

INTERSTATE '82

(Activision)

Thanks to some unnecessarily harsh reviews by the video game press, *Interstate '82* hasn't achieved the hype or the sales figures of its groundbreaking predecessor, *Interstate '76*. But upon closer inspection, the truth is that *I82* is every bit as good as the original—despite a lack of any significant improvements—and anyone who hasn't checked it out yet is making a big mistake.

First, a refresher course for the forgetful: *Interstate '76* was a tremendously original, mission-based driving game in which you drove different (and heavily armed) cars to specific locations, defended yourself and your cohorts against enemy attacks, and completed various assignments. The roads stretched for miles through the dry desert of the American Southwest and you were free to roam anywhere, giving the game a grand sense of scale and distance. And it was all wrapped in a clever '70s package, replete with afros, bell bottoms, funky music, and sporty muscle cars.

As for *Interstate '82*, it's simply more of the same, this time with mohawks instead of afros, music from Devo, and cars like those you'd see in "Miami Vice." This time out, you get to play as Skye Champion, sister of auto-vigilante Groove Champion, the hero of *I76*. As Skye, your mission is to find Groove, who was last seen trying to bust up an auto-felon gang somewhere out in the desert. As in the original, the primary goal of the game is not nearly as important as the individual missions themselves. Each mission in the game is a new adventure, whether you're escorting a vehicle somewhere, setting up enemies for an ambush, searching for something, or embarking on a rescue mission. Never knowing what the next mission will bring keeps the game fresh and exciting. And getting past some of these missions is no easy task.

One new addition to the *Interstate* series is the ability to hop out of your car and travel on foot. Not that you'll want to do this for very long (you and your

.45 are no match for cars with roof-mounted cannons), but it does come in handy from time to time, like when you want to bail out of a crippled vehicle and get into another.

Obviously, our advice is to disregard any negative press you may have read about *Interstate '82*. Whether or not you played the original, this game is not to be overlooked.—*Jeff Kitts*

BATTLEZONE II: COMBAT COMMANDER

(Activision)

Last year's *Battlezone* was a top-notch strategy game in which the primary focus was running a space mining colony, with a secondary emphasis on combat. For the new sequel, however, the focus has shifted. Now it's all about combat. And it's even better than the original.

Battlezone II: Combat Commander features a combination of flying and, for those times when you're forced to abandon your craft and go on foot, first-person 3D shooting action. But while the combat sequences are perfectly fine, it's not like all-out mindless war. *Battlezone II* is something of a thinking man's space combat game. The beauty of this game lies in the fact that it's a mission-based adventure, meaning you're given objectives that must be completed before you can do anything else.

As the game begins, you're in control of a spacecraft. Your commander, seated in another craft, is giving you orders, be it following her to a specific nav point, escorting a utility ship somewhere, attacking or climbing out of your craft, and going inside a building to investigate. Along the way she'll even tell you which keys to hit to perform certain commands, which means you're not pausing to study the included keyboard layout card.

Fans of the first *Battlezone* will be pleased to know that the new installment still features some strategy elements, as you're able to build military outposts, communicate with other ships and lead a squad

of tanks, infantry, and aircraft into battle. The mix is right on target, and the end product will have you engrossed for hours.—*Jeff Kitts*

SOUTH PARK RALLY

(Acclaim)

If you're such a fan of TV's "South Park" that you absolutely have to own anything retaining the sicko animated program's license, then the new *South Park Rally* racing game for the PC, PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and Dreamcast should be just your cup o' puke. For the rest of you, however, there's really no need to investigate this game any further. In short, it just ain't worth your time.

South Park Rally is pretty much your standard kart racing game, save maybe for the "Ass Battle" multiplayer mode, and the fact that your assortment of available weapons include barf, a case of herpes, explosive diarrhea, an anal probe, and a dildo homing missile. Okay, so that's pretty funny—but unfortunately, the gameplay just isn't there.

In a nutshell, it's just boring. The action is slow and repetitive, the controls are sluggish, and the navigational system is wretched. You won't even care whether or not you win or lose races. The whole thing will simply leave you unaffected.—*Jeff Kitts*

NIGHTMARE CREATURES 2

(Universal/Konami)

The first *Nightmare Creatures* was an outstanding achievement in the field of violent 3D action gaming, complete with finely detailed graphics, riveting gameplay, and an atmosphere so effectively eerie, you wouldn't want to play with the lights off. And best of all, it's about to spawn a sequel that promises to outdo the original in every way.

Taking place a full century after the conclusion of the *Nightmare Creatures* story, *NC2* puts players in

control of Herbert Wallace, who's pursuing the evil scientist Dr. Albert Crowley through the dark underbelly of old London. Crowley has grown in power since his defeat a century ago, and unless Wallace takes him down, Crowley will extend his dark dominion across the globe.

Players will face more than 20 different types of monsters—all under Crowley's command—including zombies, hideous lab monsters, and giant bats. Defending Wallace against the waves of inhuman monsters will require the use of various new fighting techniques, special moves, weapons, and lethal magic spells. Wallace also has a full array of moves and abilities, as he can run, climb, cling, swim, pick up objects, and use environmental items like doors, crates, and furniture. *Nightmare Creatures 2* will feature 30 game sectors spanning across eight different worlds, including the cities of London and Paris, subways, alleyways, castles, and underwater areas. From the looks of things, it's one you won't want to miss.—
Jeff Kitts

MTV MUSIC GENERATOR

(Codemasters)

Billed as "music creation for the PlayStation," the new *MTV Music Generator* is more of a song construction program than a game—and in that sense it's one of the most unique products to hit the video gaming world in years. The idea here is simple enough—you build songs using a massive library of riffs, beats, and melodies. Select sounds from a giant list, put them in order on the grid screen, then play the sequence. Just like that, you can create some pretty wicked tunes.

There are over 1,000 pre-recorded riffs to choose from, broken down into the stylistic categories of Drum N Bass, Beat, Trance, Techno, Rock, and House. Within those groups, you'll find subcategories like "drum loops," "bass lines," "vocals," "sound effects,"

"percussion," and "melody." From within these banks, all you have to do is click on the riff you want, drop it in an available space on the grid, and hit Start to hear how it sounds. I was expecting some hideous cacophony of noise, but nearly everything I created—even while selecting riffs at random—proved incredibly musical. Without patting myself too much on the back, everything seemed about as good as something you might hear at a professional rave. And the sound quality is outstanding—everything sounds rich and full, not hollow and tinny as you might expect.

And while it's certainly easy enough to string a bunch of riffs and beats together, *the MTV Music Generator* does offer some deeper editing techniques for those looking to expand their musical chops. For instance, you can change the size (duration) of a riff, raise or lower the volume on a specific sample, change the BPM (beats per minute, or tempo), add reverb, or change the key.

There's also a video clip function you can use to add visual imagery to your sounds—but all you end up with is a headache-inducing series of pulsating blobs and shapes.

MTV Music Generator is a highly original and enjoyable program that clearly shows the PlayStation has not outlived its useful life expectancy (a PC version is coming soon). Whether or not you ever had a desire to step behind the turntables, *Music Generator* will bring out the mixmaster in everyone.—Jeff Kitts

ZOMBIE REVENGE

(Sega)

Check your brain at the door, folks. This one is strictly for the bloodthirsty and trigger-happy. In *Zombie Revenge*, a direct translation of the arcade coin-op for the Sega Dreamcast, a government experiment in the town of Woodside City to turn the undead into soldiers has gone awry. Now gamers must assume the role of one of three playable characters

who are out to remedy the dire situation. To aid in their defense against the endless waves of zombies and green-blooded monsters, each character comes with their own special attack moves and combos--not to mention the many weapons that appear at random, including machine guns, shotguns, flamethrowers, and even a giant power drill (for when you want to bore a hole through a creature's abdomen). Of course, any weapons you drop are fair game, so try not to let them fall into the rotting hands of a zombie. Basically, it's like a gory 3D version of the old Sega Genesis game *Streets Of Rage*: punch, kick, shoot, move onto another area. Punch, kick, shoot, etc.

Truthfully, however, it's not as boring as that may sound. While the basic gameplay can get pretty repetitive quickly, *Zombie Revenge* does offer enough variety in terms of other modes to keep things entertaining for more than a few plays. In addition to the standard Arcade mode, there's also a new Original mode (where you can play Bare Knuckles or the fully armed Gun mode), a Vs. Boss mode (where you can go back and fight all the bosses one at a time) and a cool Fighting mode (where you fight one-on-one against an opponent in a best-of-three-rounds match, weapons and all). There's even two VMU mini games: *Zombie Fishing* and *Zombie Doubt*.

For what it is, *Zombie Revenge* is a decent enough gorefest, with some excellent graphics and a heart-racing pace--just be sure to give your brain the night off.--*Jeff Kitts*

CRAZY TAXI

(Sega)

We've only just dented the new millennium, and already we may have seen the game of the year. *Crazy Taxi*, a direct translation of the hit arcade game for the Sega Dreamcast, just might be that game. For those

unfamiliar with the coin-op, the concept here is a pure adrenaline rush: you're a cab driver in a big, sprawling California metropolis (could be L.A., could be S.F.), and your job is to pick up fares along the road, then take them to their destination (Tower Records, Pizza Hut, or whatever) as fast and as recklessly as possible in the time allotted. The more drastic measures you take (speeding along the sidewalk, jumping off ramps, weaving in and out of traffic), the more money you earn. The city streets are highly interactive, letting you drive anywhere and crash through whatever stands in your path (people, mailboxes, phone booths, etc.). And you'll never tire of driving through this city, as it seems like there's an endless supply of new roads to navigate, parks to barrel through, and underground train stations to explore—all with some good, fast-paced punk rock from the Offspring and Bad Religion blaring in the background.

For a quick diversion, there's also a series of exhilarating mini games where you can practice your driving skills for points and money.

And while the concept of *Crazy Taxi* rocks, it's the graphics that give the game its jaw-dropping appeal. Nothing has ever looked this good on a home system—and it makes *Crazy Taxi* reason enough to own a Dreamcast.