

Shoot'em-up

Graphics: 6 Sound: 7 Gameplay: 6 Overall: 6

This game concept did make it out the front door, but as an Odyssey2 release. Both the O2 and CV versions, subtitled The Quest For Volcan, were part of the Probe 2000 game series manufactured by NAP (North American Philips). Unfortunately, even the Odyssey2 edition is very rare because it came out near the end of the system life cycle in the US. It has shown up in Brazil under the name Serpente do Poder. There is no Videopac counterpart.

My O2 cart has the word 'prototype' printed diagonally across the label. I believe it is the same as the production version. The title is based upon the DC comic book series and the Revell action figures. The Power Lords were superheroes with the ability to transform themselves into various alter egos. This was one of those rare times that the O2 had a licensed commodity. A limited number of the Colecovision prototypes were available at CGE2K in Vegas. Sean Kelly had somehow managed to get a hold of that title and others in a trade with an ex-Philips employee. Last I spoke to him he had a few left.

Screen one in the CV version is a two-against-one shooter. A cobra and a starfighter vs. you (Space Sled). The cobra fires lasers at you with its beady little eyes from the top of a volcano. The starfighter comes at you like some pesky mosquito. Which is a good analogy because if you hit it, the word SPLAT appears. This game is very tough on your hands and controller. Since you can wraparound, playing both edges of the screen seems to be the best strategy. It takes many hits to destroy the cobra. I am not sure how many, but you can notice it sinking lower and lower. The O2 prototype is similar, but the graphics are blocky and not as nicely detailed. This time it is a one-on-one confrontation. Missing is the attack by the starfighter, instead you spend a lot of time dodging the deadly falling debris from the frequent volcanic eruptions. The eruptions are a nice effect, but they aren't as convincing as those in Atari's Crossbow. As far as I can tell, the O2 prototype has only one screen.

Screen two on the CV prototype starts a secondary quest game. There are no instructions for this part, so bear with me. You have to dodge fire and reach a hole in the ground to descend a stairwell. Screens three thru five contain hallways that are the same, except for color. It looks as if each hallway goes "to infinity and beyond" to paraphrase Buzz Lightyear. There are many doors on each side. The ones on the left are all open while the ones on the right are all locked. You have to defend against attackers that appear overhead. Staying towards the left side appears to be the best way to navigate the hallway because prizes can be found in some of the open doorways. You have to get close and use the * key in order to pick them up. The items include a rifle, armor, and a key. If you get a key, you can exit through any of the right hand doors to cut across the hallways. One key can open any door. This seems too easy.

Probably the final version would have required a new key per hallway. To build up your score and strength it is probably best to collect as many prizes as you can. After the last hallway door is exited, the end of round # screen appears. The next round starts automatically and returns to the cobra screen with the pace cranked up a notch. The difficulty level (1-5) is an option from the title screen. The # key is pause and the * key is continue. I did manage to complete Level 2 and found that the number of hallways had increased to five. The fifth level I don't think is humanly possible.