

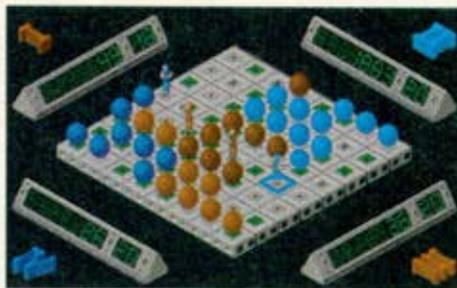
GAME REVIEWS

CONTINUED

Welcome back to the **AMIGA POWER** reviews. On page 86 we start our budget and compilation coverage, but first here are the rest of this month's full price games...

THE BALL GAME

Publisher: Electronic Zoo
Price: £25.99
Author: ESP
Release: Out now



An intriguing but flawed game involving coloured balls, enigmatically titled *The Ball Game*.

Now this is odd. *The Ball Game* is a strange computerised board game with elements of Go and Othello – but also a remarkable similarity to a Mastertronic game called *Infection* which was previewed by other magazines some time ago but never released (not to mention an arcade game based on it called *Attax*, and the forthcoming Virgin product *Spot*). In the

Ball Game version, between one and four players can play, in any combination of computer and humans, at skill levels ranging from 'Very Easy' to 'Ludicrous'. I don't have space to fully explain the rules here – it's all about little men jumping around the board, leaving coloured inflatable balls in their wake and trying to get close enough to spray-paint the coloured balls of the opposition – but they're very easy to get to grips with, and the game proves to be essentially very interesting and actually quite gripping.

There are several problems with this version, though – not least the introduction of a random teleport element which wasn't in the original *Infection* version of the game. (I can't understand why they introduced such a wild card to what is essentially a game of strategy and wits) Graphically, too, things could perhaps be clearer – on anything less than the crispest monitors the colours of the balls can become hard to distinguish at times. In addition, playing at anything other than the very easiest level introduces a long delay in waiting for the computer players to make a move, and this, coupled with the fact that the game by its very nature takes quite a while to really get going, proves to be something of a fatal flaw.

Basically then, what we have here is a potentially brilliant board game, slightly spoiled by a couple of pointless twiddles and irritating inconsistencies. It's good, but it's at five times the intended price of *Infection* and proves to be something of a lesser game. • **STUART CAMPBELL**

THE BOTTOM LINE

Good fun with lots of pals, but struggles to hold the interest when played against the computer. An interesting game design, slightly ineptly executed and not really worth the daft price tag.

56 PERCENT

SWORDS AND GALLEONS

Publisher: Idea
Price: £25.99
Author: Luca Podestà
Release Date: Out now

Any game that promises 'suggestive, detailed graphics' has got to be worth loading up. So I did. Unfortunately, with the possible exception of the Queen of the Red Coral Sea on the title screen, *Swords and Galleons* is decidedly tame, pointing to some roopy Italian-English translation on the back of the box.

Swords and Galleons – says it all, really. You've got a sword, and a galleon, and you've got to sail around collecting



The Hunt Continues (for a decent way to convert an action film).

PREDATOR 2

Publisher: Image Works
Price: £25.99
Author: Arc Developments
 Julian Scott (Programming)
 Paul Walker (Graphics)
 Justin Schwarvona (Music)
Release: Out now

Of all the licensed wares in the world, computerised versions of films must be the most awkward to put together. Invariably the licensor imposes restrictions aplenty, which makes life all the more difficult when it comes to producing a product with decent gameplay. Take *Predator 2*...

What we have here is an *Operation Wolf* style blaster spread across four levels, each preceded by a picture and text description to set the scene. Something else the levels

have in common is gangs of gun-toting drug-baron minions who attack Lieutenant Harrigan (played by Danny Glover on the silver screen, but in this case you). It's not too difficult to guess what the objective is...

Bad men, bullets and grenades aren't the only things to fill the horizontally scrolling playfield. Innocent bystanders run around like headless chickens, and if you shoot too many of them you can kiss your badge goodbye.

But what of the Predator? Bad luck – the creature you came to see plays a background role in the early stages, using its chameleon-like abilities to blend in with the scenery until the finale. Mind you, it does have a habit of taking out a few of the bad guys for you – just for fun.

Sadly, Harrigan's trusty .45 Magnum has a slow fire-rate and, despite being the most powerful handgun in the world, a single shot isn't enough to despatch foes. It's frustrating, but more so is the fact that the proceedings slow down when there's too much happening on screen. At least the Magnum's ammunition is in unlimited supply, unlike the other weapons picked up along the way.

A few less adversaries but



More 'booms' and 'bangs' than a Eurovision Song Contest entry. (Erm, sorry. Gary wrote this caption).

with more prominent behaviour and distinguishable characteristics would have helped, and a greater contrast of colours certainly would – intense concentration is required to make out who's who and what's what and it's enough to make your eyes water.

The peripheral vision effect works well, but being able to see a wireframe Harrigan isn't effective: it looks a little too odd to be believable to see him sliding along with the scrolling screen.

Predator 2 doesn't succeed in coming across as a two-disk product worth a penny short of 26 quid. The addition of a film poster or some stills would have added extra value, but as it stands all that's on offer here is short-term entertainment. • **GARY PENN**

THE BOTTOM LINE

Quite simply a very average blaster in the *Operation Wolf* tradition. *Predator 2* lacks suitable emotional hooks to make you want to play and is insufficiently varied to keep you going.

53 PERCENT



Look closely at some screens (but not this one) and you'll see the shimmering Predator effect. (He's the one that looks like a stray Spectrum graphic.)

