

REVIEWAL

#40

NEW FORMAT



WIND FIRST

explodes on
Atari UCS 2600

**Ghost n Goblins
self-confident
on Colecovision!**



**NES in full shape with
Mystic Pillars, Exerion
and Ultimate Frogger Champion**

and all the news on Lynx, Odyssey2,
Vectrex, 7800 ProSystem...

FROM THE EDITOR



Here is the new issue of Revival, ready to accompany you during the long winter evenings. Many, indeed many, news announced or already there as evidenced by an interminable "In Brief" feature. Up to the point that it is very difficult to be comprehensive, and to be sufficiently responsive to order all these games as quickly as possible to be able to chronic them as soon as possible in Revival. Since in addition some titles are in very limited quantities, you must admit that being the champion of homebrew video gaming requires a constant search, exhausting but always exciting!

The high homebrew activity of the last months inevitably brings a lot of testing. Note that the Jaguar is getting a little healthier with the controversial *MadBodies* but above all with all the development related to the activities of the Team Jagware joined recently by Reboot with a promising shoot'em up. And in the interview "du jour" you will find Richard Ciervo, Mr. Rotary Tempest 2000 on Jaguar. *Dux* on Dreamcast was released over the past few months and we will present it in detail in our next issue. *Ghost 'N Zombies* is a real UFO on Colecovision and its author should not stop there. Finally, let's not forget *Juno First*, a small gem of programming on the Atari 2600.

Exerion 2 was also recently discovered on Nintendo NES, so we wanted to compile a detailed portrait of this underestimated title based on the original arcade version, and addressing its unofficial sequel Exerizer.

Revival 41 will come with the spring (let's bet on May) and will, be assured, chock full of good things that only homebrew development can bring to us, *gamers*, simple hobbyists, enthusiasts or collectors or all that at once. We can already announce *Dux*, *Ghosblaster*, *Mean Santa*, *3D Sector-X* and much more!



REVIVAL #1



Happy Content



Revival #40

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Here is the direct access to these retailers:



http://sales1632.myzen.co.uk/acatalog/16_32_Catalogue_Atari_Magazines_68.html

Many thanks to all people behind ReVival, with a special mention to Didier Briel, the main translator, and to Simon Dean, who helped with translation.

Don't hesitate to advertise ReVival to your friends, on different forums, etc. And we listen to any comment, critic, help and ideas. Be sure that we always try to do our best.

So, please enjoy reading ReVival, the voice of the hidden side of videogames!

And if you love Atari 16/32-bit computers - or you just would like to discover them - don't hesitate to read ST Magazine, which is sold worldwide by 16/32 Systems and AtariAge!

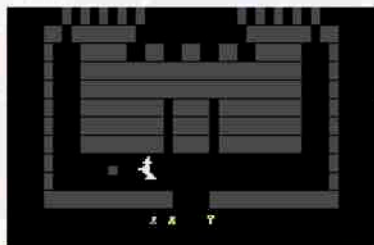




Here we go for a dive into the exhilarating world of homebrew video game. As you will see, the number of machines covered in these columns is increasing although regulars of the columns are not ready to be dislodged!

The Atari Jaguar makes a beautiful entry with a large number of attractive projects.

ATARI VCS 2600



The magician character, known because it is in the *Adventure* game, serves as the basis for a new game called *Evil Magician Returns* taking place as a sequel, since dragons are now dead.



Production is done using the Bataribasic tool, which often means a lower quality production compared to games in assembler.

An adaptation of the *Stacker* arcade is also underway.

The Atari 2600 gets a cartridge named ... *Dot* containing three games: *Doris*, *Omicron* and *Tint*. These are three "small" very funny games that all can be accessed from a selection screen. Note that the Atarivox is managed by *Omicron*, which is the biggest game since fitting in ... 2K! The other two are one and is therefore a compilation of only 4K. A feat only possible on this type of machine.



Phantasm

This is horror role-playing on the Atari 2600, the mission being to destroy the Tail Man. Production is definitely reminiscent of *Pirates*, a game on a cartridge compilation with *Phantom II*. Several options exist to attract the budding collector.

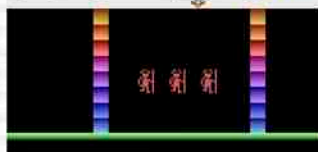




Games in RAM!

That's the feat, or even the feats, several programmers were able to achieve: use only the console's RAM to create games. You don't really find that striking? Know that the venerable 2600 has only 128 bytes (!) of memory ... The games are thus rudimentary but yet cover the essential basics of video gaming: *Pong*, *Defender*, *Space Invaders*, *Car Race*, *Frog Pond*, *Sliding Puzzle*, etc.

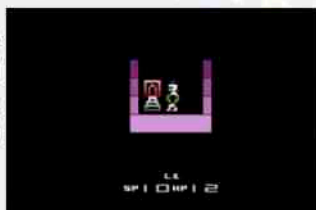
The idea is ultimately to create a cartridge containing all these "small" games.



◀ *Bifrost* is a little game in which a character is moved laterally at the top of the screen. The latter fires on warriors coming toward it. Quite addictive but very tiring despite nice graphics and sound effects, all in just 2K.



Dungeon is now complete. This is a 32K adventure/role with a small game window but an obvious interest. Everything is there: life points, inventory management, turn-based fight, different floors, etc. Very addictive.



Panky The Panda, episode 1, is a kind of Kangaroo where the emblematic animal of the WWF goes searching its brother.



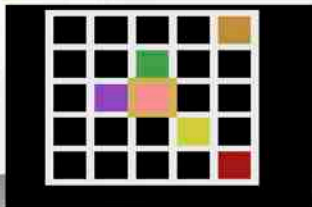
As for *Strip-Off*, it wants to capture the essence of an old vectorial arcade game, *Rip-Off*, known for its conversion on Vectrex.

i, made by Chris Read, has the shorter game name in history and consists very originally in directing the *i* letter attacked by other vowels! But the 9th letter of the alphabet has the deadly weapon, its point, which is used as a missile. Games are limited in time and the purpose is to destroy as much as possible enemy letters.



Finally, a new puzzle game called *SkullIsland* is being developed on this console.

◀ ▶

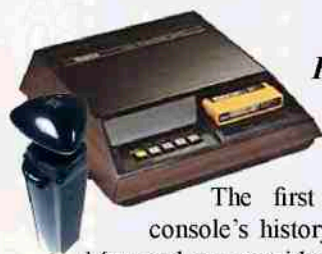




Racer is a recently discovered prototype. A cartridge edition with a specific packaging has been produced, in limited quantities as often. Two editions are available (50 copies each) for a price of 70 or 45 dollars. Really expensive when compared to the price of AtariAge games. We owe this game, from 1982, to the Roklan company. ▶



You like *Adventure*? You loved *Pitfall* and *Jungle Hunt*? Then you might enjoy *Curse of Blackbeard's Skull*. Indeed, it uses only the standard resolution (large squares!), but the whole is pleasant to the eye. The main character can run, jump, crouch and even fight with swords!



FAIRCHILD CHANNEL F

The first homebrew game in this console's history is finally there. It is *Pac-Man* and on cartridge media, mind you. As we hinted, all this has a monstrous cost: 120 dollars! Indeed, the rendering is superb, but who may want to invest that price in such a game? Note that if you provide the necessary equipment, the price is halved. This is due to the scarcity of cartridges on this machine.



COLECOVISION

That's official, Luc Miron leaves Opcode Games. The latter company is thus composed only of Eduardo Mello. Luc leaves to found TeamPixelboy and plans to publish *Gulkave* for the first title (adaptation of a Sega SG-1000 title). Opcode does not change however and the ongoing developments, mainly the Ograde module and the *Donkey Kong Arcade game*, are still planned. Good news finally!





New cartridges for Colecovision!

Luc Miron is having new Colecovision cartridge boxes manufactured, through injection molding, only commercially viable if enough copies are produced. Any homebrew developer can buy them, for 2.10 Canadian dollars. A true good idea!



Burn Rubber

Developed by dvik/joyrex, the car race seen from above *Burn Rubber* impressed Opcode Games so much that this company will rightly distribute it. It will be the first game not made by Eduardo Mello. There will be a two-player mode and it will be possible to compete in a championship.

Pac-Man Collection

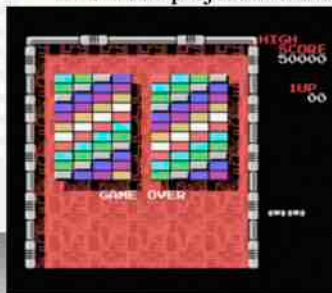
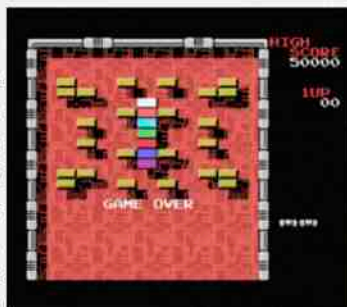


We've been talking about it in ReVival for so long... *Pac-Man Collection* on Colecovision is at last available, with a beautiful yellow cartridge as the famous little yellow man! Opcode Games publishes it similarly to its previous creations. Who would complain? Seventy copies were made and we tell you everything, absolutely everything, about it as soon as Revival #41! <http://www.opcodegames.com>



Arkanoid being developed

The mythic *Arkanoid* breakout is being ported on Colecovision, still at Opcode Games. There is even the Tatío copyright displayed... Did the Japanese vendor grant its agreement? Impressive graphically, this *Arkanoid* is not planned immediately because, just as *Donkey Kong Arcade*, it is designed to work with the Upgrade Module, not currently available. The aim of this extension, being developed currently, is to boost CBS' console capacity. An ambitious project if there is one, which one would think would use the Roller Controller.



But, according to Eduardo, this module uses too much CPU resources, and should make do with the VCS 2600 paddles, which will require an adaptation, because they cannot be used directly on Colecovision.





Zippy Race

Divx/Joyrex do it again on an adaptation of a game Sega SG-1000 called Zippy Race created by Irem. CollectorVision published it, with a corresponding box and leaflet.



▲ Frantic

Frantic, Scott Huggins' new game, is unfortunately canceled. This remake of *Berzerk* and *Frenzy* promised to be superb graphically. A pity.

MazezaM is a Ventzislav Tzeltkov's game whose goal is to reach the exit of various levels by moving blocks to clear a path. Halfway between *Sokoban* and *Jammed!*, its peculiarity is that it is developed on many platforms including the Super Nintendo, the Game Boy Color and the Apple II!



Pooyan

Divx/Joyrex and Collectorvision are not idle! A new game, adapted from a Konami arcade game. The packaging and the production seem faultless. Price: 60 dollars shipping included.
<http://www.colecovision.dk/coll-pooyan.htm>



In addition, *Mario Bros* continues to progress and should be out at the beginning of this year. We know already that this game will include levels designed specifically for this release with very attractive bonus levels based on Mario and Donkey Kong! We don't tell you more!



Donkey Kong :bonus level



Donkey Kong Jr :bonus level

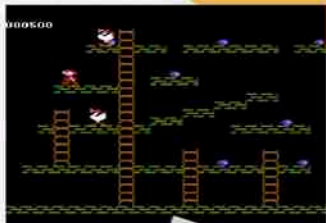
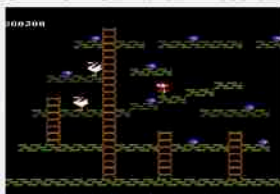


Finally, we reported that the *Fireman* prototype had been discovered. A cartridge version was published soon, with a dedicated packaging modeled on the aesthetics of games made in Taiwan at that time. Only 50 copies were produced, all having already been sold.

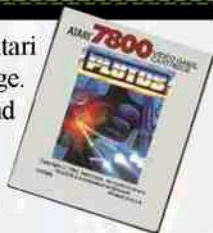




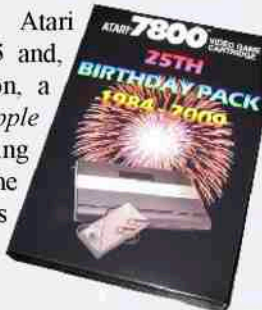
HARRY'S HEN HOUSE is under development and is based on *Chuckie Egg*, a well-known game for MSX owners. These two titles are the work of Mark Ball.



Thanks to Good Deal Games, many Atari 7800 games are available for sale on cartridge. This is the case for the remarkable *Sirius* and *Plutos* but also for *Rampart* and much more!



The Atari 7800 turned 25 and, for the occasion, a game called *Apple Snaffle* is being developed by the same author as WASP's.



MATTEL INTELLIVISION



STACK'EM!

Arnauld Chevallier sets aside *Rick Dynamite* (let's hope it is not completely abandoned) to dedicate now himself to *Stack'em*, a *Columns* clone that

seems to be superb. This game was originally developed in 2004, during the Mini Game Compo, but was never completed until now.





Composite video output on Intellivision 1 and 2

Oliver Puchatski offers a DIY kit to get video output on the Intellivision models 1 and 2. Quite useful for not having to set a channel on an old television. Price is 35 dollars.

http://www.beeslife.com/video_mod/video_mod.php



Super Pro Space Patrol

The superb *SpacePatrol*, tested in Revival #37, is being sublimated by an even more polished new version. It should be available in 2010.

NINTENDO NES

Lots of games never commercialized before!

Good Deal Games publishes many games never commercialized initially. At a mean price of 30 dollars, it is the opportunity to play *Hit The Ice*, *California Raisins*, *Drac's Night Out*, *Robocop vs. Terminator*, *Secret Ties*, *Sun Man* and others. But also to the U.S. versions, thus translated into English, of *Earthbound (Mother)* and *Final Fantasy 2!*



Exerion is an arcade game of the 1980s of which there are many conversions. Here from two prototype versions, Retrozone offers both *Exerion 1* and *Exerion 2* on a single cartridge at a price of 30 dollars, called *Exerion 1 + 2*.

EXERION





Sivak Games, a company known for having made some interesting puzzle games on this machine (including *Mystic Pillars*, tested in *Revival #40*) prepares a platform game called *Kid Battle* promising to be superb,

evidenced by the screenshots unveiled here. To be followed closely!



The Nes doesn't stop hosting new games. Here a prototype recently discovered. One hundred copies of *Hoppin Mad* were published on cartridge by *From Nowhere Productions* in an original and successful packaging, in a metal box. The price is high, however, 65 dollars (excluding postage). Is it really worth it? Rely on us to inform you as soon as possible! A second prototype will be published on cartridge by the same team. This game was originally made by GameTek, an independent developer. It is a fishing game between two players. To be followed!



Happy Camper also experienced a cartridge edition, limited, with a packaging closer to the original Nes productions.



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CREATIVISION

Luca Antagnino and its CreatiVEmu site offer *Diagnosis Cart v1.0* A pack of two cartridges containing diagnostic utilities to test various components of a Creativision. Few copies were made, and they are all sold already!





MEGGY JR

Appeared some months ago already, this is a console with LED display. The concept is amazing and the games seem playable!



NEC PC ENGINE



MindRec continues to develop *Xymaty*. This vertical shoot'em up displays excellent graphics, which should move homebrew on this console to another dimension. The PC Engine is also experiencing strong homebrew news with a new title released recently. We tell you more soon!



XYMATY!



SEGA MEGADRIVE

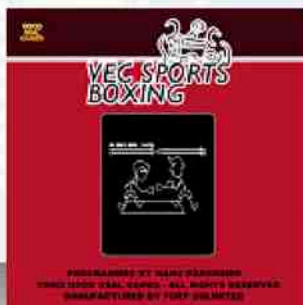
Like *Dux* on Dreamcast, *Pier Solar* accumulates delays since the start of pre-orders. Still no specific date announced.



VECTREX

Kristof Tuts' *Vector Pilot* is still planned. This *Time Pilot* adaptation is very promising.

VecSportsBoxing never ceases to experience new editions. Produced by Fury Unlimited, it is resold by Good Deal Games and offers a box similar to the previous edition but a different jacket. For those not having this game yet, it's the right time!





Note that *War of the Worlds* is purely and simply canceled, and that *3D Sector X* is completed and already sold out!

A little anecdote: *Fortress of Narzod* has just been adapted on C64 at the *Breakpoint '09* coding-party. It is made by Tristar & Red Sector Incorporated.



ATARI LYNX

This console still has a great interest among fans. Celebrating its 20th anniversary, Karri Kaksomnen proposed to celebrate the event an adaptation of the well-known card game, *Solitaire*. It can be downloaded for free, but its implementation is fairly average with a difficult readability, making the game taxing to practice.

But what is the ultimate game of this console has just been released. We are of course talking about *Zaku*. In gestation for several years, its author Tailchao was able to achieve true technical feats, with huge sprites, and stunning graphics to the point that it is hard to believe that the Lynx has a resolution of only 160 by 102 pixels. The game is published by the Super Fighter Team (Brandon Cobb) and the price remains quite acceptable. *Zaku*, very close to *PC Denjin* on NEC, deserves to be sold by the thousands and to make buy a Lynx to all skeptical people about the strength of this machine in terms of technical performance. Full test very soon!



In addition, *Bitchy* is a little game made by Rygar, a sort of puzzle whose goal is to reconstruct a picture of a beautiful nymph. An edition on cartridge is planned, with only 20 copies, all offered in a contest.

Lady Bug's development was started by Fadest. This title should be to completed by making additions to the original arcade game.



SEGA DREAMCAST

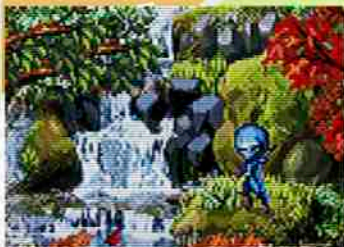


Last Hope reissued in Pink Bullets version

This updating of *Last Hope* offers some additions in an attempt to improve the playability and reduce the difficulty. On the menu, six credits and immediate reappearance of the vessel each time you lose. A greater speed of movement at the start, five levels of difficulty to choose, a higher visibility thanks to a change of colors used, and of course pink ... enemy fire!

If one can criticize the existence of a new version, it is clear that not everyone takes into account comments and criticism enacted on their creations. In this sense, we can only be satisfied with this new version.





Yuan Works, the development team behind the excellent *Wind and Water: puzzle battles*, tested in detail in ReVival #38, works on a platform game with ninjas. We appreciate anyway the current graphic style. An ambitious project.



Dux finally out!

The new shoot'em up on DC is finally out, after many delays due to technical problems. It is there and really cheap, 25 euros only for a high quality game with a R-Type-like side and elements borrowed from the current shoots. All that topped with a welcome touch of originality. More details as soon as ReVival #41.



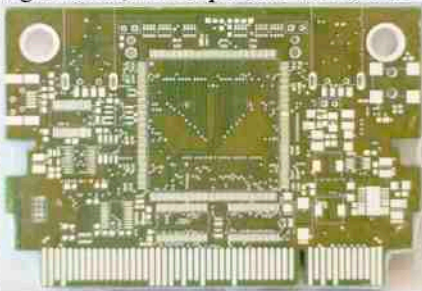
ATARI JAGUAR

Bomberman and the Jag-CF being prepared

According to the latest news, SebRmv will offer a release from his Bomberman clone on Jaguar, with graphics made by Iceman. In addition, the Jag-CF appears to be in the home stretch. This fabulous extension, long awaited, will supersede the normal cartridges and will avoid buying a Jaguar CD drive for a small fortune. Let's remind that this extension bases its storage on Compact Flash memory cards. In terms of features, it should be as follows:

32 megs of ram (2 only originally on a Jaguar!), communication with a PC via USB, new DSP processor (with powerful instructions, for now it is classified top secret!) new network (not buggy!) support for keyboard and mouse, BJI programs support from the CF (thus allowing to run most homebrew games).

You can see photos of printed circuit boards made at the A.C. 2009 while they had just been received the day before. They are thus the blank boards, and now the components are soldered on and finalization is in progress.



Orion_'s compilation on Jaguar-CD

The developer of the Jagware Team, Orion_, offers as a free download a Nero image, ready to be burned to CD-R, of all he has programmed on this medium. It goes from a complete game to sketches of games to demos. Great stuff and a real pleasure to browse this compilation, perfectly presented by a nice selection menu.



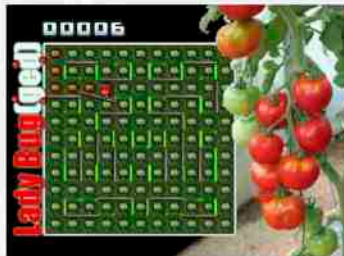


Mighty Frog and G.E.T. next games of 3D Stooges

3D Stooges, to whom we owe the recent Madbodies, work currently on *Mighty Frog* and also *G.E.T.* (formerly *Gorf Plus*). The first is nearing completion and graphics are promising.



Madbodies



LadyBugged being developed

A porting of *Lady Bug* under the name *LadyBugged*, an Exidy arcade game (the recent Atari 2600 version is tested in Revival #39) began at the last Atari Connexion, through Matmook and Zerosquare. Revival is pleased to offer you an exclusive picture, which should be further improved in the future, no doubt about it!



A new *shoot'em up* is in the make in the workshops of the Reboot development group. Called *Project One*, it looks very promising with fast animation and nice graphics. For the record, a member of Reboot contacted the Jagware Team to be part of it. Prothea (Reboot) helps us to learn more about these new developers. Reboot has four Atari enthusiasts wanting to develop quality products for 16/32-bit computers and the Jaguar. Their productions will be mainly free but limited series of cartridges will be possible. Revenues generated from these sales will then be used to purchase hardware for the following developments. The group Reboot wants only one thing, that the Jaguar scene be similar to that of Atari computers (read ST Magazine!), no elite using the opportunity to sell at exorbitant prices of more or less finished games, as it is the case for the recent Madbodies tested in this issue.



JAGUAREBOOT



Let's finish with an exclusive tip, to associate with the *Mr Chin* test published in our previous issue. You can select the level when the blue screen appears. Simply select *Player 1 Skill Level 2* and voilà, you start from another level! Thanks to Jean-Francois Dupuis for having mentioned that to us.



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TEST

VCS 2600



WOLFENSTEIN : VCS THE NEXT MISSION

Developer: Coleco
Year: 1982
Genre: Platform
Media: Cartridge
Players: 1
Save: no
Language: English



6/10

By LUCIFER SHALO

Venture is a 1982 arcade game from Exidy, a small company that produced some interesting games like *Bristles*, *Death Race* or *Pepper II*. In Venture, you are Winky, a small guy made of a smiling round face (at least at the beginning) and armed only with a bow and arrows. You travel through corridors avoiding the invincible monsters while trying to go into one of the four rooms. Once inside you can kill the enemies who protect a treasure. If this takes too long, one of the indestructible small beasts of the hall will come and chase you as in the game *Berzerk*. The only way out: escape! Once safe and sound, the room becomes fully colored and not accessible any more. Once the four treasures are recovered, you can go on to the next level.



If this game was never considered as a classic per se it is because it looks a bit dated : extremely simplistic graphics, basic sounds and music. But it is saved by its undeniable interest , since it mixes successfully elements of different genres: labyrinth (avoid the monsters to go in the rooms), agility (once the villains are killed, their corpses remain and must be avoided or you will lose a life yourself) and difficulty (your icon is a big round with an arrow by way of bow, not only do you have to move your character in the right direction but you have to aim correctly).

After this long introduction, the conversion to the 2600 has been done by Coleco (famous for orchestrating bad adaptations of their licenses on concurrent consoles - Atari and Intellivision - in order to implicitly prove the technological superiority of their machine) and remains quite acceptable but far from perfect : only 2 of the 3 levels are present, the enemies move but are not animated, the direction of shooting of your character is represented by a dot and not an arrow (even harder to aim); and when the malicious ones die they all resemble the same blob. No music and primitive sound effects, the rooms are not colored, etc., the final result is a bit of a mixed bag even if the pleasure of playing the game is still present. Note a difference compared to the original: in rooms, you have to get the treasure, and only then kill the monsters to score points; killing them before will not score any bonus.

Recently, Batari decided to publish a limited run (30 cartridges) of its revised version of the game, named *Venture A.E. (Venture Arcade Edition)*, effectively "giving back" the missing third level. In fact it is a hack: they modified the existing enemies and treasures to make them appear like a new level.

Venture II: The Abysmal Adventure: "hacked" by Tim Snider, the changes impact





the treasures, the enemies, but also additions of partitions and walls in the game. While this adds a certain challenge, it also quickly leads to frustration because moving in some areas, which became too small, becomes very difficult.

You can get stuck trying to escape, the enemy arrives and you quickly lose your life.



Published in a more professional way by Packrat VG, then by Atariage, this game comes with a nicely illustrated instruction booklet.

Wolfenstein: VCS The Next Mission: technically, this is still a hack of *Venture*, but the modifications and additions made are so numerous that one can consider it a completely new game. Plug the cartridge into your favorite 2600 (or 7800) and there, you will be amazed by a title-screen representing the threatening castle-prison at night. You are now a prisoner in a German citadel and you must escape (that reminds furiously of Colditz, the boardgame). Here is an incomplete description of the changes made compared to the original *Venture*. To reach the various rooms (and so get the treasures) is much more difficult, you have to cross a labyrinth (*Pac-Man*-style but more convoluted), and the guards, represented by a revolver icon, occupy all free space on their way. There is no possibility to slip on the side or to dodge them; it is necessary to find an alternative route. In the



top right corner of the screen, an icon of a knife (you are, at this moment able to shoot at a short distance). This is your starting weapon. In one of the four rooms, the treasure is a gun that makes it then possible to have a longer shooting range. But, as with any firearm, ammunition is not infinite. Another icon on the screen shows

the number of remaining bullets. Look for another pack of ammunition (one pack is 8 bullets, like a real German Luger). One of the other “treasures”

proves to be a survival kit that gives additional life (maximum of 4). So everything has to be thought through: seek the additional ammunition only when the gun is empty, the survival kit only when your live level is nearly depleted; take one of those two treasures when you still have the maximum will make it obsolete. You have thus to recall the location of each finding, and to use it wisely.

Compared to the original *Venture* game, the modifications are stunning. All graphics of the monsters and the various rooms, all the sound effects (for example the use of the knife has a different sound than the gun. Normal you might say!), the granting of points; if you kill a monster before taking the treasure, touching the corpse after does not penalize you. Addition of a title screen AND an end screen! Indeed, after finishing the 8 levels (4 different ones x2 difficulties), the game is over! After the first 2 levels, the rooms and monsters appear at

random, each level has an appointed color; finish the 8 levels as well as the secret level and the screen at the end will be different. No, you are not dreaming, you are actually considering an Atari 2600 game with strategy and especially a real end! *Wolfenstein* is a little marvel, published on a cartridge with instructions by Packrat (available in clear cartridge) and Atariage (improved version), it mixes action and strategy like few games have made it before on this machine.

translated by the author



20



TEST

NES

By RAYX AMBER



MYSTIC PILLARS

Developer: Sivak Games

Year: 2008

Genre: Puzzle

Media: Cartridge

Players: 1

Save: no

Language: English

6/10



The Sivak Games company offers, chronologically, its third game on Nintendo's 8-bit. Clearly inspired by *Columns*, you have to move some color tiles (three ones arranged in columns) in a playground similar to *Tetris*. The colors can be exchanged between them and three identical ones are removed, as well as horizontally, vertically or diagonally. Making a *combo* is, as usual in videogames, strongly recommended in order to achieve the better scores.

Traditionally, the difficulty increases little by little, especially the velocity. Fortunately, in the most delicate cases, sometimes a special tile appears, allowing to eliminate all parts of the same color, which is really helpful.

The gameplay is excellent, everything answers perfectly to any input. The production is very traditional but nicely done with simple graphics and the choice of music during the game. Among the other options we can mention the ability to play with other pieces (like fruits and playing cards) and the possibility to

change the background. Nothing essential and we would have preferred a two-player game, which would have allowed *Mystic Pillars* to surpass the mere clone of *Columns* (which also only have a single-player game).

It is unfortunate that homebrew development is not always used to improve and surpass an existing game. Anyway, Sivak Games here offers an interesting and well-done game. Price is 25 dollars.



◀ Limited Edition (33 copies)

translated by the author



**ROYAL 21**

Developer: Fury Unlimited

Year: 2009

Genre: Card Game

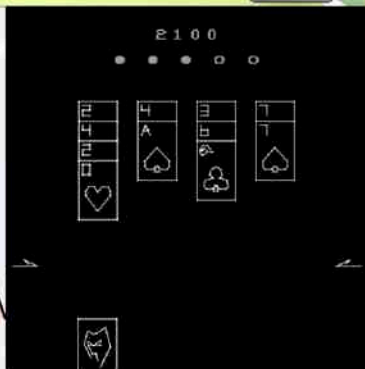
Media: Cartridge

Players: 1

Save: no

Language: English

8/10



By RAYX AMBER

Hurrah, here comes a new Vectrex game! After a year of lean times in 2008, 2009 seemed to follow the same direction. Fortunately, George Pelonis (Fury Unlimited) continues to develop games for the pleasure of all the fans of the only vector system.

Royal21 has similarities with his previous *Vector21* except that this one was more static. Here the cards scroll continuously, like a sort of reversed Tetris (from bottom to top), as if they slipped from the hands of the card's dealer and must be placed on one of the four possible columns. This period of time, rather short, forces to decide quickly and often have someone making mistakes because of speed. *Royal21* also requires a little practice, and first to memorize the different combinations, the points of each card and especially to learn to recognize cards and symbols decorating them. The first tries are quite frustrating because the random aspect is very important. This is also what makes the charm of *Royal21*: short games where everyone has a chance!

Note that, notably in the United

States, blackjack is commonly known as "21" because it requires to never exceed this total.

The overall production is moderate but effective. Combined with accurate graphics, we recognize easily the typical sound atmosphere of Fury Unlimited's productions, made of cold sounds with the only goal being to distress the player. If it renders beautifully in a game like *I, Cyborg*, here warm sounds would have been more appropriate, to retranscribe the overheated and smoky atmosphere of poker games between gangsters! The gameplay is excellent as it responds instantly. Last of all, the packaging is identical to other games of this editor, like no others, very simple and compact.

A good game, even if, in this case, vectors don't give a different feeling from rasters.



♦ If *Royal21* is clearly inspired by *Vector21*, this one has now become as freeware! A laudable attention that allows its integration in ParaJVE, the excellent Vectrex emulator made by Frank Chevassu.

♦ George has released a special version for Christmas 2009, called *Royal21 XMas*. Only five copies are known to exist.. More info soon!

♦ And George Pelonis will sell another 16 Christmas Editions this coming December to complete the Christmas Edition at 21 copies!





GHOST 'N ZOMBIES

GHOST 'N ZOMBIES

Developer: Collectorvision

Year: 2009

Genre: Ghost 'n Goblins

Media: Cartridge 32 K

Players: 1 player

Save: no

Language: English

8/10

By RAYXAMBER

Ghost 'n Zombies increases the Collectorvision's catalog. Indeed, when such a game turns up on this machine, you can but hasten to offer your services to publish it! We can thank Collectorvision for this idea, because it would have been a pity that the general public misses this title. One hundred copies were manufactured.



While the name of the game is different, it is truly an adaptation of Cap-

com's Ghost 'n Goblins, a mythical arcade game from 1985, and famous for its legendary and irritating difficulty, as one has to memorize the course and start again the same sections many times before overcoming them. But the quality of the production was so good that it left its mark on the gaming history.

How about Ghost 'n Zombies (with a different name for obvious rights issues) on a far less powerful console than the original arcade cabinet? That's a huge surprise, because graphically one can recognize easily the different screens, the progress of the game and the sound atmosphere. Of course its author, Jean-Philippe Meola (aka Youki), had to compromise with the limitations of the CBS console by reducing the number of screens, doing without scrolling and limiting the sound atmosphere to a few effects and a little jingle at the start, which reminds that you are indeed playing Ghost 'n Goblins!

info +

- A best score contest was held in November (corresponding to the release month of the game)
- Fun fact: even dead, it is possible to move the pile of bones. Which makes Youki say that we can choose where to make the knight rest in peace!





Everything is there, and notably the lateral view showing the course and the place where you are. One can then guess that the full GnG game is not re-transcribed, and this is very well explained in the Youki's interview that you will find in our next issue.

Graphics are thus very good, with well chosen and laid out colors. On the other hand, the hero is a bit of a failure (my children even thought it was Santa. True!) as it is so difficult to recognize a gallant knight in armor. It is also very clumsy and is made of two parts, top and bottom, unresponsive to collisions! This is intentional on the part of the author, otherwise the zombie attacks would cause more damage.

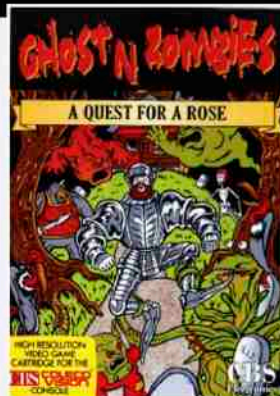
Apart from that, the handling is excellent (especially with the very successful Mario Bros controllers that we'll test in the next issue!) and jumping and shooting precision is a pleasure to see. Difficulty appears to be below that of the original game but Ghost'n Zombies is far from being easy. From the second phase, you're tearing your fingers to move and as there are only a few lives and no continues, seeing the end of the game (after one last fight against a tough, to say the least, red dragon) will not be a sinecure.



However some flaws and a few bugs a little irritating (sometimes dying simply by going to the next screen, oddities when you jump on moving platforms which means that you jump two of them at once, sometimes the character is placed at a level slightly elevated from the ground, extremely aggressive plants when passing near them, etc.) are to be noted.

And although it is mentioned «to be continued», the game is definitely over as the author intends to make a trilogy! Hopefully the sequels will be at least as enjoyable to play as this one. For a first attempt, Youki scores and raises the bar to a level that he will have now to maintain or exceed. Or how to put pressure on oneself...

The packaging reaches a truly excellent quality, very close to Opcode games. One feels that CollectorVision is doing everything to improve it.



The leaflet is made correctly (there are however some strange traces on the screenshots, however, which appear to be due to a low resolution scan) and we would like a leaflet with both English and French language, since the latter is that of JF Dupuis, aka Mr. Collectorvision! The last game on Lynx, Zaku, has benefited from that and we can only rejoice from that.. Let's be demanding!





despite the meager resolution and the huge size of the game, to orientate yourself easily. A good point because the specification isn't easy to follow!

Rules are greatly based on the original game's rules and more specifically those running in the developer's family. This brings us to explain some of his choices for this particular title on the game *Lynxopoly*. First, this has not been the base of the supposed rarity of a game and not on the results of the developer's preferences. Given to the huge number of available games on the Lynx, he had to restrain the number of games and summarize them most of the time. That's why *T-Tris* represents alone the whole puzzle game category and why Songbird Productions' games are organized under the title *Carl's shop* (Carl Forhan). Also, as another limitation, Matashen had only 2x7 possible characters to write this game's title!



If you're not repelled by this kind of game, you'll find *Lynxopoly* very addictive, namely thanks to the ability to save your game which allows you to play for a short while. Nice job.

Note that you'll find a hidden game that we let you discover. In fact we're completely unable to enlighten you on this point!



LYNXOPOLY

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- ◆ The author specifies that he's already working on his next game and that he has lots of ideas for the coming years: Lynx games are not bound to stop being released and that's a good thing!
- ◆ We noticed different mistakes in the English translation (because the author is German) in the manual, but no big deal.
- ◆ After having to develop on PC, without any users' feedback, the author started to work on Lynx. The big enthusiasm of Lynx' fans after the first screens led him to go on to the end of the project. A good example that motivation is important and that the Lynx' scene is one of the most unified of the world.
- ◆ Daniel Horvath worked on some of the graphics: He is known to have worked on *Pier Solar*'s graphics in preparation for the Megadrive, and also Rygar for some animations.





MADBODIES

Developer: 3D Stooges

Year: 2009

Genre: Arcade

Media: Cartridge

Players: 1

Save: No

Language: English

6/10

It had been a long time since a new Jaguar cartridge hadn't been released, except the very poor *Frog Feast*. While it wasn't expected anymore, *Madbodies* was eventually released. Made by the 3D Stooges, it is their second attempt on this machine, after the controversial (and now rare) *Gorf Classic CD*.

Despite a high selling price, more than 80 dollars, the packaging does not reproduce Atari Jaguar games, but uses a rigid and thicker plastic. While the whole is esthetically successful although massive, one could have expected that a generic box would have allowed a lower selling price (its primary function is to store 15 CD).



That said, let's look at the game. To summarize, it can be presented as a mixture of *Breakout* and *Space Invaders*. You control a racket in space, which you can move laterally at two different speeds, the fastest being obtained by simultaneously pressing a button. It can also shoot with a square viewfinder that must be placed precisely on the object or enemy to destroy. Last, it can jump, provided the skip function is enabled, which is not an obvious utility and may even prove to be dangerous.

We therefore easily imagine that the difficulty of the game comes from the player's ability to handle multiple tasks simultaneously. Indeed, it is not obvious, especially at first, to be able to aim, shoot, jump, move quickly or slowly, in the same fraction of a second! The imadî part of the game's name is not by chance.





Each level offers to juggle with planets that play the role of the ball to return: it's as if you thought you were Charlie Chaplin in *The Great Dictator* when he plays with the globe. However, and it is really your interest to do so, it is possible to destroy them! The idea is to never have to manage multiple planets simultaneously because then it becomes impossible to keep them all alive.

In addition, enemy waves appear frequently and do not hesitate to shoot you if you do not destroy them. There are also items to collect, like the one giving guns on the sides of the racket and a powerful but temporary shot.

Further refinements are to be discovered during the game, such as these astronauts lost in space that you can get with the viewfinder. They have three uses: to give points (for 1 to 3 astronauts) if you manage to land them on a space station (one goes by frequently), to provide a bonus repairing the racket (4 astronauts) and to improve the speed of firing when there are many (at least 5 or 6 from memory). To do so, you must keep them on the viewfinder and not place them on the station.



Madbodies contains 10 stages, some punctuated by a boss on which you must send back its shots several times (the ball changes color from orange to green to purple, the only color being able to damage the boss). While you can go through the first one, a beautiful red head, without too much problem, the second - an orange ship - is incredibly difficult to eliminate. It must be said that the screen gets very crowded when it is damaged by approximately half: spiky red balls, blasting green shots, many enemies. And one must always remember to return the boss fire! Then a third boss comes immediately after, a kind of large brain. This phase is more a shoot'em up, especially if you have the maximum fire ability (with 6 astronauts).

This bad mix of difficulty will soon discourage the average Joe Player. Only the most stubborn ones will show composure enough to go further.





In terms of disappointments, the game sometimes mark a time out during the action without the player knowing why, with the impression that the cartridge loads data and freezes the screen a few moments. Also, for each loss of life, the racket reappears in the middle of the screen and, if there would be enemies and shooting at that location, cannot avoid them. It happens so that one loses a life while not being able to do something. Frustrating when a simple timer for invincibility (when the sprite flashes!) would have solved the problem. Similarly the lack of autofire is not



the most enjoyable thing, but helps to bring Madbodies closer to the ultra-speed *Zero 5*. Finally, done in one go, the game is horribly short to play. Really a shame because apart from a race to score, there's no incentive to return. Stronger still, the leaflet explains very little and only by practicing one can understand the tricks and what there is to do. One wonders, therefore, about the interest of making a leaflet, except for the collection aspect.

The overall production is of a satisfactory level with nice graphics. Although fast, the animation is not as smooth



as could be expected and the soundtrack is rather ordinary, the music only starting after several minutes of game! Also, the sampled voices are disappointing (low sampling frequency) and are virtually inaudible.

No presentation, a simple title screen (which displays in the lower right the date of manufacture of the cartridge!) and that's all. One can notice the possibility to continue several times a game, something very useful given the extreme difficulty of the game. In the high score, a smiley is placed next to each score, indicating the number of used continues, because the score will not restart at zero at each game.

Clearly the price of such a game is not justified, even if one finds oneself having fun playing, mainly because of its originality and its simply irritating difficulty: either one gives up, and the game collects dust, or one clings to it, keeping in mind an irresistible urge to jump with both feet on this wretched cartridge. Fortunately the game is expensive, so one is reluctant to commit the irreparable! Behind the production, there's mainly *Terance Williams* and others who helped for beta testing, sampled voices or debugging.

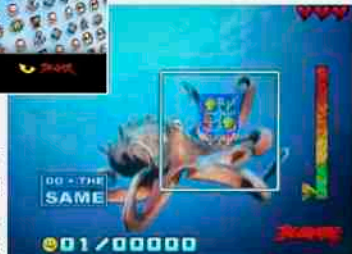


THE GENESIS OF DO THE SAME!

TEST



29



For the 40th issue of Revival, you are treated with a little story about the genesis, totally fortuitous, of a game you are surely already playing! A little while ago, on Jagware web site, a new member registered with the nick of *Matmook*. Coming from nowhere, he just wanted to develop a game. We have thus shared a few lines of code and we have talked about making a shoot'em up together. One day he sent me a game not really finished. He had just written it to test his sprite manager (piece of a program that manages the display of sprites, the most important part on the Jaguar). After playing it, I asked him why he did not want to go further.

So we decided to finish the game, we needed some additional graphics and for that, we contacted Bear. The latter has, for this occasion, developed a special technique: he designs the characters with clay, takes pictures, colorizes and then modifies them on an Atari Falcon. Some photos are placed on the site of *Do The Same* because it is the name of the game! (www.dothesame.jagware.org). The music is made by Scrat.

We have therefore decided to distribute this game for free (the game is good but does not justify selling it). On the other hand, we have decided to help an organization called "un jeu d'enfant" (a child's game, <http://un.jeu.denfant.free.fr/test/index.html>). But how? The game is free, you can download it and do what you want, but please remember

to pay a few euros to this association. All details are on the site of DTS, in "donation" features. Why this association? Because we want to give little comfort to children through video games. In addition, the leader of this association is an affiliate of MJJ Prod (a group of demo makers on Atari computers). If you have any questions, feel free to ask for Fred or contact me at gt-turbo@jagware.org

Concerning the game itself, we wanted it as finalized as possible, so we have been helped by external beta testers. The Retro Gaming Connexion association has also agreed to make the jacket and to distribute - for free - 30 copies of the game on CD. These have been spread over three forums, so 10 per forum. The same process was made for *Atomix*, for example.

With the development of a shoot'em-up, you can expect a lot of new games from Jagware!

GT Turbo (C.V.S.D, Jagware)





CHAOS REINS

P *Hello Richard. Can you introduce yourself succinctly to our readers?*

Hi Cyril. Sure, my name is Rick Ciervo and I am the person to blame for Chaos Reins controllers. I live about 3 hours outside of New York City in the US with my wife, three children, a dog, a cat and a bird. Oh, and a Jaguar! By day I am a Systems Engineer and Technologist for the Timex Group, by night, I'm whatever my wife needs me to be.

P *How did you get the idea of design, and to achieve, a rotary controller for Atari Jaguar?*

I'm old enough to have been a part of the '80s video game boom and at that time I spent way too much money on two games - Black Knight and Tempest. Fast-forward to 2005 when I bought my first Jaguar from eBay, and with it Tempest 2000; that was my introduction to the crazy/cool/strange world of Jeff Minter's sheep-obsessed rethink of my favorite game. This was the first time I had played Tempest without a rotary controller and it was (to me) a big disappointment! I did some research and found out that Minter had built a back door into the game to allow for a rotary controller, but no "official" controller had ever been made. My research had also turned up a couple of different homebrew versions, of varying execution quality. Once I saw that it was possible, I just sort of dived in, grabbed a soldering iron and a drill and got busy; I like to call that "engineer's disease"- that unshakeable belief that most engineers have that they can solve the problem, no matter

how hard it appears. "Engineer's disease" has gotten me into lots of trouble throughout my life (don't even ask about plumbing), but in this case it worked out really well. Also, in a previous company I had designed a control system for audio preamp volume controls, and those had relied upon stepper motors and optical rotary encoders, so I had some experience with them.

At first, I was interested in making a pair for myself but once I saw how much the gameplay improved, I knew I had to figure out a way to make them for others. And so, here we are.

P *Have you been inspired by another rotary (such as paddles controllers on the Atari 2600) or is it a completely new design?*

First, let me say that the idea to make a rotary controller was not mine; as far as I know the first one was devised by Tyrant back in 2002, so all props must be given to him. That needs to be said to make sure that credit goes where it is due. I had seen a picture of his controller on the Internet somewhere, and that convinced me that the encoder could be packaged inside the standard Jaggy controller; that was really important to me. But, really Tyrant's controller was my inspiration when I started.

I had also seen some that were completely stand-alone, or based on old 2600 driving controllers, but I could see that those were less than optimum (either not enough pulses per revolution, or too many parts).





P *Do you think making a new model or restart a production, because the first copies (100?) have all been sold.*

As long as I can get the parts, I will continue to make the model I sell now. It is very popular, and it does the job nicely for most people, and the price is right. To date, I've made/sold about 125 units - and so far, I've never had a dissatisfied customer.

P *What were the technical reasons, or difficulties?*

When I decided to make the controllers for others to purchase, my research had turned up two complaints with the then-current controllers: the encoder had detents ("clicks"), which was not true to the original game; or the controller didn't produce enough pulses per revolution and the gameplay felt sluggish. Both of these problems stemmed from the rotary encoder itself (not the Jag controller), so I bought a whole bunch encoders that had no detents (for a smooth feel) with a range of pulses per revolution and tried them. Since I played A LOT of arcade Tempest in my day, I knew the kind of response I wanted, so I just kept trying them one by one, till I found one I liked.

The other improvement I brought to the "state of the art" for spinners is my construction method. My first few controllers were held together with epoxy - the actual rotary encoder assembly is glued to the case. While certainly effective, I wasn't too pleased with this because it meant that if I ever needed to service the controllers, it would be very difficult to disassemble. I experimented for a while, and eventually came up with a mechanical capture method to hold the

encoder assembly in place with no adhesives at all. Disassembly is simple and assembly is reliable and robust.

P *Why the name Chaos Reins?*

The domain name was available! Just kidding, although that was part of it. I was looking for a name that would be meaningful for a game controller project. So, this name sort of bubbled up - the controller allows you to "rein in" the chaos of the game. At least it's short and easy to remember. Eh, what's in a name, right?

P *Would it be possible to make a joystick with both rotary and paddle? In order to allow using the pad during the bonus stage in Tempest 2000.*

Maybe, but it would be extremely difficult to do in the same controller, both mechanically and electrically. There isn't a lot of room in there for extra parts - I was pretty lucky that the encoder and the wiring fit in there so nicely.

One way might be to create a Y-splitter that would allow you to connect two controllers to one input port on the Jag - one standard and one rotary. You couldn't just use a wire, though, because of the way the Jag works - this splitter would have to have some circuitry inside it to prevent the controller outputs from damaging each other. Hmmmm...I'll





need to think about that one. If there is enough interest from the community, maybe that is something I could work on.



P *How do you consider your achievement in terms of accuracy, robustness, in comparison with other released rotary controllers?*

I've never used any of the other controllers, so I really can't say. In terms of accuracy, since we are limited to using mechanical encoders with a Gray-code output (that's what the game requires) I would think that all of them are going to have similar accuracy. The number of pulses per revolution has a huge impact, like I said before, that is an area I spent some time in the beginning.

P *What is your opinion especially about the homebrew Jaguar scene but also on other machines?*

I am constantly amazed at the stuff that the entire Atari community turns out; clearly there are a lot of really motivated people out there who love these platforms and want to see them continue to have great gameplay. It's also great that we can give back to the community by creating all these great games and accessories and keep the platforms alive and strong, even 15 years later.

P *Do you have any future projects?*

There are two projects that I really want to do, but I haven't had the time to get to:

1. A more generic spinner for the Jag that would allow you to play Breakout 2000. B2K doesn't have the code built in to allow my spinner to work with it, so I'd have to create a spinner that simulates left and right buttons (to the game). Others have tried this and I think the results have not been very good. Just the kind of challenge I like...

2. I really want to make a spinner for Tempest 3000 on NUON. There is a lot of debate on whether T3K is really a game to be played, or an acid trip to enjoy, but in any case, I think that the gameplay would be enhanced with a spinner. Getting an encoder in there, however, is an enormous challenge, because the NUON controller is complex and not documented. Rumor has it that there is a spinner out there based on NUON controller that Minter himself has. I've contacted him and asked him to send it to me so I can study it. He said he would, if he could find it, but so far, I haven't seen anything. It might be possible without the Holy Grail controller, but really, really difficult. And I am only a mere mortal!

If there was demand for it, I might consider making a more expensive "pro" version of my spinner, in a nice case with a control layout that matches the arcade cabinet. It would be designed to sit on a table or on your lap. That would require some time and money, but I don't think it would be too difficult.

I get tons of requests for spinners for other platforms, but I haven't had the time to figure out how to make it happen. No other





version of Tempest 2000 supports a spinner directly like the Jag.

Last, I've been asked to make a MAME spinner. Again, I have an idea about how to do it, but I need to see if the interest is strong enough to devote the time.

P *Do you have a Jaguar, and do you play it regularly? What games impressed you the most on this machine? And what do you think of the current retrogaming trend?*

Of course I have one, and I play it occasionally - a lot less than my two sons play it! I also have an Atari 7800, a broken 2600, a ColecoVision, an original Nintendo NES, a NUON DVD player and Nintendo Wii.

My favorite Jag games have to be Tempest 2000, Iron Soldier and Dragon's Lair (I also spent WAY too much money on THAT game in college). I've also spent a fair amount of time with Flashback and Pitfall II. Overall, I think that platform had so much potential, but just got lost because Atari lost its way in that time period.

Retrogaming. Well, my feeling is that great gameplay is more about the game design than about the platform it is on. For example, Tank Battle on the Atari 2600 is essentially the same gameplay as Armor Battle on my Wii. Sure, the Wii has better graphics, but my 2600 is just as fun to play. Same goes for games like Centipede (7800) or Pitfall (2600) - these are great games with great gameplay, as appealing to my 9 year-old son as they are to me. For example, he loves to play Iron Soldier on the Jag, even though we have similar games on the Wii; Iron Soldier

is just plain fun. Mario on the NES is still a fun game to play, even in 2009. Clearly, just because a game/platform is old, it doesn't mean it isn't fun to play; but that also doesn't give old games a free pass (E.T.? Checkered Flag? Yuk!).

P *It remains a sort of mystery: how is it possible a game can include a game function, only accessible by a hidden trick for a device that does not exist?!!*

Well, as I understand the history, Minter was pretty convinced that players would want a spinner and so (being the kind of guy he is) he built in a way to do it. At the time Atari may have had plans to produce a spinner, but the company had so many problems, and the Jag wasn't as successful as they had hoped, that I would bet they just killed any plans to support it. Luckily Jeff talked about the option in interviews and described how to access the option on the cartridge - and more importantly - what kind of encoder inputs the game expected. So, being a resourceful lot, we fans took over from there and made the spinner a reality.

P *Thank you for having accepted this interview, it was a pleasure!*

You're welcome. This was fun - I feel like a celebrity!



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TEST

Odyssey 2

CLAY PIGEON +

Developer: Videopac.org

Year: 2007

Genre: Shooting

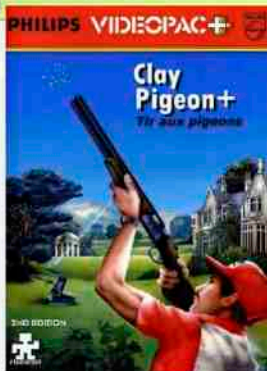
Media: Cartridge

Players: 2

Save: No

Language: English

6/10



This game is not strictly speaking a homebrew, since this is a prototype of an original game, unearthed at a flea market in Eindhoven, Netherlands. Certainly, *Clay Pigeon* had the good fortune of already being published, but in Brazil! The difference here will be the presence of the word “+”, which induces the availability of high-definition background scenery. Otherwise the game remains the same.



Clay Pigeon + is interesting for that matter. It is a game of shooting pigeons placing the shooter to the right of the screen; an automatic launching machine being on the left. Two shots may be fired before having to reload, a process that takes a few moments (down on the joystick). The game is divided into several sessions of 10 shots and you must touch at least 8 to continue the game. Meanwhile, you must avoid, at times, pigeon (real!) excrements, and most of all a terrible black bird which will dive to try to capture you. The party is over if you get caught and that, even though you have hit all targets. Everything is about timing, you must shoot relatively quickly and get to steer your gun with the proper angle. The controls require, in addition, a little adjustment period. The production is of high standard with a successful background (+ version) even if preventing to accurately see all sprites, notably the targets. As a result, though it is less pretty, it is easier to play on “basic” Videopac! If you are bad, you cannot hide behind the nullity of the playability since the controls respond perfectly!



It should be noted that there was an initial version published, a dozen copies only, by Nicolas Sapin. For the occasion, a contest was held to win a copy of the game. In the end it was not enough copies to satisfy the gamers community on Videopac. Fortunately, Videopac.org decided, in collaboration with Nicolas, to make a second batch! The only difference seems to be the presence of a logo on the jacket and the words “2nd edition”, allowing the first to retain its collector side. The game is provided, as often, without the Videopac + clear rigid box. You would then have to tear apart an old game. A pity, even if it is understandable, the reproduction of such boxes being too expensive given the too low quantities to produce.

info +



Spicy anecdote: Philips had apparently planned to affect the number 56 to this game. But it was never marketed, and Norseman subsequently took this number. Naturally, after the Interpol's number 61, Nicolas Sapin gave number 62 to *Clay Pigeon*. It all adds up! <http://sapl.club.fr/vpac/clay/claycart.htm>

translated by the author





JUNO FIRST

Developer: AtariAge

Year: 2009

Genre: Arcade

Media: Cartridge

Players: 1

Save: No

Language: English

9/10



By RAYXAMBER

Juno First is supposed to be the conversion of the frenzied arcade shooter released in 1983 and designed by Konami, but the specifications and technical limitations of Atari's VCS 2600 have forced its developer - *Chris Walton* - to make some changes. Otherwise, the spirit of the game remains the same and the differences we noticed would rather make us prefer this recent version of 2009, a version of it having been released by the AtariAge store last October.

The graphical design is the most surprising thing, for one who knows the original version. In the latter, impression of speed is rendered by series of points aligned vertically while the Atari 2600 use horizontal full lines. Indeed, for the Atari console to display points, one would have to declare sprites, but the maximal capacities are already used for enemies. This singularity reminds us more of Activision's *Beamrider* than the original version. We also noticed that warps are missing. Though the author thought about doing it for a while, it finally was too difficult to use because the Atari controller has only one button (the select key is used but only to change the autofire speed). On the other hand, hyperspace is still there and activates like in the arcade version, namely in destroying an enemy looking like a ball. This operation frees a spaceman you'll have to grab to go through hyperspace for a few seconds, keeping your enemies from shooting and forcing them to avoid your ship. During this short while, destroying enemies will bring you more points!




Konami


Another major difference: in the arcade game, time is limited to 99 unities while this 2600 game uses a fuel tank to show the time limit. The author confessed to us that he had not enough place to display this timer and used this tip for this reason. You will get surprised by this game which offers 32 different waves, that is twice the number of the original version! These ones are repeating, once, with a major improvement of the difficulty (enemies are moving faster). Then the game loops. Notice that it's the player who compels the ship to move forward and even backward. This strategy is to consider because it allows you to destroy more quickly the waves of enemies and to save some fuel.

The production is excellent with smooth and speed animation and most of all an instant response time. The pleasure is undeniable and impression of speed is very well rendered.

One of the most addictive games of the last months on this system. For fans of pure action.


info


- ◆ Juno First is also available on MSX and C64
- ◆ Its graphics and design inspired Axelay on Super NES!
- ◆ This game uses the AtariVox in order to save the high scores and also to add digitalized voices. For example, the name of the game is clearly pronounced at the title screen!
- ◆ In the first cartridge editions, the high score table is not shown when the right difficulty switch is in the A position on Atari 2600. A new version now fixed this problem. Only 50 carts were produced for the first version becoming a collector!





THE FULL PACKAGE

JALECO



By RAY XAMBER

In 1983, many arcade games are trying, with more or less success, to be inspired by well-known arcade games like *Space Invaders* or *Galaga*. Very few manage to equal them. Some others choose a way both more dangerous and less subject to comparison, the one of diversity and innovation. *Exerion* is one of them and pays tribute to a company sometimes underestimated whereas it brought a lot to the arcade game, Jaleco (Japan Leisure Corporation).



▲ *Exerion 1 + 2* NES ▲ *Exerion 1* NES

The challenge of originality

Exerion is plainly a “vertical-trend” shoot’em up that has marked its time with its successful esthetic. Of course, it cannot deny its link with *Galaga* and other remakes, but its originality and production allow it to stand out from the mass of this genre. Conventionally you pilot a ship having to destroy the enemies approaching from the top of the screen. But, where *Space Invaders* clones only offer lateral movements, *Exerion*

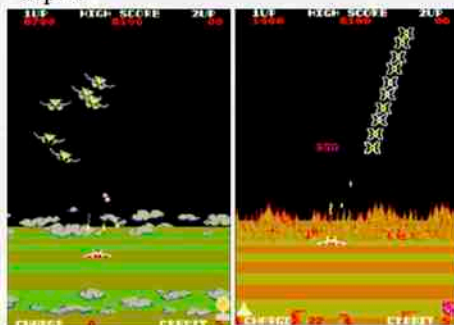
uses the eight directions of joystick providing diagonal trajectories and the possibility of moving forward and backward anytime. This is essential as it is very common not to be able to eliminate the enemies when they just arrive; then they try to intercept you by the sides and even from below. Jaleco also added an interesting point in the controls: the inertia effect. The ship cannot stop immediately, which forces to consider this phenomenon in your playing technique. And it requires some time to master it.





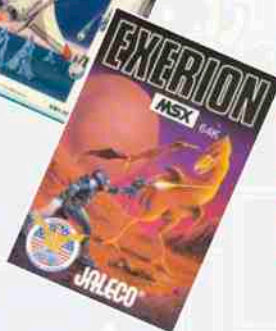
Other refinement, the backgrounds are well animated and display a beautiful parallax effect that reminds the premises of a game like *Space Harrier* (even if the sprites do not zoom here). Some horizontal bands, made of alternating colors (brown and green for example), and a few buildings on top (pyramids, statues of Easter Island, etc.) contribute to give a stunning impression of depth.

This set of new ideas brings freshness and a welcomed originality conferring a sensation of liberty that we not find in games of that time. Indeed, *Gyruss*, the same year, also tries to offer 3D sensations while maintaining a gameplay exclusively in 2D, but the ship can only spin, without inertia, and in front of a full black space background. The overall production is excellent for its time with convincing sound effects and impeccable gameplay. The choice of the screen, vertical, and the animation of backgrounds contribute to immerse the player. It is impossible to take off the joystick until a breath of life remains!



▲ Exerion 1 Arcade

▲ Exerion 2 Arcade

◀ Title screen
Exerion 2 NESTitle screen ▶
Exerion MSX

Formal interdiction to fire!

The other peculiarity of this title is to offer two different weapons: a simple machine-gun fire and a double one. The latter is unlimited and relatively slow (it is intentional): you must wait until all the bullets have disappeared from the screen to shoot more. The single shot is much more frenzied but requires to spare it so that it doesn't fail to appear during intense moments. It is the interest of the remaining shot gauge in the lower right corner. This number decreases with each use of the single shot but is able to increase when you touch an enemy with the double one. You would be inspired to alternate with these

two sorts of shots so that the machine-gun fire doesn't disappear too soon. You can also opt to keep the single shot for the more frenzied moments. In all cases, wasting is fatal: formal interdiction to shoot at random, you must aim!

Fortunately, bonus stages contribute, to an important part, to reload the single shot, as long as you manage to destroy enough enemies. This stage is close to be a carbon copy of the one in *Galaga* (first game in history to offer this opportunity in a video game) except that here, you are not damaged by collisions. So take care to not acquire bad habits that will be difficult to lose in other stages...





On console and computer

Few systems have tried to adapt *Exerion*. It is a pity that no second-generation console, while the game was made in 1983, as the Colecovision, did it. Only the obscure Sega SG-1000 offers conversion with a mixed result, because of the lack of full screen. Indeed, the game window is reduced by a vertical strip to the right of the screen just used for displaying the score. It is maybe the choice of developers in order to keep the format of the original game. We even found *Exerion* on the Sega Game Gear, on a pirate multi-games cartridge! It's probably the same version as the SG-1000, the architecture of both machines being so similar.

We must look at Japanese computers, with the "standard" MSX cassette and cartridge, to find a convincing adaptation, without full screen again. Later, with the resounding success of the Famicom, *Exerion* make a discreet appearance. Yet it is indeed the best version, with full screen and perfectly made: graphics, animation and sounds are impeccable. However, the full horizontal screen does not allow to fully recover the essence of the original arcade game. The perception that we have of the game is changed due to the decrease of the distance between the enemy and the ship while the backgrounds have been reduced.



And now, the sequel!

A sequel has been given to *Exerion* in 1984, subtitled *Zorni*, and whose best-known version is the one available on MSX computers. This is not originally an arcade game but more an incentive to spend money a second time. One has to admit that the differences are minor and do not really justify the purchase.

Considered on the Nintendo Nes a few years later, in 1989, it has unfortunately never seen the light until 2009. For the anecdote, the NintendoAge community has collected enough funds from its members (more than 25 people have contributed!) to be able to buy the prototype of a collector (Jason Wilson, better known by the nickname of DreamTR). This initiative, really laudable, allows all people to discover *Exerion 2* and many other Nes games (like *U-Force Power Games* for example).



- ◆ It's Taito, and not Jaleco, which has commercialized the game in the United States.
- ◆ A display bug occurs on the title screen of *Exerion 2* on Nes, after playing a game.
- ◆ The statues of Easter Island, the moais, are shown as background. We find them two years later in Konami's *Gradius / Nemesis*. Nobody knows why these statues inspire so much the programmers! Perhaps for the symbolic value of lost civilizations?
- ◆ In *Game Paradise*, explanations concerning *Exerion* take place with a screen showing the name *Exerizer*, only released in 1987!
- ◆ In *JaJaMaru Jr Denshouki Jaleco Memorial* on GBA, Jaleco has used the *PocketNES* emulator!





To be direct about *Exerion 2*, the biggest changes are limited to the 4-way fire replacing the original double one. Even if the graphic performance is superior and the sound more polished, it is not enough to justify the development of a sequel and especially buying it. Retrozone, which makes a cartridge of this game, had the good idea to also add *Exerion 1*, which should be enough motivation for you to get it.

One would have thought that *Exerizer*, with its name, is the official sequel. But this game, released in 1987, has not much to do with *Exerion* except the presence of two kinds of shots. The developer is not Jaleco but Nichibutsu, Jaleco having acquired the license to manufacture the arcade cabinet. The game is more conventional, a mix of *Galaxian* and *Gorf* for the presence of varied stages.

It is known in the United States under the name of *Sky Fox*.

Version NES



Newer versions

Exerion has never been updated. At most it was necessary to wait for retro compilations such as *Jaleco Collection Vol.1* (on PS1) or *JaJaMaru Jr. Memorial Denshouki Jaleco* for GBA to play in the original version, besides famous games such as *Ninja JaJaMaru Kun*. The Nintendo Wii does not sulk it by offering it in 2007 on its Virtual Console service. For the anecdote, a wink exists in *Game Paradise* on Sega Saturn. This parody of Jaleco games, like *Star Parodia* on Nec, shows the stage 1 with backgrounds made of arcade cases of famous games from this company, *Exerion* being of course included. Moreover, some explanations about this game (surprisingly dated 1984 when it was released one year earlier) are available on the CD.



NES

ULTIMATE FROGGER CHAMPION

Developer: Khan Games

Year: 2009

Genre: Arcade

Media: Cartridge

Players: 2

Save: no

Language: English

6/10

TEST ULTIMATE FROGGER CHAMPION



TEST



42



By RAYX AMBER



Surprising as it may seem, the famous *Frogger* from Konami has never been released on this console! This lack has been finally fulfilled by the work of *Khan games* aka *Kevin Hanley*. Respecting the founding principle of the game, it still stages a frog – *Mr Frog* – having to reach a side first (after crossing a busy road) then a river to get into one of five locations at the top of the screen.

From the outset the packaging is a pleasant surprise with a cardboard box in blister containing a leaflet, a cartridge with its case and even a small soft plastic frog! The downside is the cost, much higher than other homebrew games on Nes: 48 dollars!

Without wanting to insist, it is a shame not to offer NES games in two forms: cartridge only around 25 dollars and a version with dedicated packaging at higher prices.

After a very basic title screen, the game begins. Each level consists in bringing 5 frogs to safety, unharmed. Once this is done, you start again with an increased level of difficulty evidenced by a larger number of actors on the road (trucks, cars, ...) and they are often faster. But it may also involve reducing the number of useful items to cross the river (tree trunks, turtles or crocodiles), the aim being to go as far as possible to score the greater number of points. A times, you can increase the score by taking with you a pink frog, gulping down the insect sometimes present in locations, etc..

It is a pity the author did not wish to extrapolate from the original version by adding one or more other levels (as in *Frogger 2*). Moreover, it is with great regret that we deplore the lack of diving turtles; they made things even more difficult and were adding spice to the game.

While production is of a good level with a very fast animation, the soundtrack is disappointing. Despite interesting music, the lack of sound effects carry weight. Fortunately there is a new thing exclusive to this release: a two-player mode called *Battlefrogs*. It is strictly the same game but for both players simultaneously. It could have been however further developed. Indeed, the winner is the one that leads to their destination the larger number of frogs. It's a false good idea because lives are infinite and thus there is no real end. A division into several rounds, time limited, with a choice of difficulty for example, would have been preferable.

The result is thus mixed between a game very enjoyable to play (controls respond to the slightest move) but disappointing in terms of almost prohibitive defects. And the high price does not help to take the plunge ...



42



TEST

VCS 2600



ASSES OF FIRE

Developer: Atari2600Land

Year: 2008

Genre: Platform

Media: Cartridge

Players: 1

Save: No

Language: English

6/10



Based on the characters *Terrance* and *Philip* of the cartoon series *South Park*, this game – developed in *BatariBasic* – is quite an original and even puzzling game. Only 20 copies have been produced, in the same fashion as *Isaiah Wii Chase*. The character is bigger than in most of the other games on the 2600, and the very bare (not to say empty) setting is composed of pieces of platforms. The aim is, of course, to jump from one platform to another while avoiding the gaps. What makes the strangest aspect so strange is that the game is composed of fixed screens (no scrolling; impossible to do in *bB* language). As a result, when the character jumps and “leaves” the screen on the right, he appears on the left of the following screen and, although the pieces of the platform follow him onto neighboring screens, that soon destabilizes and you often fail. The enemies are strange and resemble a mix of a dog and a spider (after having checked, they would seem to be pigs!), they aren’t animated but move simply as a group from top to bottom to

block your way. You have to therefore calculate your jumps well. The life system is rather simple, given probably the difficulty of the game: You have three lives but each uses a bar of energy. Each time you take a hit, it diminishes by one unit. Once empty, you lose a life. A multi-colored character has full of health.

While there is always the curiosity of wanting to discover the following screens, the ugliness of the adversaries and the simplicity of the graphics are quite disappointing, with a cruel lack of polishing. With more time or simply programming in a different language other than *Batari*, it could have been a good game a la *Gingerbread Man*. It is nevertheless a fun little game which risks being a quick “collector” with its very meager distribution. Even with six months of programming and over 70 screens, it still doesn’t persuade us.





ROAD FIGHTER

Developer: Opcode Games

Year: 2008

Genre: Car race

Media: Cartridge

Players: 1

Save: no

Language: English



8/10

Historically, *Road Fighter* was created on MSX computers in 1984 and was then adapted on Nintendo Nes, due to the success of the console. It is the first car game by Konami. The purpose of the game seen from above, like in Sega's *Monaco GP* is to end each course within the limits of the allotted time or before you run totally out of petrol. Your petrol is used as your run along (which is quite normal) but also when you bump into other cars. As soon as you have touched or have been touched more than three or four times, it is impossible to hope to end the course. Therefore you have to be fast and precise. Being able to drive among your opponents' cars while avoiding touching them is the key to victory. In order to achieve this, you must not be heavy on the gas pedal permanently as it would prevent you from having the necessary reaction time to avoid the other vehicles. Unless you have a bionic hand!!!

If the characteristics and the performances of Colecovision are close to those of MSX-1, it still remains that it has been

perfectly designed like any Opcode game to tell the truth! And we are delighted that Luc Miron (aka Pixelboy) used all his energy to offer a new release of this game after the lengthy pause by Eduardo Mello in programming games on Colecovision. Its handiness and the response time of the controls are excellent, which does not make *Road Fighter* an easy game to play. It will be straining for your reflexes, with what's more, a random parameter as you don't always avoid (or not) other cars. It is a sheer arcade game for Joystick's confirmed pros: bionic reflexes, and an optimum eye/hand coordination are needed, except for specialists in scrolling on *FI Circus*, what do you say JP?

The packaging is magnificent, pro like and does not look out of its league compared to official games by CBS. And it is really cheap. Unless we are mistaken, no other *homebrew* creation, for any console, can boast about offering a cartridge game at that price (30 dollars) with such a comprehensive and magnificent *packaging*. Let that be an example to some !



info +



- ◆ This game is present on the *Konami Arcade Classics* compilation. And under arcades in 1985 Konami GT has used the same principles.
- ◆ A remake was created on different computer operating systems: Linux, Windows, Mac OS X <http://roadfighter.jorito.net>
- ◆ The game ending screen and some extra music are not present in the original MSX version!





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