

-

MG: The Macworld (& CES) Report by Tuncer Deniz

Enthusiastic is the one word I would use to describe the mood at the recent Macworld San Francisco (held in early January). Crowds were huge, the talk in the air was about the hot PowerMacs, and games were a plenty.

American Laser Games (505/880-1718) will in February Mad Dog McCree, a live video interaction shooting game set in the old West. Mad Dog and his men have kidnapped the town's mayor and his daughter. To save the town, you will be challenged by a saloon full of outlaws, a hair-raising bank robbery, gunfighters, a slew of ambushes, and Mad Dog himself. Gameplay involves using your mouse as a gun and shooting at bad guys as they suddenly appear on the screen. The action is fast paced and fast hand-eye coordination is a must.

American Laser Games will also be releasing a sequel called Mad Dog McCree II sometime in May. The company also announced Crime Patrol for the Mac (due out in March), a live action thriller that challenges the player to progress through police ranks and battling a variety of criminal elements. But that's not all! Also in the works is Drug Wars, an action adventure that involves hunting down international drug cartels.

One of the more crowded booths at Macworld was Digital Playground (818/773-4999), a pornographic CD-ROM developer who was showing. The Maddam's Family and Vampire's Kiss, two 3-D sex adventures sporting some spectacular 3-D graphics. In The Maddam's Family, you explore a 3D mansion where you interact with characters like those from the classic TV show Adam's Family. Vampire's Kiss is being touted as the first full screen-full motion sex adventure. Here you journey through the corridors of the vampire's ancient virtual 3-D castle. Interactive graphics allow you to search for the secret passageway that leads to the vampire's private chambers. Both titles are for adults only.

First time exhibitors Future Pirates (310/396-6788) showed off Wacky Races, based on the popular Hanna-Barbera characters. Gameplay consists of interactive races and exploratory trips into virtual worlds. If the former, the objective is to win the "wacky race" and receive a driving card for entry into the virtual worlds, all the while avoiding the evil schemes of Dastardly and Muttley. The game features over 2,000 interactive point and click features and has wonderful graphics and amusing schemes. Look for Wacky Races to be released by the time you read this.

Turner Home Entertainment (404/827-2890) will be making its entry into the Macintosh game market with The Pagemaster. To be released in March, the game is a fully animated 2 disc set for children ages 6-12 based on the popular movie starring Macauley Culkin. The adventure begins when the missing Pagemaster entreats to player to rescue him. Interactive challenges include riddles, mazes, and encounters with famous characters from classic literature.

While walking by the Velocity (800/VLOCITY) booth at CES, I began to think, "Oh no, Spectre, not again!" But to my delight, Spectre was no where in sight. Instead, Velocity is developing new (hurray!) titles for the Macintosh. The first is JetSki Rage, an action/water simulation set to be released in May on CD-ROM. Set in San Francisco Bay, Jet Ski Rage plunges gamers full-throttle into the only ocean based racing/combat simulation. Competitors race in a turbulent, fully rendered 3-D ocean where a heinous band of kydro-ragers where the goal is to cross the finish line first. Jet Skiers rage through the course and collect points while battling past heavily armed competitors, jumping shark pits, and avoiding floating spike fields. Jet Ski Rage will also up to 8 players to play on a network and over the Internet.

Velocity is also working on a game called Mega Rave, designed by Justin McCormick, part of the original SimCity team. Mega Rave is an interactive rave party simulation game based on the underground dance party phenomena (uh, ok). The game thrusts players into the pulsating underworld of the rave cyberculture, where they try to control the social interaction and create the ultimate party. Look for Mega Rave in the Spring.

Strata, developers of high-end 3D graphic tools announced at Macworld the formation of Strata Interactive (801/628-5218). As part of Strata, Strata Interactive will be developing and publishing Macintosh games. Their first title, Mummy Trouble is an interactive adventure for children of all ages. The game involves helping Arthur MacArthur save ancient Egypt from the terrible clutches of the Mummy King and restore the Pharaoh to his rightful place as ruler of Egypt Look for Mummy Trouble and other Strata Interactive titles in the Summer of '95.

Sale Curve Interactive (310/577-1518) will be in the Spring of 1995 be releasing the next generation in The Lawnmower Man series, Cyberwar. Once again you take on the role of Dr. Angelo, as you pit your physical and mental stamina against the once simple Jobe, now a psychotic virtual Cyber God operating from within the cybercomplex of the VSI mainframe computer. Your mission: fight your way through the military defense network to locate and destroy the Omega chip which is at the hear of Cyberjobe's Virtual City. The game will ship on 3 CD-ROM's and includes actual footage from the film, stunning 3D graphics, and 360 degrees cinematic panning.

If you thought Spin Doctor from Callisto Corporation was dead, think again. Spectrum Holobyte, of all companies, will be resurrecting the game and renaming it ClockWerx. Alexey Pajitnov, creator of the world-famous Tetris, is lending his endorsement to and is helping in the design of the game's overall design and feature enhancements. In ClockWerx, players must maneuver a spinning clock hand from one part of a grid to a gateway that leads to the next level. The game will feature over 100 exciting play fields including such opponent as enemy clock hands, oil globs, and spikes. ClockWerx will be released on both CD-ROM and floppy disk formats, no release date has been set.

Feoh-mu, Inc (800/734-9466) was showing an impressive adventure game entitled Horror Tour (no release date available). The game is set in a medieval castle. You've heard of rumors of vast treasures within the decaying walls and decided to venture in. Soon you must find your way the maze of passages and solve all the mysteries of the castle. But your journey won't be easy, you'll be encountering loathsome witches and demons and discover hidden traps

and more.

Origin Systems plans on introducing another Macintosh title in 1995 (the first being Super Wing Commander, System Shock. In System Shock you are a renowned hacker caught during a risky break-in. You are arrested and a cyberjack implant is put into you. After six months of healing in a coma, you awaken to the twisted aftermath of a terrible disaster. Once a prime corporate research facility, Citadel now teems with mindless cyborgs, robots, and terribly mutated beings, all programmed to serve SHODAN, a ruthless artificial intelligence. It's your job to waste him.

By far the busiest Macintosh game developer in 1995 will be MacPlay (800/4MACPLAY) Among its many planned releases this year is Frankenstein: Through the Eyes of the Monster, a gothic tale on CD-ROM to be released sometime in the Spring of '95. The game starts Tim Curry as the diabolical Dr. Frankenstein. Players will experience this original tale as the grotesquely disfigured monster resurrected from the dead by Dr. Frankenstein on a quest to discover what has happened to himself and his young daughter. Similar in the style of Myst, the game features enormous 3-D fully rendered rooms in Frankenstein's castle, catacombs, gardens, and secret passageways. The game also incorporates digitized voices, live action video, special effects, a mind-twisting mysteries and puzzles.

Another MacPlay title in the works is Dungeon Master II, the sequel to one of the best-known entertainment products, Dungeon Master. In the game, creatures and characters think, act, and react according to the players interactions. Real-time combat is combined with finely-tuned traps and puzzles to further test the players logic and reflexes.

MacPlay will also be releasing in the first part of 1995 USCF Chess, Voyeur (a political thriller featuring suspense, erotic overtones, and a plot right out of Hollywood), The Skins Game at Bighorn, Solitaire Deluxe, and Rocket Ranger (formally known as Mighty Mike). In addition, MacPlay in the later part of 1995 will be releasing titles like Descent (a stunning 3-D flying game with DOOM like qualities), Star Trek: Judgement Rites, Star Trek: Starfleet Academy, Stonekeep, SimCity CD-ROM (woppie!), and more. Wow! What a year!

Here's some small tidbits to wrap it up. Expect a multi-player version of Civilization available this year for the Macintosh. A company called Athead we hear is developing 3 INCREDIBLE PowerMac only games that are going to blow people away. The first is a Virtua Fighting like game, a racing game, and an intense 3D puzzle game. One source at CES told us it was the best stuff he's seen EVER on the Macintosh. More details to come. Also expect an totally revamped version of Deadly Games' U-Boat, appropriately titled U-Boat 2.

And finally we come to the end of the Macworld Expo article. But wait, I haven't mentioned X-Wing (like I always seem to do at the end of these articles)! Inside Mac Games has learned from at least a dozen reliable sources that X-Wing for the Macintosh is currently in development. Despite continual denials from LucasArts, we've learned that Peregrine, Larry Holland's development company, has hired programmers from Apple and other places specifically to do the Macintosh port. Unfortunately no release date is available and LucasArts continually denies that it is in development. Our guess is they just don't want to let the cat out of the bag so soon. We suggest our readers do the same and sit tight and wait. We don't expect X-Wing for the Macintosh to be available until late 1995 or early 1996.