourself and your car. Let's start with a few basic tips that apply to all races equally.

Practice Builds Confidence

No matter how good a driver you are, there's really no substitute for practice laps. You have to put the miles in.

Patience Wins Races

Too often, on-track incidents are the result of ill-timed moves by impatient drivers. Remember: The most basic goal of the race is to ensure that you are there to see the checkered flag. Don't take unnecessary chances.

Easy on the Throttle and Brakes

Your lap times will improve and your tires will last longer if you use the accelerator and brakes as a means of applying power—not as on/off devices. When you approach curves, apply just enough throttle to get you around the turn with a minimum amount of squealing tires. Don't slam on the brakes when a touch will do.

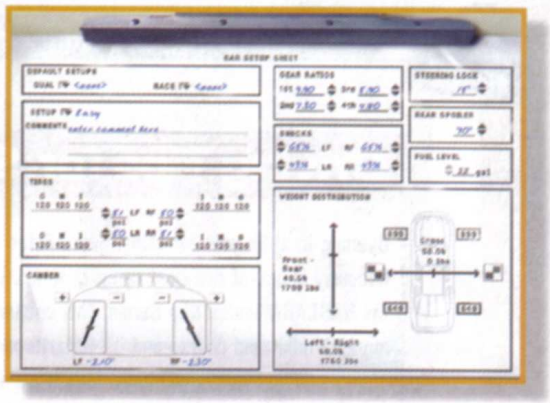
Races Are Won in the Garage

A true *NASCAR Racing 2* champion has to excel both on the track and in the garage. Correctly setting up your car is important to winning races. Since every driver will attack the racetrack a little differently, there is no such thing as a single "magic setup" that works for everyone, but there are some key areas to focus on when you enter into the garage.

The most important part of car setup is stability. If your car is too loose, you can't drive consistent laps, and you'll be a hazard on the track. When you drive a road course for the first time, you'll likely complain that your car is unresponsive in turns, so your inclination will be to "loosen the car up." Resist this inclination. More likely, you are overdriving the car. You will never obtain those "superspeedway" speeds on a road course. But that doesn't mean you won't be able to improve on your current time. You just need to improve your setup.

Find the Limits of Your Car's Current Setup

1. Start with the ACE setup.
2. Drive several laps at your best possible speed.
3. Monitor your tire temperatures. (Use the F4 key.) If the tires heat up to more than 230°, you're driving the setup beyond its capabilities.
4. Make note if a tire is carrying too much or too little of the load. Ideally, all four tires will stay close to the same temperature.
5. Let the tires tell you when they are at their limits. (They'll squeal.)
6. If the rear of your car seems to slip out from under you entering or leaving a turn, or if your car seems to resist steering, make note of it.
7. Drive several laps for consistency. When lap times stabilize, you know the limits of the setup.



Now Test and Adjust

Once you know the limits of your current setup, change it to see if your performance improves. Change only one item at a time. If you make multiple changes, it is very difficult to tell which adjustment affected your lap time. See the chart below to make adjustments based on your performance. NOTE: A pre-race setup for a road course should be as neutral as possible. Save the crossweight adjustments for race day.

Setup for Road Course

When you set up for road courses, make the car's setup as neutral as possible. The right side shocks should be the same as the left side. The left side bias should be set to neutral (1,750 lbs). The rear bias will be fairly close to the middle (1,700-1,800 lbs).

To give you some idea of what a proper setup for a road course might look like, NASCAR Racing Online Series (NROS) racer Lonnie Larkan has provided his favorite setup for Sears Point Raceway (see above). This setup may not suit your driving style, but it might be a good place to start making adjustments. Where you wind up will depend on your own style of driving.

Condition	Remedy
Car is loose entering left turn. Front tire temp high. Car is loose entering right turn. Front tire temp high.	Increase air pressure in right front tire. Increase air pressure in left front tire.
Car is loose entering left turn. Front tire not overheating. Car is loose entering right turn. Front tire not overheating.	Increase right front shock. Increase left front shock.
Car is loose in middle of turn.	Move rear bias forward.
Car is loose exiting left turn.	Add left rear shock and air pressure or lower left front shock and tire pressure (try both).
Car is tight entering right turn. Right front tire temp high.	Add left rear shock, if necessary.
Car is tight in the middle of the turn.	Move rear bias to back of car.
Car is tight exiting left turn.	Add left front shock and tire pressure or lower left front shock and tire pressure.
Car is tight exiting right turn.	Add right front shock and tire pressure or lower right front shock and tire pressure.
Tach is red-lining (and in correct gear).	Adjust to a taller gear.

PHOTO BY NIGEL KINRADE

Driving Tips for Sears Point Raceway

Opening its 29th year of racing, Sears Point Raceway is one of the most complex tracks in the NASCAR Winston Cup Series. This challenging 2.52-mile road course and its 12 torturous turns have played host to some of NASCAR's biggest drivers. According to driver Lonnie Larkan, the real keys to Sears Point are braking and throttle management.

"If you were driving your real car around a turn, would you press the pedal to the floor and hang on?...If you said yes, you must be the guy I saw pulled over by the cops on Interstate 5 the other day," he says. "More likely you would apply just enough throttle to get around the turn without squealing the tires since this would be the most efficient means. This is how you should drive... you'll see more consistent and faster lap times, your tires will last longer, and there's less chance you'll wind up off the track."

SEARS POINT RACEWAY

Another Passing Point

Apply a little throttle. From the apex on Turn 3, point the car at the curbing on the right side of the track to the apex of Turn 3a. A smooth, quick move through here will impact your lap time. Too much throttle in Turn 3 will push you too wide for a good entry. Get on the right side of other cars as you come out of Turn 3a, and pass them as you head down the short straightaway to Turn 4.

Turn 3 and Up to the Left

Approach on the outside. Let the drag of the engine slow you down. DO NOT BRAKE. Stay in second and adjust the throttle to 75 mph. Turn in tight to the apex on the left side of the track. Set up for a fast line and exit in Turn 3a.

3

Touch the Grass

Stay low and get off the corner fast! Approach Turn 2 on the left side and slow until the car is neutral and ready to turn. Turn wide but cut to the curbing on the right side. Easy on the throttle. Round the apex, apply full throttle, and shift to second. Stay on the outside for entry. Let the right side tires touch the grass as you approach Turn 3.

2

One Long Curve

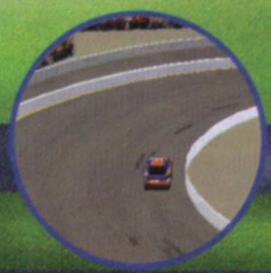
Take the curve on the outside wall at full throttle pushing 120 mph*. Make a smooth arc from the outside wall down to the left edge of the asphalt, then back out to the right side of the track to set up for Turn 2. Adjust your speed to maintain your line. (Don't go too fast or you will push out to the grass on all four tires.) Take the first kink at full throttle, then ease off to allow the car to stay on the track. Follow this line through the second kink, come off it, and go low to the left side of the track. Round the second kink and get the car neutral/facing straight. Downshift and brake to about 60 mph. Downshift all the way to first gear and hold until exiting Turn 2.

1

One More to Go

Take this one much like you took Turn 7. Come down the short straight flat out in fourth gear, and look for the yellow dash lines that signify the entrance to the pits. As you pass the start of these lines, press the brakes and begin downshifting all the way to first. Make the turn and put the pedal to the floor.

11



2

1a

1

Start/Finish

11

10

*NOTE: You'll never approach these speeds unless you adjust the setups in your racecar.

Down and to the Right

Still in second gear at full throttle, approach Turn 4 on the left side close to the grass. At braking marker Number 2, come off the gas, hit the brake, and downshift to first, then enter the turn from the outside at around 60 mph. Turn in just a little late and head for the apex on the right edge of the track. Gently apply the throttle to initiate the turn, then floor it and shift up to third gear as you set up for Turn 5.

Right-Hand Turn at 100 mph

Turn 5 is easy to take flat out. Out of Turn 4, move to the left side of the track, then, at full throttle, make a smooth arc to the edge of the track at the apex and down to Turn 6.

The Carousel

Enter this downhill from the right. Stay in third gear and start braking. Fall off to 90 mph and turn in late. When you enter the turn, ease off the throttle to keep the car neutral. (Keep the car off the grass!) As you pass the apex, apply full throttle, let the car drift out wide, and shift to fourth gear.

The Hairpin

You will blow right through this if you don't brake fast enough. Enter the turn wide from the left and short from the inside. Approach the turn at about 140 mph going downhill. You must break early enough to slow to 45 mph, but not too early or you'll lose valuable time. After you pass the blue billboard, step off the gas, apply the brakes evenly, and downshift to first. Good timing will have the car at 45-50 mph when you reach the bend. Maintain this speed until you round the curve. After completing Turn 7, head for Turn 8 and shift to second gear. Apply full throttle and steer to the right side of the track.

The Esses

A bad turn here, and it's impossible to get a good entry to Turn 8a. Enter from the outside edge of the track. Don't brake and stay in second. Ease off on the throttle and stabilize the car. (Don't slide your tail here.) Exit Turn 8 dead center. After Turn 8, apply the throttle and shift to third. On Turn 8a, make the arc straight and short. Come from the outside to the inside wall and exit mid-track. Shift to fourth gear and head for Turn 9 at 108 mph.

The Humpback

Approach on the right of the track. Near the turn, downshift to third and touch the brakes, then ease back the throttle and hold steady. Head left toward the grass, and wait for Turn 10. (Hint: Getting through Turn 10 is more important than speeding through Turn 9, so slow down.) When you near the Number 2 braking marker, cut the car to the right and try to run over the curbing at the apex of Turn 10.

Fast & Ugly

Take Turn 10 flat out in third gear, but be careful. Turn too early and you'll catch grass on the inside, winding up in the outside wall. Turn too late and you'll head into the left wall. Remember: Timing and consistency. As you make the turn, put your right tires on the edge of the asphalt and round the turn. Shift to fourth down the short straightaway.

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Driving Tip

Don't attempt a pass through the Esses unless it's a sure thing. The benefit isn't worth the risk. Best odds for successful passing will put you low going into Turn 2 (you'll have to come off the gas to hold the line), thereby setting your opponent up to be low going into Turn 3. Even by going mid-track into Turn 3 (the driver to the inside will have to come off the gas), you're putting your fate in another driver's hands. Remember, real drivers may not hold their line. A good shot through Turn 4 is more desirable.

3 At or just after the base of the hill, a crisp left turn (timing!) will allow you to hold Turn 3 apex or mid-track at 135 mph. Exit Turn 3 in fourth gear at approximately 141 mph. Ease the car toward Turn 4 apex and head for the back straight exiting at 162 mph. **4**

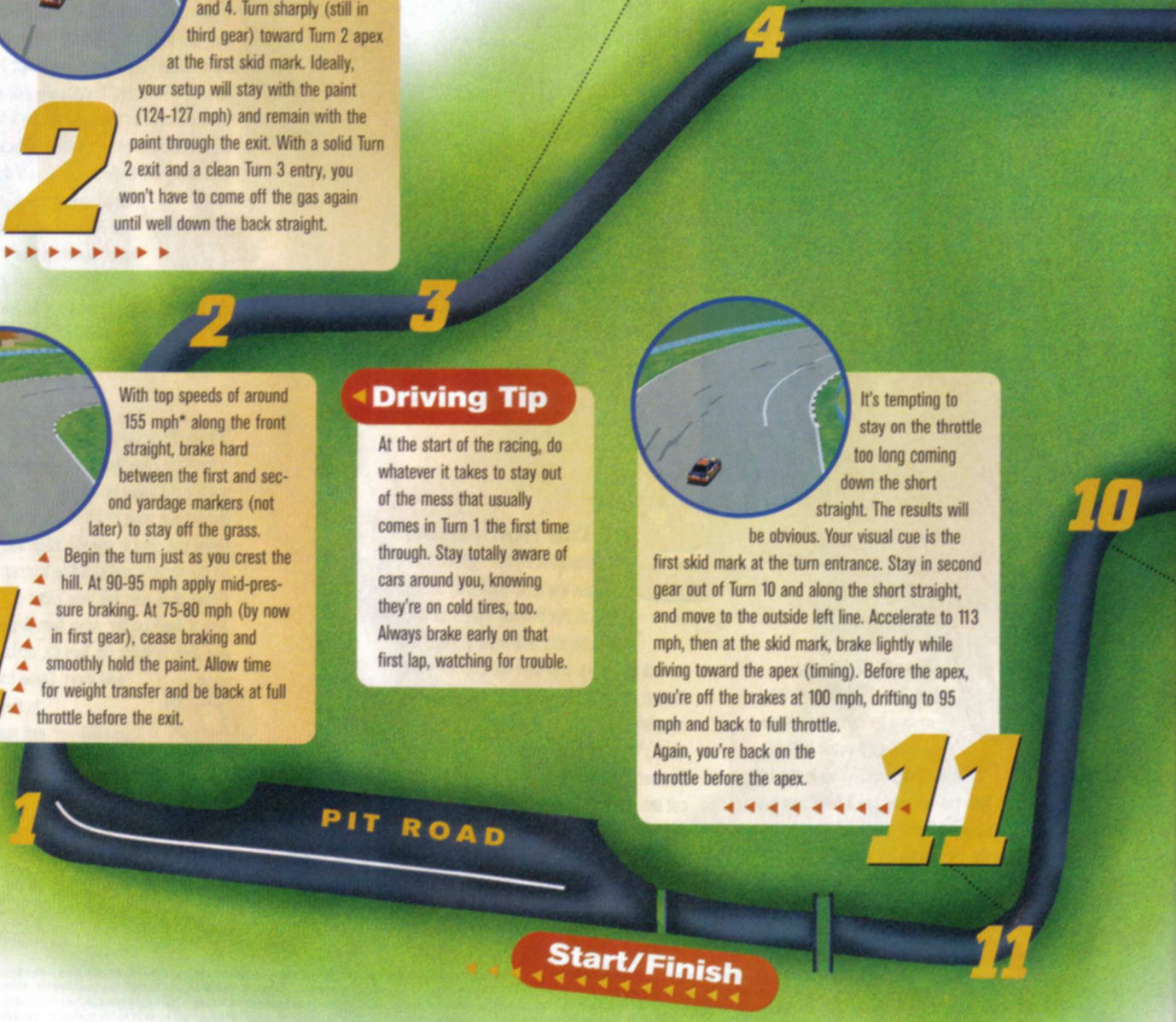
2 Entry to Turn 2 is critical as it sets up entry to Turns 3 and 4. Turn sharply (still in third gear) toward Turn 2 apex at the first skid mark. Ideally, your setup will stay with the paint (124-127 mph) and remain with the paint through the exit. With a solid Turn 2 exit and a clean Turn 3 entry, you won't have to come off the gas again until well down the back straight.

1 With top speeds of around 155 mph* along the front straight, brake hard between the first and second yardage markers (not later) to stay off the grass. Begin the turn just as you crest the hill. At 90-95 mph apply mid-pressure braking. At 75-80 mph (by now in first gear), cease braking and smoothly hold the paint. Allow time for weight transfer and be back at full throttle before the exit.

Driving Tip

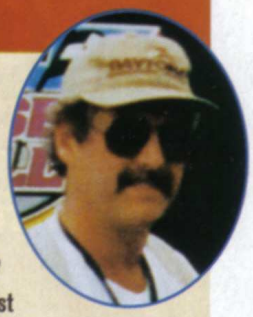
At the start of the racing, do whatever it takes to stay out of the mess that usually comes in Turn 1 the first time through. Stay totally aware of cars around you, knowing they're on cold tires, too. Always brake early on that first lap, watching for trouble.

10 It's tempting to stay on the throttle too long coming down the short straight. The results will be obvious. Your visual cue is the first skid mark at the turn entrance. Stay in second gear out of Turn 10 and along the short straight, and move to the outside left line. Accelerate to 113 mph, then at the skid mark, brake lightly while diving toward the apex (timing). Before the apex, you're off the brakes at 100 mph, drifting to 95 mph and back to full throttle. Again, you're back on the throttle before the apex. **11**



*NOTE: You'll never approach these speeds unless you adjust the setups in your racecar.

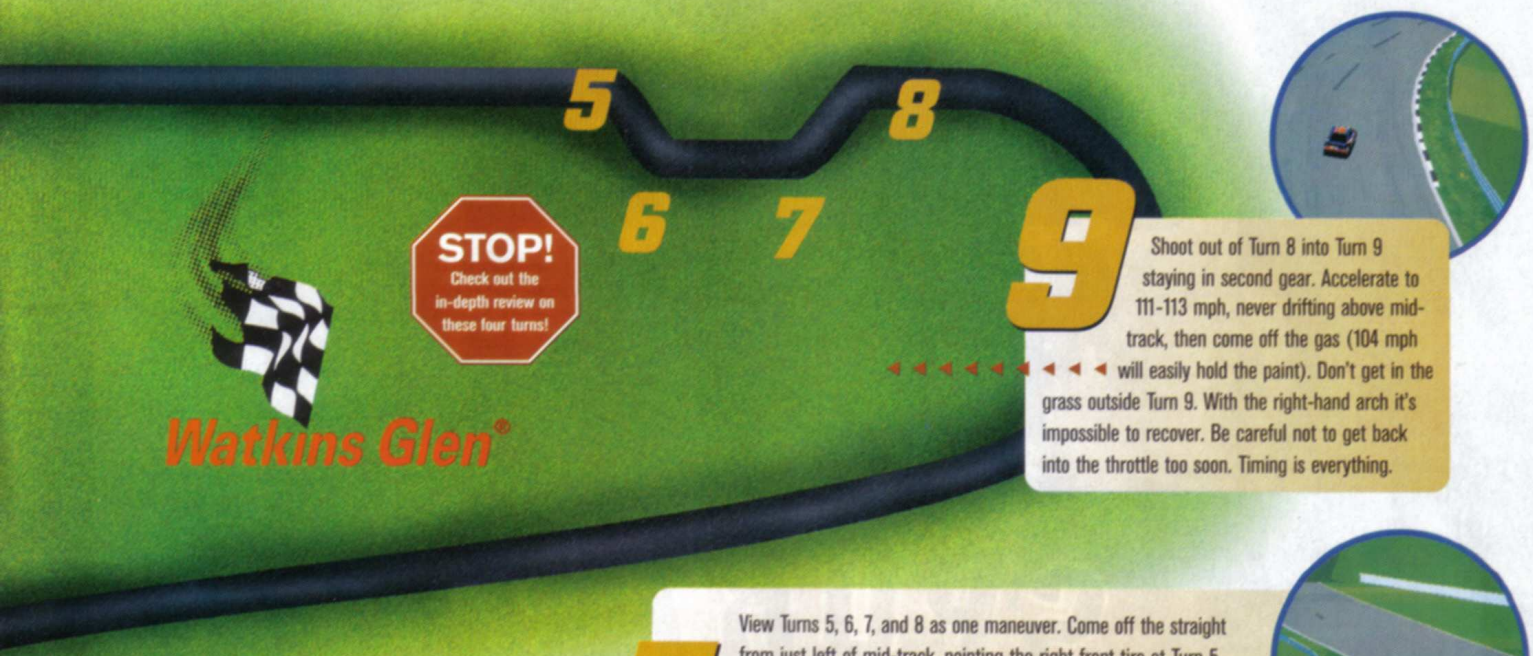
Driving Tips for Watkins Glen



Historic Watkins Glen Raceway features the unusual distinction of having seven right-hand turns within its 11 corners. This 2.45-mile course is regarded as one of the finest spectator tracks on the NASCAR circuit and always challenges drivers' road-racing skills.

According to driver Doug Thompson, "I was shocked the first time I'd completed a lap at Glen without so much as a tap on a guard rail or a wheel in the dirt! I was even more astounded when those times improved dramatically over when I'd started out by slowing down!"

According to Doug, Watkins Glen is a course of a thousand questions. You constantly have to adjust your thinking about your speed and your line as the race conditions change... "I can easily spend 32 hours tweaking a setup (literally hundreds of laps!) preparing for an important league race.... When I'm satisfied with a setup, done deal, right? No! More laps! There's just no way around having to put in the miles at Watkins Glen!"



9

Shoot out of Turn 8 into Turn 9 staying in second gear. Accelerate to 111-113 mph, never drifting above mid-track, then come off the gas (104 mph will easily hold the paint). Don't get in the grass outside Turn 9. With the right-hand arch it's impossible to recover. Be careful not to get back into the throttle too soon. Timing is everything.

5 6 7 8

View Turns 5, 6, 7, and 8 as one maneuver. Come off the straight from just left of mid-track, pointing the right front tire at Turn 5. Cease braking at approximately 103 mph, already in second gear before Turn 5. Steering through the Inner Loop happens very quickly and may seem complicated at first. But you've only three simple moves to make before Turn 9–a sharp left turn (allow for weight transfer back to neutral), point the right front tire at Turn 8 apex; then a sharp right turn!

Coming off the straight, point the car so the right front tire is aimed at Turn 5 apex and the left front is aimed at Turn 6 apex. A sharp left turn before the Turn 6 apex will throw the weight to the front right. Your momentum will set you up for the exit. As the weight shifts back to neutral, hit the gas. Point the right front tire at the apex of Turn 8. Turn right into Turn 9 just before the Turn 8 apex, never having slowed below 85 mph, and not a wheel in the grass. As with Turn 2, entry to Turn 5 is absolutely critical. You want to be off the brakes and turning left almost before you hit the Turn 5 apex and certainly before Turn 6 apex.

If given the choice, don't tailgate down the back straight. If you're locked in this position, don't expect the car ahead of you to have your braking point–forgetting yours in the excitement! Early on, allowing your tires to get in the grass is tempting. This practice is not a prerequisite for good lap times and it is dangerous, inviting loss of control. Keep in mind many afternoons have ended right here. If you're not single file through these turns; I'm watching the speedometer more than usual. As with Turn 1, exercise extreme caution, especially the first time around. Stay out of "the pack!"

10

Between the 2nd and 3rd yardage markers, apply mid-pressure braking (not maximum) and begin the turn. Ease the left front tire close to the apex (by now in second gear), braking lightly. Come off the gas at approximately 95 mph, roll with the apex drifting to around 88 mph, then get back into the throttle.

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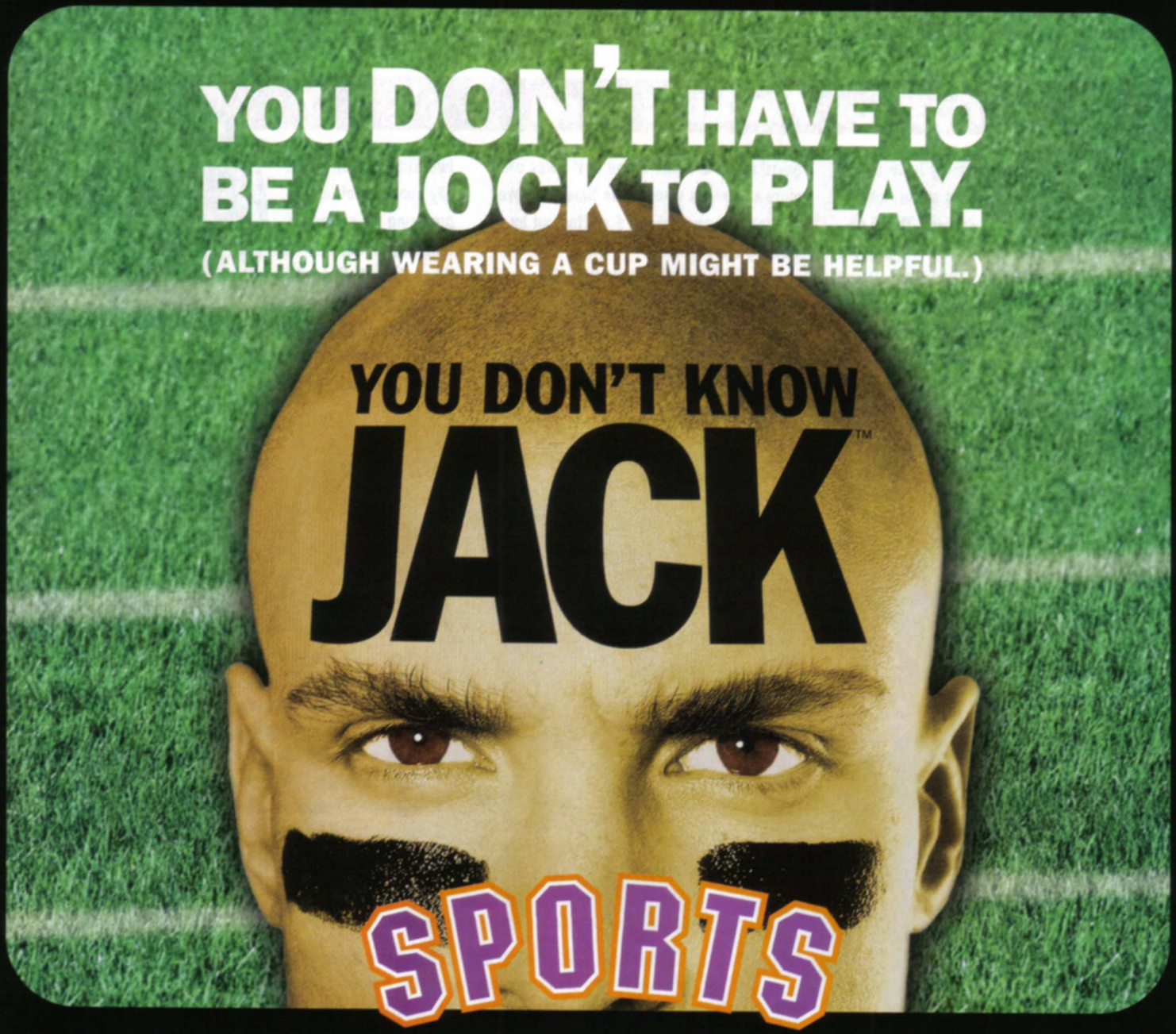
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE A JOCK TO PLAY.

(ALTHOUGH WEARING A CUP MIGHT BE HELPFUL.)



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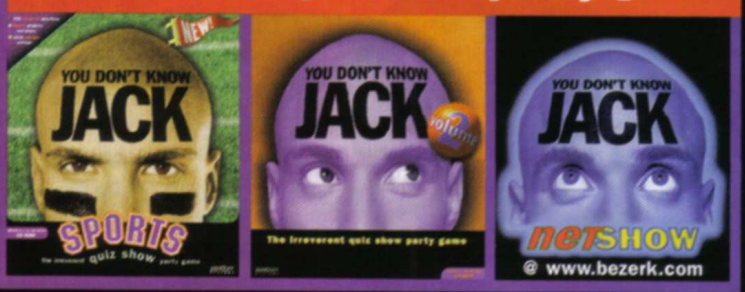

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WHEELS OF FORTUNE

By Paul Quinn

SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME THERE have been many inventions, creations dredged up from the depths of humankind's collective imagination: the airplane, the computer, Spam, dryer sheets, the turbo-charged tomato flosser (Pat. Pending #4711THX1138-69). But amidst this myriad of automatic hat tippers and self-propelled butt kickers (I am not making these up), one innovation has been hailed universally as the single most important invention of all. I refer to—of course—The Wheel. To this day intelligent, philosophical human beings everywhere ask perhaps the most pertinent and astounding question regarding this deceptively simple device: Which wheel works best with **NASCAR® Racing 2**?

We selected five candidates for this grueling trial: the **Per4mer**, the **MadCatz**, the **Grand Prix**, the **T2**, and the **Extreme CDS2R**. I used a Dell P200 with 32 megs of RAM and a Sound Blaster AWE 32 with a Screamin' 3D video card. Since I chose to test the wheels in **NASCAR Racing 2**, I had to set up and calibrate in both Win 95 and in the game. When I reviewed each controller, I kept several things in mind: retail price, ease of installation setup and calibration, documentation, performance, and—most important—feel. So, to quote a famous philosopher, "Let's take these hogs out on the track and see who's boss!"

PER4MER

The first wheel is the **Per4mer** by SC&T International (retail $49.95). The version I tested didn't come with pedals, although they are available in the $79.95 version. This is a basic wheel with a four-button setup, although two of the four buttons are duplicated on the backside of the wheel for a total of six actual buttons. The backside buttons are a nice touch as these add versatility for different driving styles and give your thumbs a break. Since I decided to test the wheels in **NASCAR Racing 2**, it was necessary to set up and calibrate the wheels in both the game and Windows 95. I used a custom two-axis four-button setup and the steering wheel settings. It took two tries to get the calibration set correctly, and we never did get all four buttons working properly. The documentation was very light—just a pamphlet—with very elementary instructions. Nevertheless, when we fired up **NASCAR Racing 2** and set the controls, we had no problems.

On to the race! The first thing I noticed was that it was touchy getting out of the pit with the **Per4mer**. When you use a button for acceleration, as we had to do, there is no feathering of the gas. We had two choices: no go and floor it! Once out of the pits and on to the track, the **Per4mer** was adequate to the task. Control was decent if a little loose, and I got used to the buttons fairly quickly. The biggest drawback was the lack of clamps to secure the wheel to the desk. This, coupled with light plastic construction, gave a less than solid feel. When I tried any kind of aggressive motion, the wheel wound up in my top lefthand drawer. In general, the **Per4mer** is better than using the keyboard or a joystick to drive, and is a good fit for the occasional driver on a budget.

MADCATZ

The first wheel and pedal combination I looked at was the **MadCatz** wheel by MadCatz (retail $69.95) which includes the pedals. This is a spiffy-looking wheel that features a four-way hat switch for flight sims, or Point Of View options, and a shift knob. While it has pedals, the **MadCatz** also has extra buttons for gas and brakes on the wheel itself if you prefer that style of racing.

The **MadCatz** also lacked clamps, but due to the tilted nature of the design, it did not slide around too badly. Again, using the custom two-axis four-button setup in Windows 95, I encountered no problems getting the wheel installed. I tried to get the hat switch working but had no luck in three tries and, since I didn't need it for **NASCAR Racing 2**, we gave up. Calibration in **NASCAR Racing 2** went as easily as it did in the control setup.

Back to the track! Acceleration was easier with pedals, as was braking, but the pedals were set so closely together that it was difficult to switch from gas to brake without mashing both pedals. Putting one foot on each pedal was a bit better but took a lot of getting used to. The **MadCatz** really lost points in the handling department. Sometimes it was as if someone had buttered the track. The wheel was not very responsive, and it took several recalibrations to get a decent degree of sensitivity. This, its lack of clamps, and its lightweight construction made for some interesting situations in traffic. Even with these drawbacks—considering the price—the **MadCatz** is a decent wheel/pedal combo for the occasional gamer.

GRAND PRIX

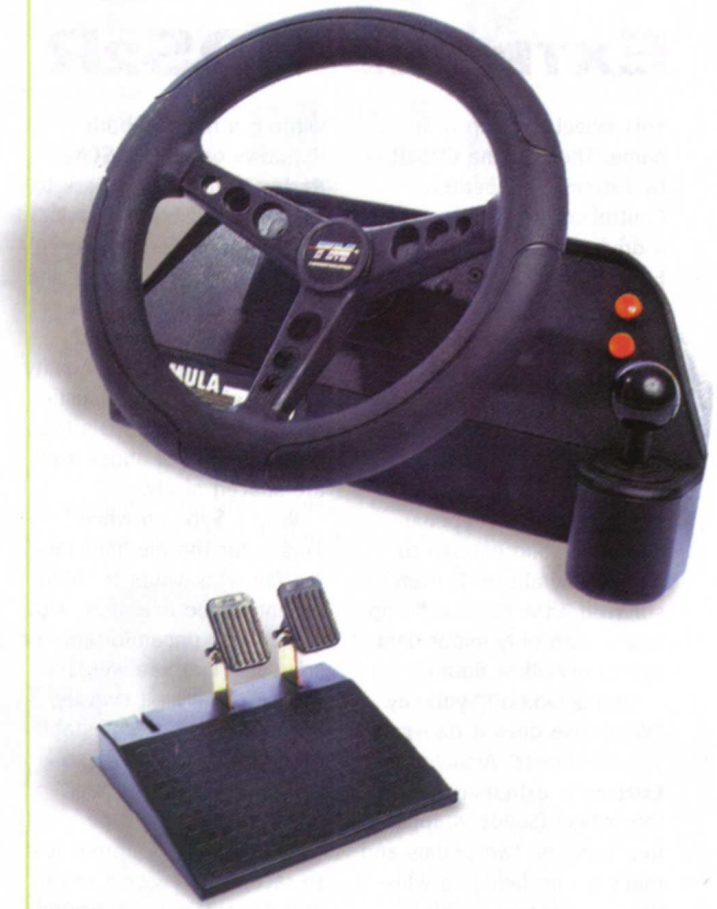
The **Grand Prix** by Thrustmaster (retail $99.95) is a different setup from any of the others I looked at. The **Grand Prix** does not have pedals. Instead, it has two paddles on either side of the wheel to control the gas and brakes. These paddles give gradual control, much like pedals, without the space requirements or extra cables of a pedal/wheel combination.

Being that the **Grand Prix** is a Thrustmaster, and Thrustmaster is the standard that most wheels follow, it was no problem setting up in either **NASCAR Racing 2** or Windows 95 using the standard two-axis four-button setup. The documentation is extensive and covers specific setup procedures for several popular racing sims (including some non-Sierra games!). Despite that flaw, the documentation is well written and quite useful.

Once again I found myself on a track on a beautiful, simulated Sunday afternoon. The paddles took some getting used to, but once on the track, the **Grand Prix** handled nicely. Heavier construction and stronger springs gave a more solid feel along with the big bonus...clamps! I also found that with the clamps, my hands didn't get quite as tired, allowing for some longer racing. The handling was smooth and responsive with little play in the wheel. While the paddle control is a bit sensitive and takes some getting used to, the **Grand Prix** is a solid steering wheel for the serious racer.

T2

The **T2** (retail $179.95), also by Thrustmaster, is the most common wheel/pedal combo available. The original **T1** set the standard for steering wheel controllers, and the **T2** improves dramatically on that design. The **T2** uses the two-axis four-button setup with two of the four buttons configured as a spiffy little shift knob on the right side on the console. Again the setup went smoothly, and I went to work on a race track where 55 mph is not an option. The pedals were nicely responsive and felt strong enough to take some punishment. The pedal platform itself is very wide, allowing enough room for your left foot to hold the platform in place. The **T2** also features desk clamps for carefree driving abuse. Like the **Grand Prix**, the **T2** has solid construction and heavy springs. I didn't feel like I was going to rip the wheel in half every time I had to avoid another car, wall, pit crew, etc. The **T2** is a wheel for the career driver and serious **NASCAR Racing** guru.



EXTREME CDS2R

This wheel lives up to its name. The **Extreme CDS2R**, by Extreme Competition Controllers (retail $679.00) is a driving wheel for the slobbering, drooling **NASCAR Racing 2** fanatic who actually owns officially licensed NASCAR bed linen and shouts driving tips at the TV on Sunday afternoons. This is an amazing wheel. Weighing in at around 50 pounds, this wheel/pedal combo is solid enough to handle any abuse. It even survived an accidental "drop test"—with only minor damage to my office floor.

"But $700.00?!" you say. "What else does it do—cook you breakfast?" Actually the **Extreme** is extremely simple. One wheel (suede wrapped), four buttons, two pedals and that's it—no bells, no whistles, no nonsense. This wheel is made for one thing—racing. Setup went without a hitch in both Windows 95 and **NASCAR Racing 2** and it was back to Taledega and on the track with minimal tire burning. Racing was very smooth and the wheel handles like a dream. The heavyweight construction and high-quality springs give a very realistic driving feel. The pedals took vast amounts of abuse and are spaced nicely.

Why a $700.00 wheel? This is for the die-hard racing fan who wants to drive an entire 500-mile race without getting uncomfortable or sore. The **Extreme** will last well into the next century, and with its fully adjustable springs and footrests, so will your hands and feet. So, if you are the type who bought a computer just to race, and have an extra month's salary lying around, you definitely want to consider the **Extreme CDS2R**.

FEATURES

	PER4MER	MADCATZ	GRAND PRIX	T2	EXTREME CDS2R
Manufacturer:	SC&T	MadCatz	Thrustmaster	Thrustmaster	Extreme Competition Controllers
Phone:	(800) 408-4084	(800) 659-2287	(503) 615-3200	(503) 615-3200	(612) 824-6733
Retail $:	49.95	69.95	99.95	179.95	679.00
Buttons:	8	9 plus Shift Knob	6	2 plus Shift Knob	4
Hat/POV Switch:	No	Yes	No	No	No
Pedals:	No	Yes	Hand Paddles	Yes	Yes
Installation:	Easy	Easy	Easy	Easy	Easy
Setup:	Fair	OK	Good	Good	Excellent
Calibration:	Fair (Very Twitchy)	OK (Twitchy)	Good	Good	Excellent
Feel/ Performance:	Fair	OK	Good	Good	Excellent
Price/ Performance Ratio	OK	Good	Excellent	Excellent	Good

There you have it. Five wheels for five kinds of drivers. I found that, overall, you get what you pay for. The less expensive wheel may not be the best choice for you, but you also may not need all the features of a more expensive setup. On the other hand, an occasional driver may want to go with a less expensive model. You make the call. Most stores have all the wheels on display, so go try them out. Keep in mind your driving style, how long you like to race, and then buy the wheel that's right for you. Most importantly, don't skimp on feel. You will be grasping this thing for a long time. You may as well be comfortable, and besides, insurance companies don't cover **NASCAR Racing 2**-induced Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

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A few months ago, my editor gave me the assignment of learning and writing about *The Realm*, an online adventure game set in a medieval world of monsters and magic. Thinking to myself, "Paid to play games—I *love* my job," I was willing to take on the task.

So, first things first. I created a character to play—Abernethy. I chose to be a wizard because, well, they're cool.

As with all newbies (new players), I started in my house. I was a poor, hungry, fashion faux pas. After I got out of my house, moved about six screens and was lost in my hometown, I encountered HorseWoman, whose biography said she was an 11-year-old. She took me to her home, gave me decent clothes, and taught me about basic communication, navigation, and combat. This was my first experience with the warm, welcoming community of *The Realm*.

I soon found myself outside of the town fighting rats. There are plenty of large, ferocious beasts to fight, but for the time being, all I could handle were rats. Not your garden-variety "catch 'em in a trap" rats, these were big, aggressive creatures that kicked my hiney plenty of times. I was really worried the first time one of these rats killed me, thinking

By Beth Demetrescu

BlueRose

Michelle Brose, also known as BlueRose, began playing **The Realm** in April 1996, when it was still in beta testing. Since Michelle, a college student planning to be a writer, is physically disabled, she uses a voice dictation program called DragonDictate to navigate and interact in **The Realm**. Feeling at home from day one and making friends immediately, Michelle founded a guild. Guilds are clubs or groups of people who have professions or morals or ethics in common. Michelle's guild is an Anti-Jumper (anti-muggers) guild. It was through the guild that this 22-year-old New Yorker found her calling–Realm Justice of the Peace.

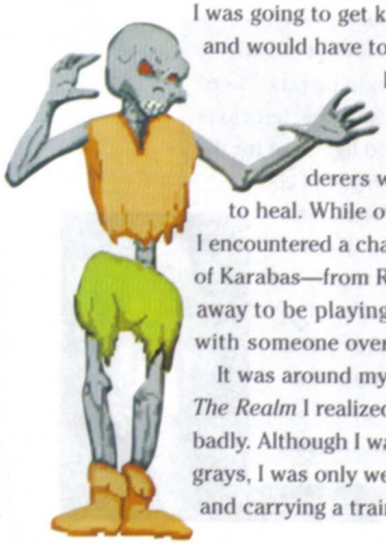
"It was actually two guild members (BlackTiger and Kelsa) who wanted to get married that led me to start doing weddings in **The Realm**," Michelle says. "They were due to be married in the new Chapel but hadn't lined up a minister. BlackTiger asked for volunteers while the bride was still making her way there, so I stood up and agreed to do it, figuring it was my duty as a guild leader. After it was over, I got many wonderful compliments on the ceremony, and decided I truly enjoyed doing it."

She then wrote another ceremony, taking time to get it just right, and started volunteering to officiate at the weddings of other friends. The word spread quickly, and now she is frequently stopped by people asking her to perform a wedding. It's estimated BlueRose performs at least half of all the weddings that take place in **The Realm**.

"Many people have taken to calling me the Lady of Love, a title I wear with pride," Michelle adds. "I enjoy helping people get married in **The Realm**, whether it's a role-play ceremony, or a prelude to a real-life relationship. It's not always easy balancing the duties of a guild leader with those of a Justice of the Peace; but I wouldn't change my roles in **The Realm** for anything."

"Many people have taken to calling me the Lady of Love, a title I wear with pride."

BlueRose officiating at a wedding at Eastern Leinster/Kurz Road.



I was going to get kicked out of the game and would have to log back on. Instead, I lost everything I was carrying, but I was found by wanderers who dragged me home to heal. While out battling the rats, I encountered a character by the name of Karabas—from Russia. It blew me away to be playing and socializing with someone over 5,000 miles away!

It was around my second week in *The Realm* I realized I needed some cash, badly. Although I was out of my newbie grays, I was only wearing pink clothes and carrying a training shield that I bummed off a cool adventurer named Vesper. Since I was so unprotected, I was getting creamed by most creatures. To raise money, I started killing anything I came in contact with (under level 3, of course) and scavenging for any gold just lying around. While cruising back from an episode of scavenging, I ran into a white wolf. Noticing that it didn't act like a wolf (by attacking me) and that it was wearing a baldric, I decided to take a closer look. I found out it was actually a character—Adventurine.

By the time I had enough gold to fill out my wardrobe and spell repertoire, I had become level 4 and had some build points to spend. Build points are the currency of knowledge. You start out with 20 and gain roughly 14 each time you level. I had 50 points to use, so I increased my skills at the local magic school. After boosting my skills, I bought some spells.

Once I purchased any spell I was able to use, I decided to get properly outfitted. I went to an armory and bought the best possible protection money can buy (for a wiz): troll leather. I purchased an entire blue and gold ensemble, figuring if nothing else, I was at least going to look good! Around this time I encountered Svenbold. Hailing from Germany, Svenbold was an experienced adventurer who could fight better than anyone I have ever met in *The Realm*.

Equipped with my new spells and decked out in my classy new duds, I went searching for some prey. The first thing I found were skeletons, and the first thing the skeletons did was kill me. OK, I knew they were level 9, but I had all this cool new stuff to try out. Anyway, I got blasted and was sent home to heal. While I was there, still reeling from my comeuppance, I put a message on the gossip channel asking to chat. I got many replies, but one stood out—Bravewolf, a wizard from Belgium who suggested I get a better dagger.

After taking Bravewolf's advice, I decided to gain some levels on my own. I was sick of being used by rodents and bones. So, I fought all the bees I could find. Then I went after the skeletons (with considerably more success). Then I targeted the swamp imps. Beating the swampies allowed me to gain the most levels. They were fun and easy to fight, even though they were above me in level.

It was about this time when I first learned of *Realm* weddings and BlueRose, the Justice of the Peace. BlueRose, often called the Lady of Love, conducts over half of *The Realm* weddings. The same day I heard about the weddings,

I reached level 15 and met Pi, who was from England and was one of the friendliest people I have met in *The Realm*.

So, here I am today—level 25. Although I now have a healthy collection of spells, I still get killed occasionally. I have picked up several valuable things from the many Realmers I have encountered. Not only did I get important information on *The Realm*'s features and inhabitants, but I also learned from their example about *The Realm*'s vast, multinational community. These people are friendly and helpful. And that, combined with the fact *The Realm* is a blast, is why I find myself, day after day, going back for more.

Adventurine

If you see a big shaggy white wolf wandering around Leinster or Ratling Run, take a good look at it before you attack. Most likely, this wolf has a name—Adventurine. She is one of **The Realm** characters created by Sierra's WebLady Cindy Vanous.

Cindy is the head moderator of all of Sierra's message boards. She oversees a corps of volunteers who keep an eye on what's happening online. Cindy has been adventuring in **The Realm** since October 1996. One day she logged on to **The Realm** to give a demonstration and hasn't turned it off since.

"Here I was, playing and socializing with someone over 5,000 miles away!"

While in **The Realm**, I had the pleasure of meeting several interesting people from around the globe. Pi, Svenbold, Bravewolf, and Karabas all took the time to chat with me. Each one contributed greatly to my experience in **The Realm**.

Svenbold

Located about 50 miles from the northern coast of Germany, Bremen is the hometown of Dominik Tonn—Svenbold, a level 57 adventurer. A 29-year-old computer science student, Dominik first discovered **The Realm** in October 1996 on the Internet during beta-testing and later bought the CD from Sierra.

Pi

The wizard Pi is the character of Jim Whurr, a 40-year-old systems/business consultant. Residing in Pudsey, England (near Leeds), Jim originally found out about **The Realm** while searching for information about virtual worlds on the Internet. "Given the quality of Sierra's games I decided to sign up without ever having seen **The Realm**," Jim says. "This was certainly a good decision, as I've never looked back."

Bravewolf

Rudi Roothooft, otherwise known as Bravewolf, is a 39-year-old bookkeeper. He lives in Herenthout, Belgium, about 18 miles outside of Antwerp, with his family. A competitive soccer player and amateur astronomer, Rudi enjoys **The Realm** because there isn't a "visual barrier." "You just imagine what others look like," Rudi says. "After a few minutes of talking and fighting together you know whether you like him or her or not."

A level 61 wizard, Karabas is the main character of Vladimir Bobrakov. A 39-year-old electronic/software engineer, Vladimir lives in Dubna, Russia, which is about 60 miles north of Moscow. He was referred to **The Realm** in December 1996 by a friend and later purchased the CD. His character's name, Karabas, comes from a children's book, **The Golden Key**. "**The Realm's** design is nice, and the user interface is simple," Vladimir says. "It's really fun to play and at the same time be able to communicate with the people over the world. It is a great idea to combine gameplay with the ability to communicate."

Karabas

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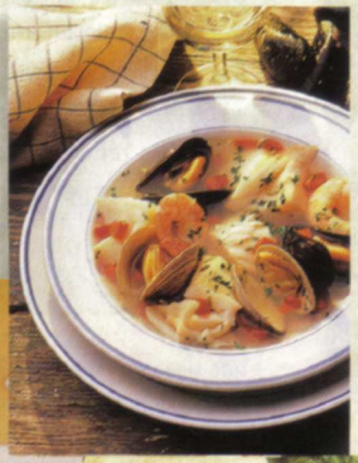

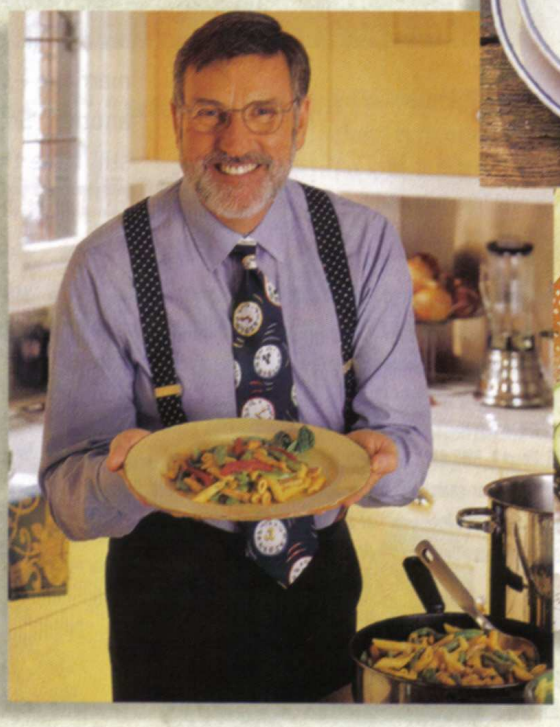

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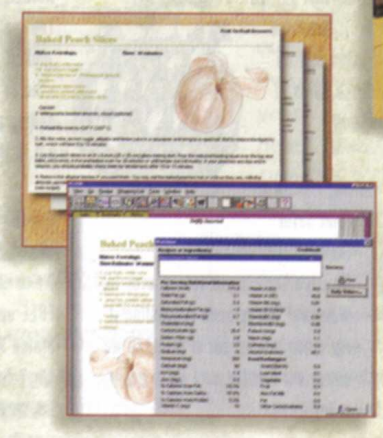

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WebTrek

By Beth Demetrescu

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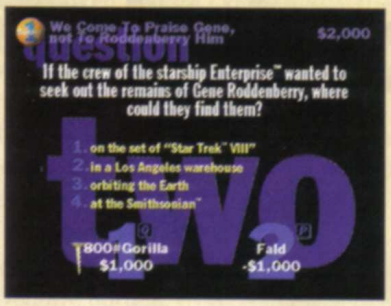

www.bezerk.com

Berkeley Systems has released a free online entertainment network called *beZerk*. We think you should drop in on *beZerk*, because right now it is showcasing *YOU DON"T KNOW JACK® SPORTS the netshow*. Featuring a new game every week, this masterpiece of sports trivia is now available for Windows 95 and soon will be available for the Mac.

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Sure everyone's heard of Amazon.com, but we think people should also check out Book Stacks. Book Stacks is an online bookstore and readers' conference system accessible via the Internet. Search for books by author, title, keyword or just browse by subject. Offering over 465,000 titles, Book Stacks' online reader's community includes author information, new releases, and book discussions.

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All right, maybe it's because we're in the magazine business, but this is a cool resource. The U.S. All Media Jumpstation is an online media guide with links to over 3,000 magazines, journals, trade and consumer publications. It's a powerful tool for research, education, business, and entertainment.

THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN COBWEBS. No, that's not a snide remark about your garage—it's a comment on the most dreaded affliction of websites: stale information. There's nothing worse than an outdated website. Well, we decided to buck the current trend of obsolete websites by giving Sierra's page the most extensive makeover in its history. In terms of the Internet, our site is an "old-timer," having just celebrated its second birthday, so these changes aren't merely a tummy tuck—they're major reconstructive surgery. So, brace yourself for some new, innovative additions and features. ¶

Now, before we get too far, a little reassurance is probably in order. This remodeling of the website should be looked at like a marriage—you are not losing one family member, you are gaining another. So, our site is gaining some great additions, but it will still have the exciting features you've come to expect. The demos, downloads, product pages, and patches are still there. Plus,

Top Ten Downloads

Here they are—the top ten hottest downloads on Sierra's website. From playable demos, to complete games, to way-cool freebies, we're absolutely sure there's something in here for everyone. Go to our Free Stuff page at **www.sierra.com/free/** and take a look for yourself.

Sierra Diving Adventure Screen Saver
Requirements: Windows 95, Direct X, 8MB RAM.
If you've been wishing for fishes or searching for sharks, this water wonderland features a fantastic view of underwater flora and fauna.

3-D Ultra MiniGolf Playable Demo
Requirements: Windows 95, Direct X, 8MB RAM.
Find out for yourself what this game is all about with one of its complete holes. After you've mastered the first hole, here are two more holes to putt around on (both require 3dmngolf.exe to use): lostmine.exe - 8 MB and wackytim.exe - 10 MB.

Betrayal at Krondor Free Game Download
Requirements: DOS
Yes, you read it right. The entire *Betrayal at Krondor*, 1994 *Computer Games/Strategy Plus* Game of the Year, is FREE for download. *Betrayal in Antara* is coming just around the corner, and we thought this would be a great way to get in the RPG spirit.

Shivers Two: Harvest of Souls Playable Demo
Requirements: Windows 95
Welcome to the bone-chilling town of Cyclone, Arizona. Enter the Cyclone Police Station, and be sure to pay close attention to what you see and hear.

NASCAR® Racing 2 Playable Demo
Requirements: Pentium Processor, 16 MB RAM
Here's a demo of the incredible Sierra/Papyrus title which has reviewers raving. Rev your engine, roll your tires, and see for yourself what everybody's talking about.

Front Page Sports: Golf Playable Demo
Requirements: Direct X
It's a big file, but it's worth it! Download this demo and try out three holes of *FPS: Golf*.

Johnny Castaway Screen Saver
Requirements: Windows
Yep, it's our classic screensaver for Windows! You've been requesting it ever since it went out of print, so we dug it out of our archive, and we're giving it to you for free!

IndyCar® Racing II Playable Demo
Requirements: DOS or Windows
Race door-to-door in this award-winning IndyCar racing simulation! All the same great racing action that you'll find in the full version of *IndyCar Racing II*.

3-D Ultra Pinball
Requirements: Win32s, WinG
The realistic pinball action of Sierra's *3-D Ultra Pinball* (the best-selling pinball game ever) takes you out of this world.

Red Baron Free Game Download
Requirements: DOS
We're doing it again—Sierra's giving away FREE our original version of the most celebrated WWI flight sim in history, *Red Baron*. Why? To get you excited about our upcoming sequel, *Red Baron II*.

Two Classics Yield New Classics

Red Baron

In order to promote the upcoming release of *Red Baron II* and *Betrayal in Antara*, we are offering FREE complete versions of not one, but two of our greatest classic games—*Betrayal at Krondor* and the 16-color version of *Red Baron*. With over a million hits per day, Sierra's website provides information on all of your favorite titles. Our site is well known for having great downloads and demos of the latest, greatest products. Well, brace yourself, because we have taken this one step further.

Known for being the greatest WWI flight sim ever released, *Red Baron* has received rave reviews from everyone—from aeronautical rookies to aces. You can engage in close-range dogfights, take on zeppelins, escort bombers deep into enemy territory, embark on nighttime undercover missions, and go head-to-head in combat with such famous aces as the Red Baron himself!

From the best-selling *Riftwar Saga* by Raymond E. Feist, *Betrayal at Krondor* is an epic role-playing game with terrific animation and fast-action battle sequences. *Krondor* was recently named to the *Computer Gaming World* Hall of Fame. Be sure to download both of these timeless classics. After all, how often do you get two great games totally FREE? Go to: **www.sierra.com/free/**

Betrayal at Krondor

we've added complete downloadable versions of a couple of our classic games. It was hard to top all this, but we gave it a shot anyway. ¶ One of the coolest new tools on our site is InterestLinker. Reversing the process of traditional site browsing, InterestLinker is a great way to find out exactly which Sierra products most closely meet your needs and preferences. Instead of requiring you to know the title of the software product you are curious about, this new tool finds out what your likes and dislikes are and suggests titles that match those interests—hence the name. ¶ Blake Park, Sierra's head Internet honcho, says, "InterestLinker helps our visitors uncover interesting and intriguing products without having to search blindly. It's kind of like having a good friend guide you around a new city—your friend

Sierra's New Clothes

Don't worry, you're in the right place. It is still the Sierra.com you know and love. Only now, we have given it a whole new look. With easy to access links and buttons, this new design will help you navigate through the wealth of information we have to offer. Whether you want to search by title or genre, our website will help you find all the details on your favorite Sierra products.

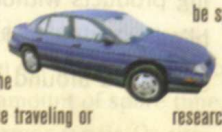
knows all your preferences and also knows what sections of the city you'd want to explore." For instance, if you wanted more details on software for young or inexperienced drivers, InterestLinker would lead you to the page for **Driver's Education '98/'99,** Sierra's instructional driving title that gives new drivers a head start. ¶ The InterestLinker is only one of the improvements you'll see in our site navigation. With 30,000 daily visitors, the site holds different attractions for everybody. So, we reorganized things to accommodate the different ways people think. Find great products like **Shivers Two: Harvest of Souls,** by typing the name into a search engine or by pulling down a list of alphabetized titles. Or you may simply have an interest in a certain genre of game but no particular title in mind. In that case, you can browse through such categories as Motorsports or Adventure Games. If you like card games, you

Chatting in Cyclone

If you own our exciting new game, *Shivers Two: Harvest of Souls*, you have access to one of the coolest new game/Internet features. When you're playing, you can click on a button right in the game's interface that puts you into a real-time chat room. Up to six players can be in a room at a time, and players can be in any place at any point in the game to participate. Running via the Sierra Interactive Gaming System, the chat rooms are a great forum for hints and tips, questions and comments. Next time you find yourself stuck in *Harvest of Souls*, check out the chat rooms—help is just a click or two away.

Take the Wheel

Sierra is developing *Driver's Education '98/'99* to assist young and inexperienced drivers in learning the rules of the road (scheduled for release in November '97). We are creating a website designed to serve as a resource for drivers' education and safety. We want to offer parents, teens, educators (driving instructors), and the press a unique resource for research and industry connections.

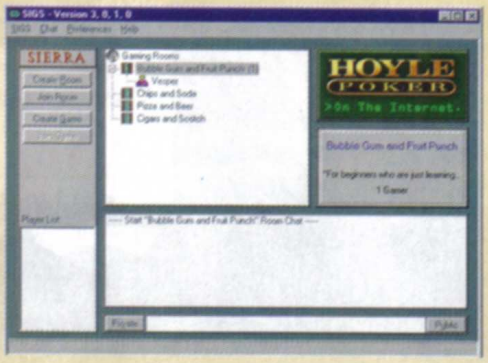


It will feature a "Rules of the Road" database, where those traveling or moving from state to state can type in the state they are in and the state they are traveling to—and the query will display the differences between each state. Currently this will be limited to United States driving rules. Canadian and U.K. rules will be added later.

Another section of the site will be specifically for the press and will have background research and statistical information about driving safety and teenage accident research. Additionally, we are planning a directory of driving schools, safety associations, and industry publication links to some clearinghouse sites that have extensive resources. **www.sierra.com/driversed/**

Hot Poker on a Friday Night

Think you got an ace up your sleeve? Able to get five of a kind—with no jokers? Well, here's your invitation to join two of the developers from our *Hoyle Poker* team for Friday Night Poker. Every Friday in June, from 6pm to 7pm (Pacific Standard Time), you can log on to the Sierra Interactive Gaming System, and if you're lucky, you can win some cool prizes!

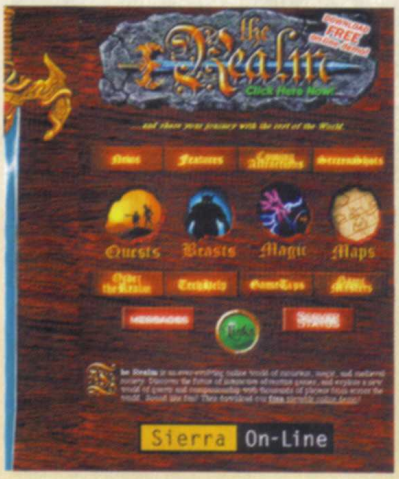


The rules are pretty straight forward: right out of *Hoyle Poker*, log onto the Sierra Interactive Gaming System as HPC<your name>. Only seven people are allowed in each game. Each person starts out with the same pot—$5,000 (virtual money, that is). Whoever has the most money at the end of the game is the winner.

Although there will be many games going on at once, only the games with the developers will have prizes for the winners. Games will be randomly selected to participate in each night's "Big Game." The top winner at the end wins four free Sierra games. The second-place winner receives two free Sierra games. Third, and fourth, place winners will take home *Hoyle* baseball caps. Be sure to log on and put your money where your mouth is! Check out the Hoyle page for the free Poker download.

can search that category and find products like **Hoyle Poker** or Hoyle Blackjack. Our new setup makes your favorite game only a couple of clicks away. ¶ The message boards underwent a major overhaul, as well. The boards have become an integral means of creating a true community of Sierra users. We felt making them easier to use and more comprehensive was critical. After all, the web is all about two-way communication, and message boards are a great way of encouraging Sierra customers to talk to each other and to Sierra. "It's an amazing experience to meet and hang out with people who share your interests, particularly when they're from all over the world," says Sierra's Cindy Vanous. Cindy isn't exaggerating when she talks about people from around the globe, either. People from as far away as Russia, England, and Germany are posting messages on The Realm message boards with news and comments about the changes to the game as well as to the new **Realm website.** ¶ Think this is a lot, huh? Well, there's more. This is only a few of the many great changes and updates you'll find on our site. You'll find us at **www.sierra.com**. See you soon.

Adventure Online



The Realm's website has undergone a complete makeover, and if you haven't already been there, you're going to love it! Complete with current news, coming attractions, tech support, and game features, *The Realm* site is garnering rave reviews. One of the site's most popular aspects is the section on *Realm* monsters. Each creature is displayed in stunning detail and comes with its own history and description. It also provides information about the history of *The Realm*, the different magic spells available, and the Game Masters. This is too good to miss. Visit *The Realm* site at **www.sierra.com/realm.**

ASK SIERRA

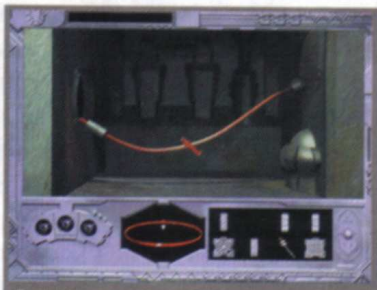
By Bryan Salois

Welcome to the latest column in InterAction: Ask Sierra. Bryan Salois, Sierra Tech Support "god" and official gaming junkie, gives straight hints and tips on some of the most frequently asked gaming questions. If you're stuck and need help with a gaming question, write us at Ask Sierra, and if Bryan doesn't have the answers, he'll get 'em from his gaming buddies in Tech Support. Mail your queries to: InterAction Magazine - Ask Sierra, P.O. Box 53008, Bellevue, WA 98015.

Rama

Q: How Can I Rescue the Trapped Avian from the Biot?

A: You need to cut the power cable to shut down the Biot and free the trapped Avian. Click on the base of the Biot to get a close-up of a power cable. Unfortunately, your standard-issue multitool is not strong enough to cut the power cable. You will need the shears found in the Myrmicat Museum, which is located in the second tier of the "city" named "Bangkok." Once you have cut the power, you will need to exit the close-up view of the cable compartment. There is a bent rod on the ground next to the ruined Biot's arm. Pick it up and use it on the Biot's arm to free the trapped Avian. The Avian will give you a red-colored neck ring in gratitude and leave.



Cut the cable with shears from Myrmicat museum.

Pry open the Biot's arms using the bent rod.

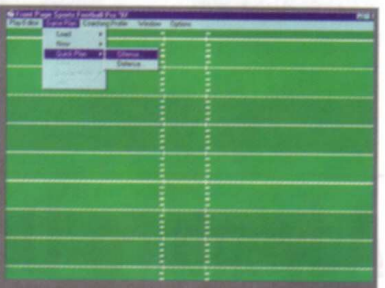
FPS: Football Pro '97

Q: How Do I Create a Custom Game Plan?

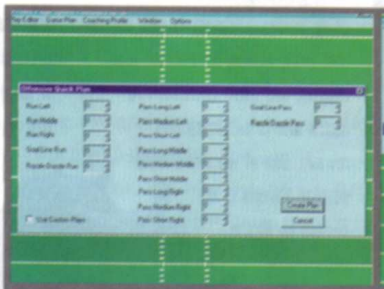
A: First, from the main game screen, click Exhibition Play **(1)**. Then select a home team (e.g., Seattle), and then select Play Editor. From the Play Editor, select Game Plan, then select Quick Plan, and then select either Offense or Defense **(2)**, depending on which type of game plan you want to create. From the Quick Plan screen, click on CREATE PLAN **(3)**.

The first game slot will be titled 1-1. Click on the 1-1 game slot and that will bring up the Load Play window. Select the play you want to be included in your game plan, then click on Add **(4)**. Repeat this step until you have all the plays that you want in each of the 64 spaces of your game plan. When you have finished, click on Close. From the menu bar select the Game Plan menu and choose Save. You will be prompted to give the game plan a name. Type in any name (e.g., "New Plan") and your game plan will now be created, saved, and available for use in practice or in your next game.

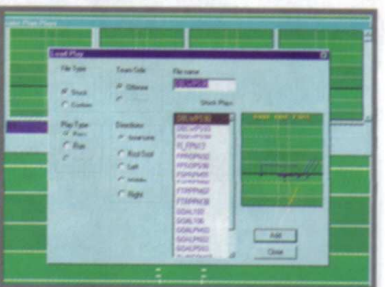
1. Select a home team in the *Exhibition Play* window.



2. From *Quick Plan*, choose *Offense* or *Defense*



3. From the *Quick Plan* Screen, click on *Create Plan*.



4. Select the plays you want from the *Load Play* window.

T2 Steering Wheel

Q: How Do I Set Up My Thrustmaster T2 Steering Wheel?

A: We suggest you set up the T2 steering wheel (for use with **NASCAR Racing 2**) using the following tips. These are only guidelines. If you continue experiencing problems, we suggest contacting Thrustmaster.

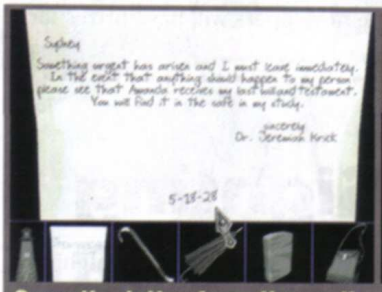
First, connect the pedals to the joystick port on your computer. Next connect the steering wheel to the Pedals connector. For the best calibration and control, we recommend using dedicated game cards instead of the joystick port found on a sound card.

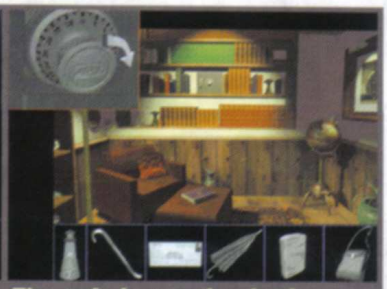
Start the game. Click on Options, then Controls. Under Steering, check the box for Wheel, under Calibration click on Calibrate Joystick 1. Under the Set Controls options, click on Steering, then turn the wheel right and left. Click on Acceleration and press the right pedal, then click on Braking and press the left Pedal. Click on Shift up and press the gear shift forward, then click on Shift down and press the gear shift down. Click on Reverse and press one of the red buttons on the steering wheel. You should be ready to go.

Lighthouse

Q: How Do I Open the Safe in Dr. Krick's Study?

A: You must first get the combination by taking the letter from the mailbox outside the Lighthouse. Using the letter opener found in the roll-top desk, open the letter and read it, then write down the combination. The safe is opened the same way you would open a standard, real-life combination lock. Click on the safe twice to bring up the close-up view of the safe dial. Turn the dial on the safe once to the right until you reach the first number of the combination, then twice to the left to the second combination number (make sure to pass the second number on the first turn and then stop at it on the second turn). Finally, turn the dial once to the right to the third and final number. When you have opened the safe properly, the close-up view should go away and you will hear a loud "click." Click on the safe handle to open it.





Open the letter from the mailbox outside of the Lighthouse. The safe has a standard combination lock.

Leisure Suit Larry: Love for Sail!

Q: How Do I Win the Cooking Competition?

A: You need to make a special quiche to win the competition. First, in the kitchen take the pot and the salt. Then go to the Lower Aft Hold (the Beaver Hold), click on the Beavers, click Other, then type in "milk" to get the Beaver Milk. Go to the lounge and talk to the bartender to get lime juice, then go to Fo'c's'le. Click on the sheep-shaped bush and take a kumquat, then go to Dewmi's room and click on her dresser until you find the Orgasmic Powder. Return to the kitchen and click the pot of beaver milk on the Cheesemaster 2000™. This will give you Beaver Cheese. In inventory, click the kumquat on the Beaver Cheese to make quiche, then click the Orgasmic Powder on the quiche. Go to the cooking competition room, click your quiche on the conveyor belt, and watch yourself win the competition.

The special ingredient: Orgasmic Powder. To the winner go the spoils.

CONTEST PAGES!

Friday Night Poker?

So, you say you're pretty good at cards, huh? Well, get ready to put your money where your mouth is. Here's your invitation to join us for Friday Night Poker—every Friday evening in June. From 6 to 7 p.m. (Pacific Standard Time), you can log on to our gaming network, Sierra's Interactive Gaming System and, if you're lucky, you can play against two developers from the *Hoyle Poker* team.

The rules are pretty straight forward: Log on to Sierra's Interactive Gaming System as HPC<your name>. Only seven people are allowed in each game. Each person starts out with the same pot—$5,000 (virtual money, that is). Whoever has the most money at the end of the game wins.

There will be several games going on at once, and only the games played with the developers will have prizes for the winners. People will be selected randomly to participate in this "Big Game." The top winner at the end of the game gets four free Sierra titles. The second place winner will receive two free Sierra titles. Third and fourth place winners will take home Hoyle baseball caps. So, if you're ready to play with the big kids, make sure you join us for Friday Night Poker.

Sierra Sighting

Jamie Rees of New Brunswick, Canada was watching a little educational television (Discovery Channel) and came up with a humorous and very fitting Sierra Sighting. Jamie wrote us about the show. "I think *Like an Animal* (the show) was doing experiments to see if animals could be conditioned to behave in certain ways and associate pictures with objects. One of their creatures was an octopus named after a video cartoon character who's all arms. Yep, you guessed it. Leisure Suit Larry was the tentacled teaser's name." We all shuddered to think of the trouble Larry would get into if he had eight arms. Way to go, Jamie!

Search For the Mask of Eternity

We've created a virtual treasure hunt to locate the hidden pieces of *The Mask of Eternity*. Starting on July 1, 1997 and lasting until September 30, 1997, the treasure hunt has five phases which represent the worlds of *The Mask of Eternity*. Each phase will reveal more clues to the locations of the Mask pieces. Your ultimate goal is to find each of the Mask pieces and understand the truth behind *The Mask of Eternity*.

Clues will be revealed each week in various locations throughout the Internet. Each phase will begin at Sierra's web site (www.sierra.com) but will take you to other exotic locations on the Internet where your next clue(s) will be revealed. Each phase will have an objective you need to achieve before moving on to the next phase. The first 50 people to complete each phase will receive the Sierra game of their choice. The first 10 who complete the entire hunt will receive $1,000 cash. The grand prize winner drawn from all entrants will receive a one-week holiday for two, in an exotic locale that can only be discovered by playing the hunt. Start checking Sierra's web site at midnight, July 1, 1997 for complete contest details.

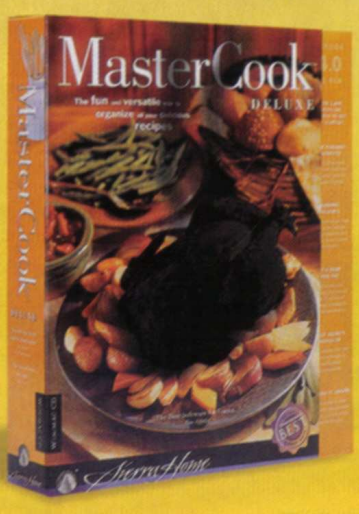
MasterCook

COOKING DISASTER RESULTS

Some people are born with the skill to create a masterpiece with food, and some aren't. But even the best of us can have a catastrophe or two. We asked people to submit their worst cooking disasters.

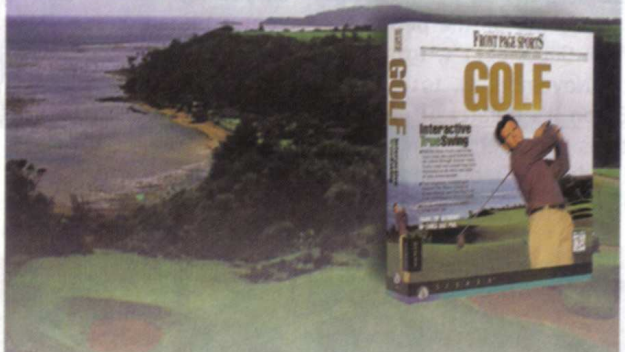
The first place winner is Cheryl Bishop for her bumbling adventure with stuffed shrimp.

The second place winner is Lee Ann Lang for mistaking egg shells for egg whites and ruining her new husband's birthday cake.



For a complete list of all the winners and their hilarious stories, write to **Worst Cooking Disaster Contest, Sierra On-Line, 3380 146th Pl. SE, Bellevue, WA 98007.**

Princeville Sweepstakes Take 2!



Don't worry, you haven't missed the deadline for the contest to win the ultimate golf vacation. You now have until June 30, 1998 to enter to win five days and four nights at the Princeville Resort Hotel in Hawaii.

Look for specially marked *FPS: Golf* boxes at your favorite retailer and enter today. Or send a 3X5 card with your name, address, and phone number to **FPS: Golf Sweepstakes, Sierra On-Line, P.O. Box 40239, Bellevue, WA, 98015.** Or register online at **www.sierra.com/golf/.** No purchase necessary.

Red Baron II Takes Flight

Fly the Unfriendly Skies of WWI-Torn Europe

www.sierra.com/rb2/

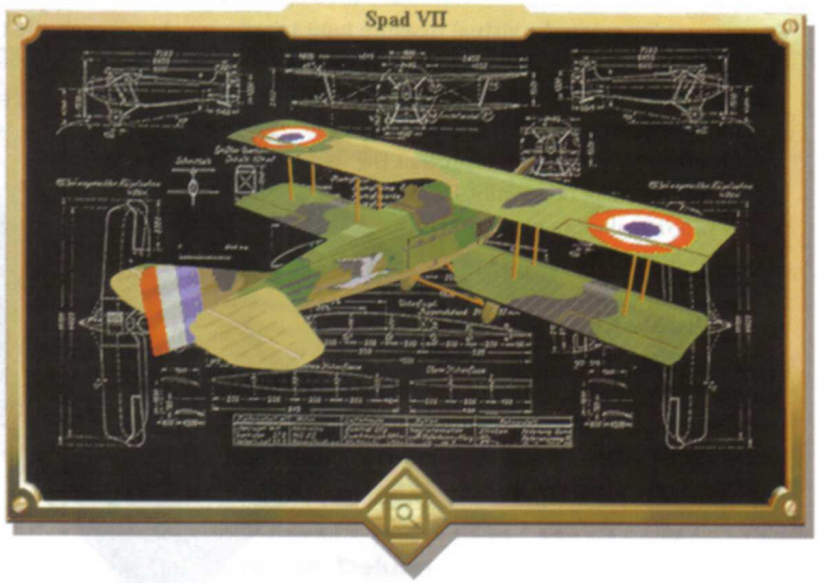
By Beth Demetrescu

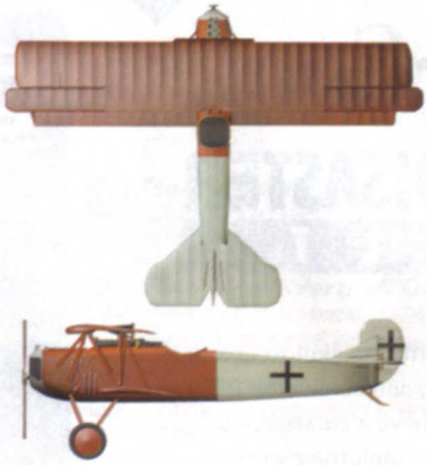
If you liked **Red Baron**, the best-selling WWI flight sim ever, then prepare yourself for Sierra's exciting upcoming release—**Red Baron II**. With smooth gameplay and unparalleled historical accuracy, **Red Baron II** will sweep you into the WWI era as a fighter flying ace.

Focusing on the period from September 1, 1915, to November 11, 1918, **Red Baron II**'s theater of operations will stretch from London to France and Belgium, and down to the German/French and Swiss border.

Featuring 40 aircraft from the WWI era, **Red Baron II** will cast you into the role of a WWI pilot from one of the major warring powers—France, Britain, United States, or Germany. As a pilot fighting for your country, your goal is to rise through the ranks and become the top ace of the war. Aces were pilots who shot down five or more planes. The top ace, Manfred von Richthofen, had at least 80 kills, so you will have your work cut out for you!

Gary Stottlemyer, the lead designer of **Red Baron II**, is very excited about the flight model used in the game. "What's cool about our flight model is that it faithfully simulates over 15 aerodynamic regions on each of the aircraft," he says. "Each of these regions can be separately damaged or destroyed, with the aerodynamic effects of that damage accurately affecting the performance."

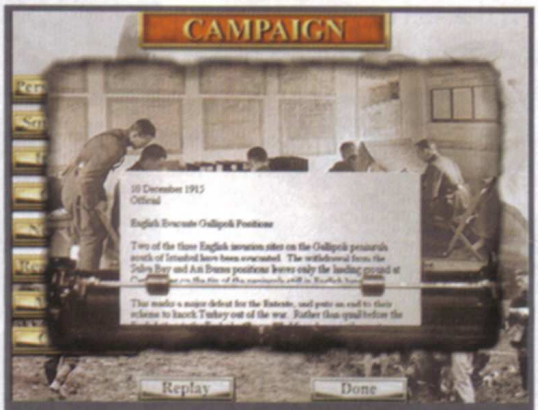




In order to achieve your goal of becoming the top ace, you'll need to participate within your squadron, focusing on leadership and teamwork. This will ensure you survive and succeed in the air. If you find yourself outpaced by an enemy ace in the battle for the top spot, you may choose to challenge them to one-on-one combat. If you're good enough, you may be able to wipe out the competition.

"This isn't BVR (beyond visual range) engagements, where you take on enemy dots that you only see on a radar screen," Stottlemyer explains. "This is an in-your-face 'knife-fight' with colorful, twisting, zooming, and juking airplanes, barely 100 yards away, that you're

Customize your plane with flames, logos, camouflage, and anything else you want.



Risk and strategy play a vital role as you lay out your next campaign.

Chalk one up for the Allies as a German biplane goes down in flames.

Your Sopwith Pup riddles a Fokker Dr1 with lead in a classic WWI dogfight.

trying to nail with short-range machine gun fire."

Red Baron II will have three main aspects of play—single missions, multiplayer, and career mode. Single missions allow you to quickly jump into the action, customizing battles to your taste. Single missions make the ideal training ground for practicing the myriad of battle conditions that will be encountered during campaign play, from balloon-busting to ground attacks and aerial dogfights.

Red Baron II's multiplayer mode will allow players to go head-to-head with human opponents via the Internet, network, or modem. Featuring multiple plane and mission types, multiplayer allows gamers to fly cooperatively or competitively against one another in a true WWI dogfighting frenzy.

"**Red Baron II** takes place in a virtual world that allows you to use your own knowledge and skill to deviate from the plan," Gary says. "You can employ your own tactics or go 'cross-country' with an entire world to encounter. A world with thousands of 'entities' that can be attacked or defended and that react to everything you do in a realistic and constantly changing way."

Although the single-player and multiplayer modes are important and fun, the heart of **Red Baron II** is career play. In the course of a career, you will face the challenges of surviving war and trying to become the most decorated ace of WWI. Using teamwork and skill, you will become a squadron commander who plans and executes each mission your unit is assigned. You will choose who flies and who stays behind with the civilians. As you gain rank and experience, you will receive more responsibility, eventually becoming a flight leader, squadron leader, and, if you're really good, commander of your country's most elite squadron.

Determined to keep you busy in the gameplay, **Red Baron II** features a new, innovative type of mission generator which creates random missions in an intelligent, virtual world. Directing activity within a 150-mile radius of your squadron, the mission generator creates an incredibly active, realistic world where you will encounter dogfights already in progress, descending aircraft, enemy planes bombing a target, or friendly spotter planes being attacked. You can't get more real than this!

With strikingly realistic terrain, relentless combat, authentic re-creation of squadron life, and the choice of which nation's honor to defend, **Red Baron II** will put you in the middle of missions, risking your life as you try to attain the goal of becoming the top WWI flying ace.

—Scheduled for release: Fall 97

Addicted to SODA

Uncarbonated Adrenaline for Off-Road Enthusiasts

www.sierra.com/trucks/

By John Williams

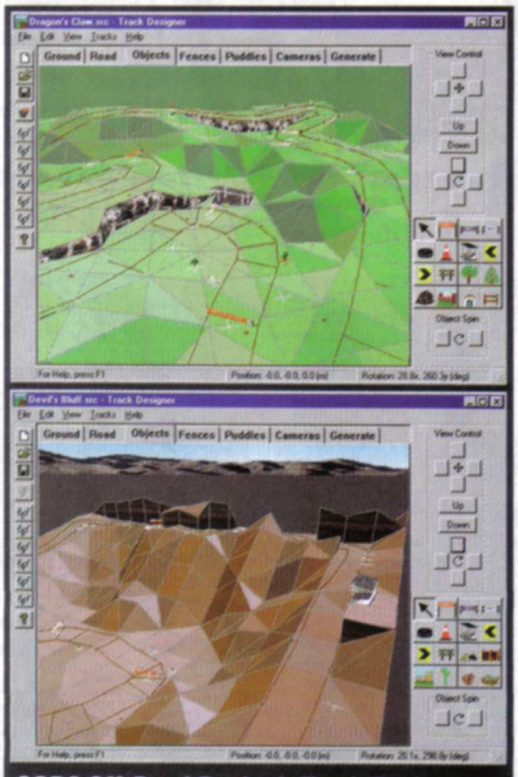
HERE AT **INTERACTION**, WE'RE all avid racing simulation fans. We live for the next big Papyrus racing release. That's why we went into mourning when the Papyrus developers recently let us know **Grand Prix Legends** wouldn't be available until Spring 1998. (Last issue, we mistakenly printed that the product would release for Christmas.)

World Series of Off-Road Racing®

The pain eased substantially, however, when the pre-alpha version of Papyrus' new **SODA Off-Road Racing** arrived. For those of you who don't know, **SODA** stands for Short-Course Off-Road Drivers Association. Developed in conjunction with Software Allies, **SODA** is a sim that lets you drive off-road buggies and two- and four-wheel-drive off-road racing trucks around off-road racing courses chockfull of bumps, jumps, mud, and mayhem. It's so much fun that driving a **SODA** truck almost feels like playing an arcade game. But the realistic detail, sophisticated opponent AI (artificial intelligence), and physics modeling is so realistic, calling it anything but a simulation would be a joke.

All of us here at **InterAction** got a big kick out of the realistic collisions, flips, and spins—they make for some pretty spectacular footage in the replay mode. But we were equally impressed with the realistic 3D dynamics of the vehicles we were driving. The way the suspension groaned—but didn't break when we hit the hills too fast. The way the mud got caught in our tires and affected our ability to turn quickly. The uneasy slide when we tried to take a quick left turn up a hill—that's real off-road racing.

The one feature that impressed us most was the Track Designer. Here you can create custom tracks, design the 3D terrain, apply different surface types to the track, and position the camera so you can watch the race from custom vantage points. You can also place objects, checkpoints, fences, or billboards. With the powerful Track



***SODA Off-Road Racing's* Track Designer allows you to create a race-ready track or a complete 4x4 playground. Design cliffs and plant buildings and cameras.**

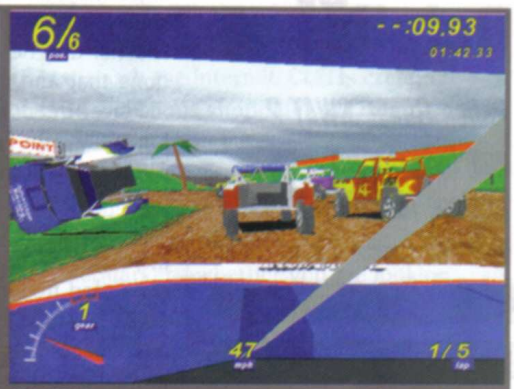
Designer, it's anything you want—anywhere you want. You'll be able to save the track files and exchange them with friends or foes over the Internet. Frankly, most of our late nights have been spent designing new tracks and putting them to the test.

Another thing we couldn't believe was that the game we were playing is a pre-alpha release. **SODA** isn't due to ship to retailers for almost four months, yet it's more fun and functional than many "finished" games are when they hit the store shelves.

The folks at Papyrus have big plans for **SODA Off-Road Racing** including multiplayer and Championship Season play, which they are working to implement now. Worldwide ranking systems for drivers across the World Wide Web, vast libraries of custom tracks made with the Track Designer, and other cool new features are waiting to be built in the months ahead. We've made Papyrus promise that we'll get a new updated version every month, which should slow down our productivity substantially between now and the fall release of the final game.

–Scheduled for release: Fall 1997

3D physics so real that, when your suspension bottoms out, so will your stomach.



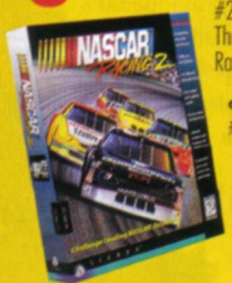
Multiple camera angles: View the action from the helicopter, the bumper, or behind the wheel.

SAVE $30

Get the Thrustmaster Formula T2 with NASCAR® Racing 2

Make your racing action even more exciting with Sierra's Ultimate Racing Bundle. You get the all-new NASCAR® Racing 2 together with the Thrustmaster Formula T2 Driving Controls for just $149.95 – that's a savings of $30 off the street price!

NASCAR® Racing 2 is the most realistic simulation of America's most popular motor sport, with 16 legendary tracks and the actual cars and drivers from the NASCAR® Winston Cup Series. The Thrustmaster Formula T2 gives you a heavy-duty dash console with a 10-inch steering wheel, plus a sturdy floor console with gas and brake pedals. Together, they give you the awesome power and control you need to blow past the competition!



#2NSCR
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Sierra Sequels Fine-tune the Strategy Details

Police Quest: SWAT 2 and CyberStorm 2 Explore New Directions

www.sierra.com/swat2/

www.sierra.com/cstorm2/

By Nancy King

DEVELOPING A SEQUEL TO A best-selling strategy game is never a sure thing. Just because the first game was successful is no guarantee the sequel will be too. Designers are constantly asking, "Can we build on what we had? Can we improve on the technology? What can we add that will offer the gamer new, bigger, better challenges? How can we enhance the storyline?"

Police Quest: SWAT 2

When Susan Frischer, **Police Quest: SWAT 2** designer, sat down to design **SWAT 2**, she worked off of a list of "musts" she felt had to be in the game. First, realism was the most critical ingredient for **SWAT 2**. "Secondly, I felt the player must be able to make the same calls as a real SWAT commander, to pick from a wide variety of options, and then play out the consequences," Frischer says. "The goal is to make the player's experience as close to reality as possible—without sacrificing the ever-important fun factor." After seeing a demo, I'd say Frischer and her team have done that and more.

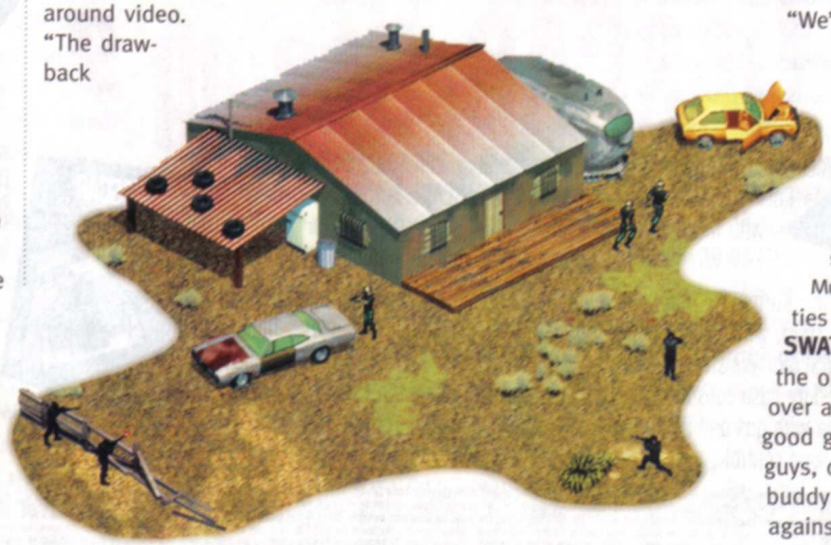
Player freedom is another big issue with Frischer. In **SWAT 2** you'll play as a SWAT officer or a terrorist. The characters can move anywhere at any time. The expanded freedom of the SWAT gear list lets you use any weapon, any place, at any time. The terrorists also have a choice of bombs, grenades, and more. As a SWAT squadron leader, you can call in the Crisis Negotiation Team (CNT), the SWAT helicopter or tank, K-9 units, and explosive experts to get the job done.

"Anything a SWAT officer might face once during a 35-year career, the player will experience multiple times in **SWAT 2**," stresses Frischer.

Unlike its predecessor, **SWAT 2** does not revolve around video. "The drawback of live-action video is that it necessitates limiting the gameplay—you can only allow the gamer to do the things that you have video for," Frischer explains. The main difference between the original and the sequel is the real-time gameplay. "We're combining the urgency and excitement of an action game with the complexity and detail of a strategy game," she emphasizes.

SWAT call-ups take place anywhere in L.A. County, including the Mojave Desert.

Hostage situations reminiscent of real-life events heighten the tension.



Multiplayer capabilities are also new to **SWAT 2**. You'll have the option of playing over a modem as the good guys or the bad guys, or you and a buddy can team up against the computer.

For some real head-to-head action, jump on the Internet or a network with up to seven other people. "We're also providing a map editor so you can create your own scenarios and challenge your friends," Frischer adds.

As previously mentioned, in **SWAT 2** you'll have the option of playing as a SWAT commander or a terrorist. Each career consists of 15 missions played in chronological order. All take place in Los Angeles County at locations that range from office buildings and apartments, to the Mojave Desert and Griffith Park.

Assemble your squadron from over 120 SWAT members and then hit the streets. You'll face psychos, criminals, and terrorists, each with his own deviant personality and arsenal of weapons. You'll have to defuse bombs, bust drug manufacturers, take out rooftop snipers, and quell riots.

Go in with guns a-blazing and you may make it through the mission, but you run the risk of destroying all the evidence and killing suspects who could have provided important clues. It's your call, play it either way.

—Scheduled for release: Fall 1997

CyberStorm 2 —Corporate Politics It Ain't

Creating a strategy game focusing on user customization was a gold mine for **CyberStorm 2** Designer Graeme Bayless and his team of bioderms at Dynamix. Allowing players to take part in the building and outfitting of their HERCS changed strategy gameplaying forever.

"**CyberStorm 2** takes everything we learned from the first **CyberStorm** to a new level," says Bayless. "Players will be blown away by the level of detail." Now you'll have your choice of 25 different chassis to build on, including tracked and grav vehicles, as well as HERCs, over 60 types of armor, more than 170 weapon systems to choose from, and millions of different pilots. **CyberStorm 2** will let you literally build the bioderm to suit your style of play."

The storyline in **CyberStorm 2** will still have you in charge of the combat forces of a corporation, but instead of fighting cybrids, now you're fighting the other corporations. "You represent one of eight corporations, each with its own advantages and disadvantages. Your goal is to drive the other corporations out of the system," explains Bayless.

The game engine has also changed. **CyberStorm 2** will be a square-based, real-time movement system and not a hex-based, turn-based movement system like the original. "The thing about **CyberStorm 2** that's so powerful is the combination of detail and speed," Bayless declares. "We think that both action and strategy audiences will be really surprised by the richness and fluidity of **CyberStorm 2**."

—Scheduled for release: Late 1997

Build your HERCs to suit the terrain and take control of your corporation's future.

Two Sci-Fi Action Titles Shake, Rattle, and Roll the Genre

HalfLife & Earthsiege 3 Slam the Competition with Explosive Graphics, Funky Characters, and Plenty of Action

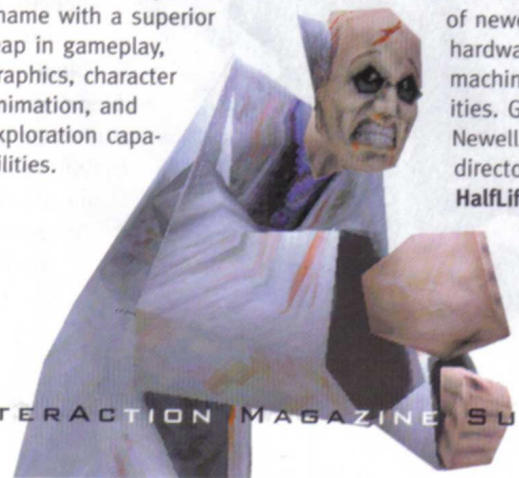
- www.sierra.com/halflife/
- www.sierra.com/es3/

By Beth Demetrescu

You're not the only one who can pass through the portal, so keep on your toes.

Watch your back! The humans in HalfLife aren't so friendly either.

SINCE THE INTRODUCTION OF **Doom**, **Quake**, and **Duke Nukem**, the action game category has become a hot target for many game publishers. The ante has been raised for action games with advanced graphics, deepened storylines, and more complex puzzles. Well, Sierra's upcoming releases, **HalfLife** and **Earthsiege 3**, will put the competition to shame with a superior leap in gameplay, graphics, character animation, and exploration capabilities.



HalfLife

Based on the Quake® engine technology, **HalfLife** will be a rich, three-dimensional, first-person gaming experience filled with unique interactive creatures and non-player characters (NPC), detailed environments, and intricate puzzles. **HalfLife** will add enhancements to the engine to take advantage of newer 3D hardware and machine capabilities. Gabe Newell, project director of **HalfLife**, is excited because this game "is making single-player fun again."

"Between the in-game scripting, the complexity of monster and NPC behavior, and some of the things we've picked up from the adventure and RPG games, we've really tried to think through what needs to happen to the action genre to give back that excitement and sense of fun missing from many of today's games," Newell says.

HalfLife will assign you to a top-secret experiment at a decommissioned missile base. It's here you and your team have developed a cross-dimensional portal through which you glimpse an alternate universe with unusual beings. After using nuclear warheads to break through to the other dimension, you are set upon by the ghastly creatures.

HalfLife will be played in three sections. The first third of the game will take place in the lab where you build up skills, weapons, and knowledge. The second part

HalfLife Life Forms

Big Mama: She's a tough one to crack. And watch out for her kids—aggressive little parasites.

Steroid Barnacle: These guys love to hang out together. Just don't go "fishing" with them!

Mr. Friendly: He's a swaggering ghoulish scavenger with a thirst for blood and an avid collector of dead players and creatures.

will introduce the CIA's "cleaners" who are ordered to shut you down and cover up the whole messy affair. The final section will push you deeper into the mystifying, alternate reality.

Newell and Chuck Jones, lead animator for **Duke Nukem** and now **HalfLife**, believe the genre has gotten pretty stale. "We started by thinking of what we, as gamers, really wanted from the next generation of action games," Newell explains. "**HalfLife** is going to be a game where people are really going to want to finish it. They're going to say, 'I can't wait to see what happens next.'"

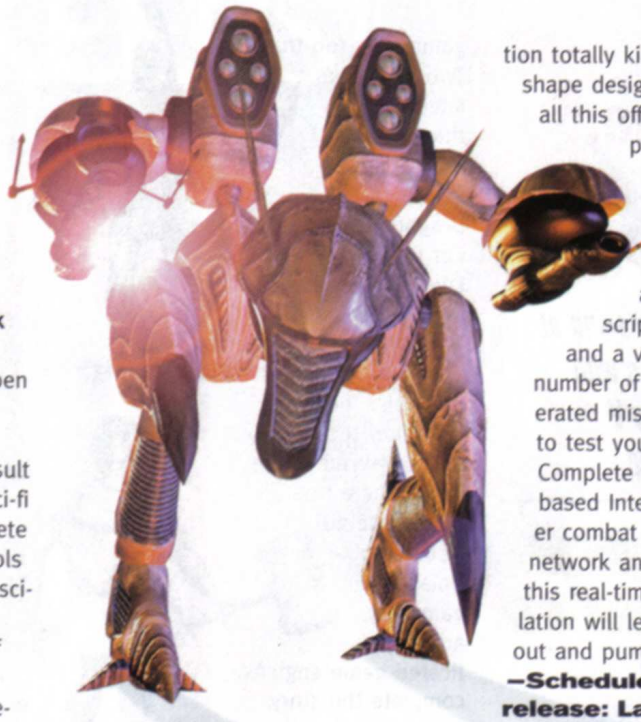
With multiple levels, worlds, puzzles, and characters. Supporting up to 32 players in head-to-head Internet/LAN play, **HalfLife** will change your sense of action games completely.

—Scheduled for release: Fall 1997

Earthsiege 3

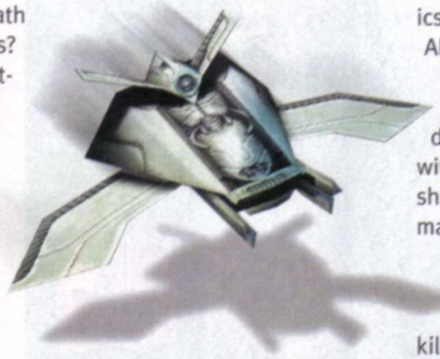
Want to stomp someone in a 90-ton robot armed to the teeth with more gizmos than a Swiss army knife on steroids? No problem. How about raining plasma death down on hapless civilians? Can do. What about blasting someone to atoms from the cockpit of a futuristic cybertank? Gotcha covered! **Earthsiege 3**, the latest title in the **Earthsiege** series from Dynamix, will give you all these possibilities and tons more.

According to Dave Selle, the lead designer of the game, **ES3** will be a completely new game both conceptually and technologically. "On the conceptual side, we've added a great deal of material to the Earthsiege saga," Dave says. "We hired Dave Bischoff, a writer of **Star Trek** novels and TV episodes, to deepen our storyline and enrich the game universe." The result is a compelling sci-fi experience complete with high-tech tools and gadgets, a fascinating plot, and intriguing hints of alien visitation.



Unlike its predecessors, **ES3** won't make you play the good guy. If you are so inclined, you can play from the perspective of a Cybrid and wreak havoc on humanity. If you'd rather, you can be the director of a corporate special operations team. Or, if you're the type who likes a real challenge, you can play as the rebels.

No matter what perspective you choose, **ES3** will provide a wide variety of configurable vehicles to select from. "Right now, there are over 40 pilotable vehicles in the spec; each one of these can be tinkered with extensively," Dave explains. "Engine, armor, weapons, shield generators, targeting systems, and jamming gear are just some of the systems that can be customized."



Technologically, **ES3** will be revolutionary. Featuring an all new 3D engine, the game boasts some of the most impressive graphics ever seen. Alien worlds are brought to vivid and detailed life with light-source shaded, texture-mapped environments that stretch for more than 20 kilometers into the horizon. "We have accurate physics in our object movement and collisions," Dave says. "Not to mention totally killer art and shape designs showing all this off to the best possible effect."

Scheduled to ship in late 1997, **ES3** will have about 45 scripted missions and a virtually infinite number of randomly generated missions for you to test yourself against. Complete with server-based Internet multiplayer combat and set up for network and modem play, this real-time action-simulation will let you reach out and pummel someone.

—Scheduled for release: Late 1997

Set your sights on the enemy and on world domination.

Stunning backdrops immerse you in the futuristic landscapes.

Fame, Fortune, and Fighting

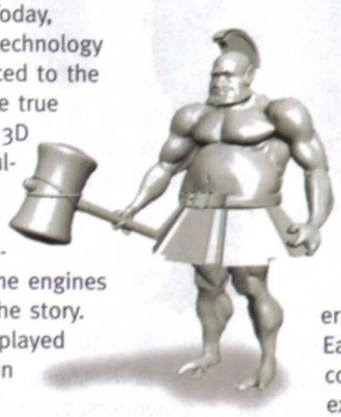
Fantasy Role-Playing at Sierra Advances with Quest for Glory V and Demon Isle

www.sierra.com/qg5/

www.sierra.com/demonisle/

By Nancy King

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, the more they remain the same. OK, it is a cliché, but in the case of Sierra's fantasy role-playing (FRP) games, it's too true. Two of Sierra's latest FRP titles are proof, **Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire** and Cat Daddy's **Demon Isle**. Eight years ago, PC technology was limited to 2D art and lots of pixels. Today, computer technology has advanced to the point where true panoramic 3D visuals, multiplayer gameplay, and sophisticated game engines complete the story. Sierra has played a big role in developing that technology, but we've played an even bigger role in exploiting the technology and pushing it to its limits.



Interact with colorful characters and explore mysterious, majestic lands.

For years what you saw in a computer game was not exactly what the designer had in mind. Early games just couldn't meet the expectations of the designers' imagination. Technology wasn't advanced enough. Don't misunderstand; early games were and still are lots of fun to play. But now, there are rich 3D renderings, multiplayer Internet capabilities, digital music, and multiplane scrolling screens. And while the characters might be different, the locale changed, and the villains more frightening and diabolical—all FRP games are based on the same three desires: Fame, Fortune, and Fighting.

Innovative 3D technology enables your hero to explore *Quest for Glory V's* exotic Mediterranean world with unlimited freedom.

Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire

Lori Cole is back and co-designing the final chapter to one of the most popular series in the history of computer gaming—**Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire**. Co-designed by Terry Robinson, **QFG V** will offer you the chance to embark on the final quest with the unique attributes of either a fighter, magician, or thief.

As in the previous four games, you are the hero. You decide on a name, the character traits you possess, and what skills you have. As you play

QFG V, your character will grow and become more defined. With every battle you fight, spell you cast, or pocket you pick, you're improving and changing. That's what a true FRP game is all about.

What's different in this game is your ability to interact with real people and play **QFG V** in multiplayer mode. Cole, Robinson, and their team are adding in the whole thrust of being able to work with or against other people—the competition vs. cooperation aspect. In it you will interact and negotiate with real people. Cole describes it as a continual balancing act between camaraderie and rivalry.

Each of the past **Quest for Glory** games had a unique feel and flavor, and Cole stresses this one is going to be a combination of all of them. Between the music, the new graphics, the story, and the characters, the minds at Sierra Oakhurst are creating a real world that players will find different.

So for this final installment of the **Quest for Glory** series, Lori Cole is hard at work tying up loose ends and drawing together all sorts of familiar and not-so-familiar faces. Be prepared though—the **Dragon Fire** quest will take you places you've never seen before. The challenges you face will shake you to your very core, and the rewards will be beyond any of your wildest dreams.

—Scheduled for release: Fall 1997

Cat Daddy's Demon Isle

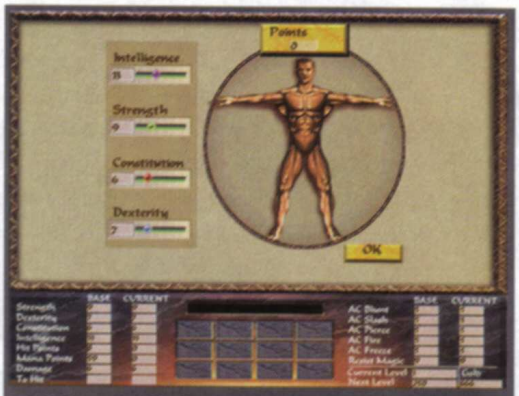
In Indiana it's common to say that someone who is the best at something—the top dog or head honcho—is a Cat Daddy. So it's no wonder that Harley Howe, Ryan Haveson, and Patrick Wilkinson chose Cat Daddy as the name of their company. Come this fall, when Cat Daddy Games releases its debut game, **Demon Isle**, the name will seem even more appropriate.

While at Microsoft, Howe, Haveson, and Wilkinson played games—lots of games. They put together a "dream list" of features they would include in the ultimate cross-genre game—and **Demon Isle** was born.

In a nutshell, **Demon Isle** is a cesspool spawning evil and despair. Creatures (so vile they answer to no one but the Demon Zorax) own the place. Their nightmare quickly becomes your nightmare.

Play it alone or join up to 32-plus players in multiplayer mode. Wilkinson tells us the multiplayer capabilities are limited only by server parameters, not client parameters. In addition, unlike most FRPs, you are not trapped inside a few walls. In **Demon Isle** you get to explore a vast island with no annoying breaks in gameplay—regardless of whether you're entering a town or a dungeon, or looking off the edge of a cliff.

"There are no other games quite like it out there," Wilkinson adds. "It's kind of a blend of what we liked best from **Diablo**, **Meridian 59**, and **Quake**." He describes it as better than **Diablo** because it's first-person, making it more immersive. It'll be more advanced than **Meridian 59** because of a higher-quality-graphics engine.



Build and allocate points to create the player you want.

Make careful choices with your arsenal or face the wrath of the Maggot Queen.

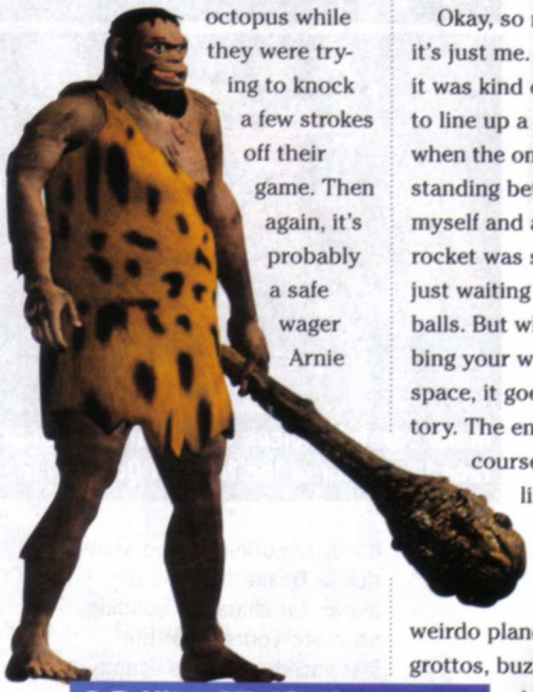
It's action-oriented and superior to **Quake** because it allows for character building. So brace yourself for the fast-paced, real-time action of **Demon Isle**.

—Scheduled for release: Fall 1997

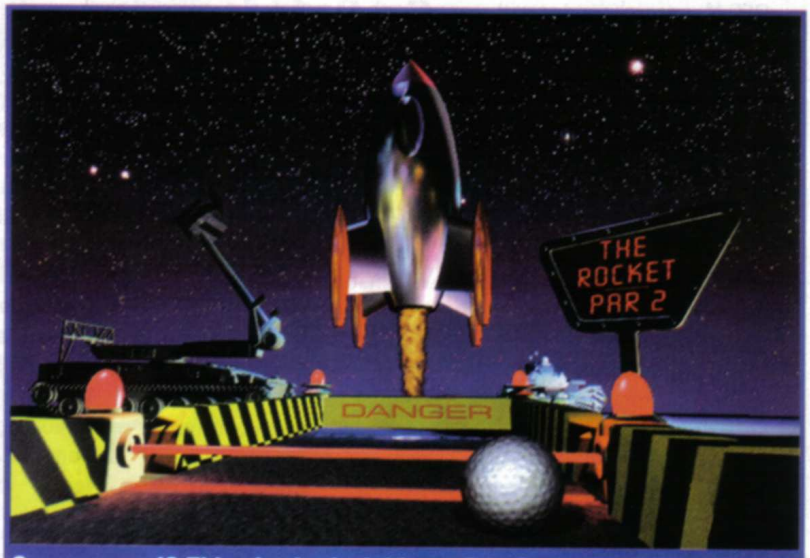
Puttin' in the Playhouse

By Jeff Gilbert

If it wasn't for the giant eyeball in the wishing well, I know I would have made par. Of course, the Brontosaurus blocking the tar pit on the 16th fairway wasn't any help. And whose idea was it to put a sand trap on the moon, anyway? I'll bet bigtime golf guys like Palmer and Nicklaus never had to contend with lava-belching volcanoes and a fat, grabby octopus while they were trying to knock a few strokes off their game. Then again, it's probably a safe wager Arnie and Jack never putted across the back of a whale popsicled in ice or chipped one into the living room of the abominable snowman, either. Such are the hazards—and handicaps—of Sierra's delightfully wacky *3-D Ultra MiniGolf.*



Okay, so maybe it's just me. I mean, it was kind of hard to line up a shot when the only thing standing between myself and an Earth-bound rocket was security lasers just waiting to vaporize my balls. But when you're clubbing your way through outer space, it goes with the territory. The entire 18-hole course (which looks like Pee Wee's Playhouse in the land of *Myst*) takes place on weirdo planets, undersea grottos, buzzing sawmills, haunted houses, ancient Aztec ruins, the South Pole—even in the back yard of the little old lady who lives in a shoe. And if she doesn't already have her hands full (something about too many kids), she isn't too thrilled about you trying to play through. You might even say she's a bit...



Can you read? This short, straight par 2 looks easy...but looks can be deceiving. Can you accept the challenge?

teed off. Ahem.

I can't remember the last time a cranky pelican snatched up my well-banked line drive into a lighthouse and dropped it in the ocean. Talk about a water hazard. Then there was that tricky hole where I got to dodge those dirt-digging bulldozers from *3-D Ultra Pinball.* Clever. If a pinball can't stop 'em, maybe a nine-iron can. You never know.

Eighteen holes, one digital club, and more balls than any one person should be allowed to have, everything I need to start my own miniature golf tournament is right on the screen before me. Thanks to *3-D Ultra MiniGolf* I no longer have to yell "Duck!" right after "Fore!" Hey, Tiger Woods—kiss my Astroturf.

Jeff Gilbert is the Editor of "ManSplat: The Official Magazine of Beer, Monsters, and UFO's." *When not studying any of these other subjects, he likes to "putter around" with his PC.*

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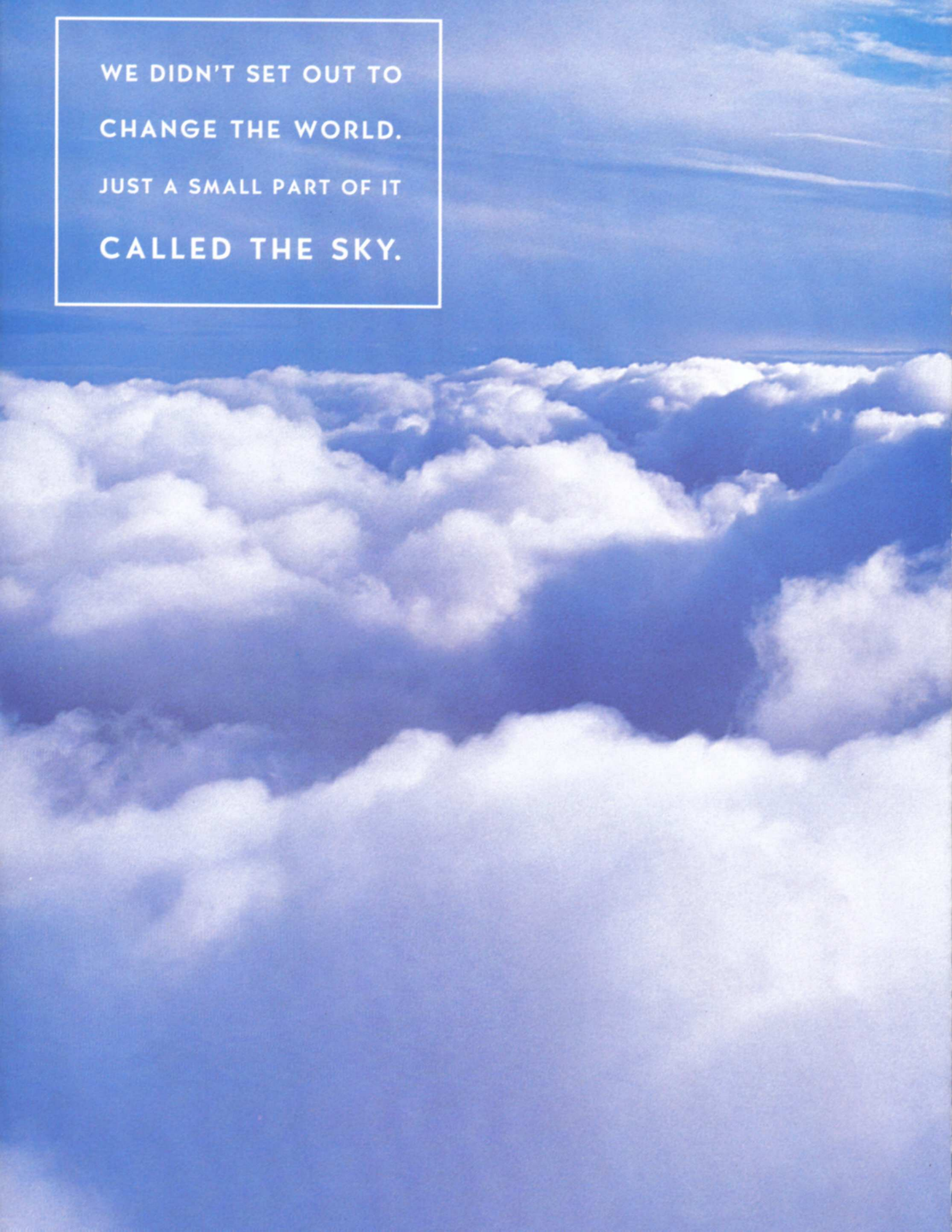
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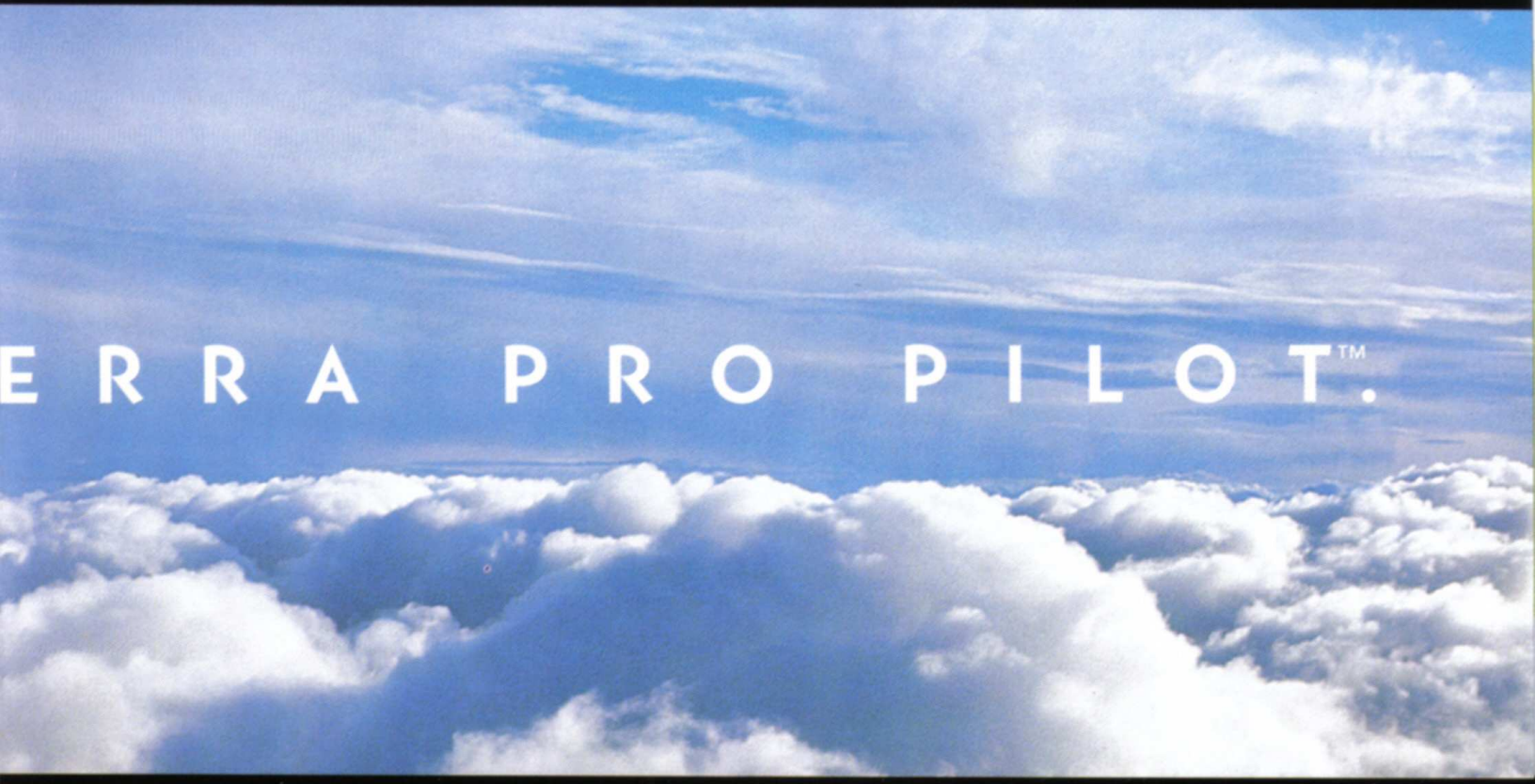

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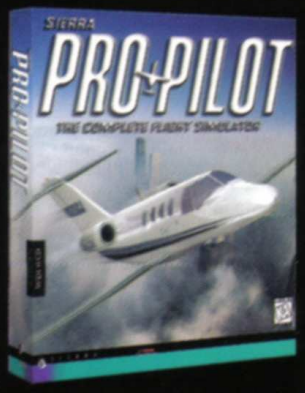

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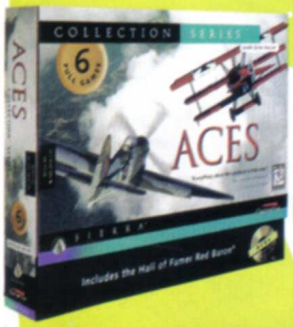

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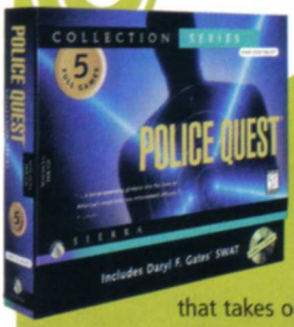

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ANDREW LINNENKOHL
OR CURRENT RESIDENT
215 SUSSEX DR APT 5
ATHENS GA 30606-5517