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With the holiday season underway, there's no better time than now to buy your loved one's something special. And if he or she is a Mac gamer, then there's plenty to choose from. It's been a fantastic year! Although the year started off slowly, Mac games picked up some steam over the summer with the releases of Dark Forces, DOOM II, Buried in Time, and A-10 Attack. But it wasn't until the Fall that Mac games went into overdrive. There have been so many titles over the last few months, even we've had to turn down some reviews until the next issue (a rarity).

With that in mind, we offer our readers our picks for the holidays. Even though we've only listed 10 or so games here, there are many more out there that might catch your loved one's fancy. So get off that chair and go do some shopping!

[Anything From LA](#)

It's been an incredible year for LucasArts. In all, they've released four Mac titles this year with two more coming before year's end. The first one, Dark Forces, is a fantastic first person perspective game set in the Star Wars world. The player must battle his/her way from level to level in search of the Dark Forces, a new breed of super bad dudes. Everything from the graphics, to the sounds, to the gameplay make this a worthwhile title. Next up is Full Throttle, a biker adventure game. If you're into adventure games and solving puzzles, Full Throttle has enough gusto to keep you happy. It may very well be the best adventure game ever. And don't forget the other LucasArts titles, Day of the Tentacle (reviewed in this issue), Sam and Max, X-Wing, and Rebel Assault II (preview in this issue). No matter what LucasArts game you choose, you are bound to love it!

[WarCraft I: Orcs and Humans](#)

After a successful run on DOS compatibles, WarCraft (Blizzard) has made the transition to the Mac. The game allows players to lead either the Orcish Hordes or the Kingdom of the Humans in an all out battle for dominion of Azeroth. Each side gets to develop technology, build towns, field armies and, of course, wage war. The distinguishing feature of the product is that it takes place in real time, testing the players' abilities to manage the details of a growing empire while still maintaining command of the troops on campaigns. The game supports either individual engagements, or the players can choose to fight their way through a series of 12 battles which ends in a ultimate dominion of the land.

WarCraft does show its DOS heritage in the graphics, but it is well designed and remains a highly satisfying game. Especially so, since there are so many options to play against another human opponent, either on a MacOS compatible or a PC. The Head-to Head option even allows players to “spawn” to another machine, allowing two people to play with a single copy of the CD. Although WarCraft does not teach anything about the vanishing rain forests or the reduction of the ozone layer, it does reinforce a basic tenet of history. Crushing one’s enemies, even on a silicon battlefield, can be a great deal of fun.

Marathon 2

The sequel to Marathon is finally out, and it’s even better the second time around. Marathon 2 features extensive new graphics, a faster game engine, and a plot that’ll have you intrigued from beginning to end. In Marathon 1, Tau Ceti, a human colony world outside of Sol, was savagely attacked without warning by the evil Pfhor, a malicious race of slavers. The interstellar ship, Marathon, which brings humans to the colony on Tau Ceti, was also attacked by the Pfhor. Leela and Durandal, two of Marathon’s artificial intelligences, organize a defense against the Pfhor. But since the AI’s can’t do any of the fighting themselves, they enlist you to recapture the Marathon. As you battle through waves and waves of Pfhor on the Marathon, Durandal strikes an unlikely deal with the enslaved S’pht. In return for their freedom, they will rebel against their Pfhor masters and give control of the Pfhor attack ship to Durandal.

After the player successfully defends the Marathon and drives a crushing blow to the heart of the Pfhor, Durandal teleports a boarding party to the Pfhor vessel and assumes control of the ship by downloading his entire personality to the ship’s massive computers.

long with the security officer and the many human colonists on board (who are put to sleep for the long journey through the galaxy), Durandal leaves Tau Ceti in the Pfhor ship. Upon hearing of the rebellion, the Pfhor leaders send another ship to Tau Ceti. Meanwhile, Durandal, after searching the vast galaxies, finally arrives on the devastated homeworld of the S'pht. Here he searches for some weapon or piece of knowledge to aid him in freeing the S'pht from the clutches of the Pfhor. Soon more Pfhor will arrive to battle Durandal and the rebellious S'pht. Once again, he calls on you to do battle against the Pfhor. But this time, you've got a little bit more help....Bob is back....

Network play has also been beefed up with games like Kill the Man With the Ball, and King of the Hill. If you haven't seen Marathon 2, be sure to check out the demo on this CD-ROM. It speaks for itself.

[Buried In Time](#)

Another sequel finally reached Mac user's hands over the summer. Buried in Time, the sequel to the popular The Journeyman Project, features a first-person perspective, beautiful 3D-textured photorealistic scenes, and seamlessly integrated animation. Buried in Time's beautiful interface and attention to detail literally puts you in seven incredibly detailed environments, including a medieval fortress under siege, Leonardo da Vinci's Milan studio, the Mayan catacombs at Chichén Itzá, and a meteor-damaged space station. The historical locations are painstakingly researched and accurate to the smallest detail. The original soundtrack and digitally sampled sound effects add further credence to these environments, and an intriguing plot and challenging storyline make Buried in Time a fascinating game to lose yourself in. Shipping on three CD-ROM's, Buried in Time is the kind of game that screams "BUY ME!"

[Power Pete](#)

MacPlay over the summer released a fun and unique little game called Power Pete. Power Pete is a one or two player arcade game where you, as the GI Joe-like doll Power Pete, have to save the cute little stuffed bunnies from all manner of toys, characters, and candy run amok. You have at your disposal a wide variety of weaponry of unique abilities and varying usefulness. In the act of rescuing bunnies from the baddies, you will have to contend with chocolate rivers, rolling batteries, race cars, and air grates blowing you in one direction when you need to go another. Fight by fight, through five departments of the toy store, you gradually free the other dolls from the grip of toy terrorism. Power Pete is the perfect gift for gamers of all ages.

[ing Commander III](#)

The game that many labeled as “light years ahead” is now available on the Macintosh. Wing Commander III: Heart of the Tiger, is the latest installment in one of the most wildly successful computer game series in the history of electronic entertainment. The Commander series pioneered the concept of “interactive movie,” with compelling storylines, cinematic sequences, a dynamic soundtrack and branching plots. Heart of the Tiger takes it to its most sophisticated level ever, as you play an even more active role in deciding what happens and when it happens.

Wing Commander III includes more than three hours of live-action video featuring an ensemble Hollywood cast. You’ll interact face-to-face with such stars as Mark Hamill (Star Wars), Malcolm McDowell (Star Trek: Generations) and John Rhys-Davies (Raiders of the Lost Ark). You’ll be able to guide the morale of the people around you by affecting conversations positively or negatively. All the while, you’ll experience a seamless melding of motion picture filming techniques and cutting edge-computer technology. The live action takes place before “virtual sets” and backgrounds rendered with Silicon Graphics workstations and state-of-the-art 3-D software.

Through the acting talent of Hamill, you play the part of Col. Christopher Blair, a veteran pilot who’s seen his share of victories and defeats against the tiger-like Kilrathi. As Wing Commander III begins, mankind is fighting a losing battle for survival. The Kilrathi have all but crushed the human resistance. You’ve been assigned to the TCS Victory, an aging tub held together by little more than the good spirits of its haggard crew. To advance throughout the story, you alternately participate in filmed scenes with other characters and fly seat-of-the-pants missions in a variety of advanced spacefighters. Finally, you must decide whether to volunteer on an almost certain suicide run to bring the war to a definitive end. Not only could your own life be lost, but the safety of Earth itself and the very future of the human race hang in the balance. It’s your call.

[A-10 Attack & F/A-18 Hornet](#)

If flight simulators are your cup of tea, then check out A-10 Attack from Parsoft and F/A-18 Hornet by Graphic Simulations. Both are excellent flight simulators that boast top notch graphics, gameplay, and realism. While the former is geared toward hard-core gamers, the later has less of a learning curve. But both can be tamed with a little practice and some reading. Check out both of the demos available on this CD-ROM. Happy flying!

[Descent](#)

Here’s the Descent commercial: They’re all plotting against you! Descent’s aliens are like not others. They possess sophisticated artificial intelligence to learn your moves, adjust their attacks and ambush you from all sides. Left, right, front, back, top, and bottom! You’ll be upside down, inside out, and coming out on top. Whether you’re annihilating aliens alone or

hooking up with a network of other players, explosive, multi-directional play, spectacular sound-effects and sizzling weapons systems will keep you in command and out of breath. If you're ready for a 360 degree, 3-D, roller coaster ride through a thirty level maze of mines and a never-ending array of new challenges, then step up to Descent. You've got 30 levels of mines to explore, a host of trapped miners to save, and a horde of aliens to defeat along the way.

Now does that sound exciting or what? OK, well, trust me, it is. Descent features state-of-the-art 3-D graphics including animating texture maps, light source shading and 3-D animating monsters. The game also features highly advanced artificial intelligence with creatures that actually learn, adjusting their actions based upon your tactics. They'll plot, wait and ambush you from all sides. Or if you want to battle your friends, you can try multiplayer action with 8-players over a network (or 2-player Head-to-Head via modem). Check out the demo on this CD-ROM.

[Links CD-ROM](#)

Does the winter have you down? Can't go golfing? Well, the most realistic and popular golf program ever made has now been enhanced for the Macintosh! Links Pro Macintosh CD-ROM takes full advantage of your Mac's graphics capability. Play the exciting Harbour Town Golf Links in breathtaking detail. Authentic digitized golf sounds completely immerse you in the game.

From tee to green, Links Pro CD Macintosh is unrivaled in recreating the true golfing experience. It's Power Macintosh compatible for faster game play, and it features AppleTalk network play-so you can golf with up to seven other players. Two world-class golf courses, Harbour Town Golf Links and Banff Springs, have been reproduced in painstaking detail-you'll feel as if you're actually there! Simulated aerial fly-bys, golf tips, digital music, and a "comic caddie" option all help make your desktop golfing experience complete.

[FlightStick Pro](#)

Now, most of these games won't be any fun with a joystick, especially games like F/A-18 Hornet, Rebel Assault II, and Descent. The FlightStick Pro by CH Products is the perfect all around joystick for Mac users. It features a programmable trigger and three fire buttons, a built-in throttle control, and an eight-way hat switch. Priced at around \$75, it's perfect for the casual gamer or the hard-core flight sim junkie.