

# after hours

This month you are charged with fighting evil in Neverhood; you can join Damon Hill in hair-raising Grand Prix races, plunder archaeological sites, or travel through time to stop a computer virus epidemic. For the family, there's fun with Toy Story and Wallace and Gromit, or a bit of culture with Arthur Miller's The Crucible. To round off, you can visit the Web

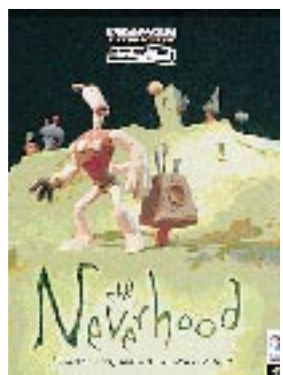
## The Neverhood



In the beginning, Hoborg built a world from clay, and created companions. But the evil Klogg stole Hoborg's crown and started to rule Neverhood for his own wicked ends.

The Neverhood is the first game from DreamWorks Interactive, a collaboration between big names including Bill Gates and Steven Spielberg. It's a graphical adventure where the biggest star is a lorry load of modelling clay.

As Klaymen, the new-born hero, you must recover Hoborg's crown and restore goodness to the Neverhood. Of course, such a task is fraught with difficulty. On your way you must solve puzzles, drive cars, fire heavy artillery and avoid being eaten by monsters. Your first difficulty is to get out of the locked room in which you spring to life, fully formed. That's not hard, but some of the other tasks are: even with the hints that Willie Trombone, Klaymen's friend, leaves for you, it's almost impossible to solve some of the puzzles.



## F1GP2



F1GP2 – or Formula One Grand Prix 2 for those unfamiliar with the abbreviation – is the follow-up to the popular Grand Prix game.

The best tip is to investigate everything. Push every button in sight, and try to pick up anything you see: Klaymen stores objects in his chest and automatically uses anything he needs, when the time is right.

If you remember Morph, don't worry. Even though Klaymen's made of modelling clay and moves, he's completely different. The graphics are superb, and movement was smooth, even on our test machine with only a double-speed CD-ROM drive. The sets were created using three tons of clay, and are stunning: they even squelch underfoot.

It's this attention to detail which really makes The Neverhood stand out. Ignore Klaymen for long enough and he'll show signs of his boredom, including taking his own head off. Look out, too, for the reactions of any creature watching while another meets a gruesome end – it's highly entertaining. Finally, the soundtrack's brilliant. Specially written for the game, it's Dixie-style jazz and blues.

**JS The Neverhood really shows what can be done when the big names in entertainment and computing decide to get together. It's possibly the best graphical adventure we've seen.**

£49.99

DreamWorks Interactive, distributed by Microsoft: 0345 002000

**The Neverhood** ★★★★★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 75MHz, 8Mb of RAM (16Mb recommended), 10Mb of hard disk space, 4x CD-ROM, SVGA, 8-bit sound card (16-bit recommended), Windows 95.

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lic sacking followed by being signed by another, hitherto unknown, racing team.

In many respects, F1GP2 is identical to its predecessor – including the plethora of control keys that need to be mastered before you can become a competent racing driver. However, Microprose has now added real team and driver names by obtaining the licence for the 1994 Championship Season. On top of this, programmer Geoff Crammond, who has a long pedigree of producing quality racing games, starting with Revs on the BBC Micro, has improved his graphics engine for this game to include light-sourcing and detailed texture mapping.

Accompanying F1GP2 is the thickest, most detailed instruction manual you're ever likely to come across with a racing game. It contains all the information you could possibly want, and then some (for instance, did you know that the technical director of the Tyrrell-Yamaha team is called Harvey Postlethwaite?). Fortunately,



## games news

DreamWorks SKG, formed by media moguls Steven Spielberg, David Geffen and Jeffrey Katzenberg, formerly at Disney, has teamed up with Microsoft to form DreamWorks Interactive. The new company is committed to producing the best games around, and its first product is **The Neverhood** (see our review to find out just how good it is). Its second title **Goosebumps**, based on an American children's book, is set to hit the shelves in December.

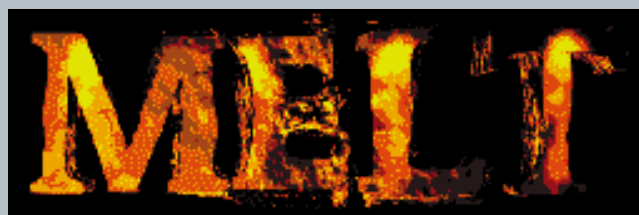
Also from Microsoft, there's a bumper Christmas batch of games. **Deadly Tide** is an underwater thriller, while

**Hellbender** is a space shoot-'em-up narrated by Gillian Anderson, better known as Scully from *The X-Files*. **Close Combat** lets you play through the Normandy landings of the Second World War, and if you're a simulator fan, **Monster Truck Madness** or **Flight Simulator for Windows 95** may take your fancy. With nine titles to choose from, there should be something for everyone. Microsoft: 0345 002000

Play Eraser and you can be

Arnie, searching for the traitor in the Federal witness protection scheme. It's new from Warner Brothers, to tie in with this summer's box office smash. The company has also announced **Space Jam**, a basketball game starring Bugs Bunny and the other Looney Tunes characters. Warner Interactive: 0171 391 4300

To the sound of Iron Maiden tracks, their skeleton logo Eddie rages through hyperspace in **Melt**. You must save the



universe from his evil in the latest 3D adventure from CMM. Castle Multimedia: 0181 974 1021

Latest to make the switch from Sega Saturn are the best-selling **Sonic the Hedgehog** and **Bug!**, a 3D platform game. Sega: 0181 995 3399

Finally, **Carmageddon** takes road rage further than ever before. It's the new 3D driving game from SCI, in which you race to destroy your opponents and flatten pedestrians. SCI: 0171 585 3308





play when you think that Azrael's Tear might just rise above the norm for this genre – you can, for example, communicate with the occasional computer-controlled character – but such hopes are short-lived as you become aware of the obvious lack of variety.

The controls are pretty much par for the course: you can walk in any direction as well as look up and down. When it's necessary to jump, the computer performs the hard work of deciding exactly when to execute the manoeuvre, leaving you to do nothing more than take the run-up. Successfully shooting the enemies, though, requires careful positioning of a cross-hair sight before hitting the fire button.

Graphically, things are quite sharp at the higher resolutions, but on our DX4/100 test machine the game was sluggish to play at even the lowest resolution. However, some compensation can be found by using the automatic resolution feature. In this mode, the screen resolution and detail level change according to what you are doing: walk or run and the detail reduces



## Azrael's Tear

The year is 2003 and sudden tectonic plate movements have revealed dozens of new archaeological sites. For some unexplained reason, this unfortunate state of affairs has led to pipe-smoking university professors the world over being banished from their chairs.



The remainder of the plot, for what it's worth, revolves around a bunch of mercenary cat burglars known as Raptors. The Raptors, of which you are one, are on a mission to plunder these newly-discovered sites of their countless treasures.

In a nutshell, Azrael's Tear is Doom set in caves littered with *Jurassic Park*-like creatures – who turn out to be your rivals.

There are a few points during

though, for those who like to learn by trial and error (after all, these aren't real cars!) there's a quick-start supplement.

It's extremely easy to 'cheat' in F1GP2, and we confess that on more than one occasion we succumbed to temptation and made our expensive car indestructible – some of the corners are extremely sharp, after all.

However, at the game's most realistic settings you are charged with making gear changes, braking, and you even have to inform your team when you're intending to come in for a pit stop. And just like the real thing, you can damage your car: from accidentally losing your rear wing by clipping a neighbouring car, to losing your front wheels by intentionally ramming Schumacher off the track (we seemed unable to avoid doing this), you can do it all.

SC

**F1GP2 is a great game that works on many levels. Whether you're after a realistic simulation of the sport, or simply fancy a quick arcade-style 'spin' around some graphically impressive tracks, F1GP2 should take pole position on your hard disk.**

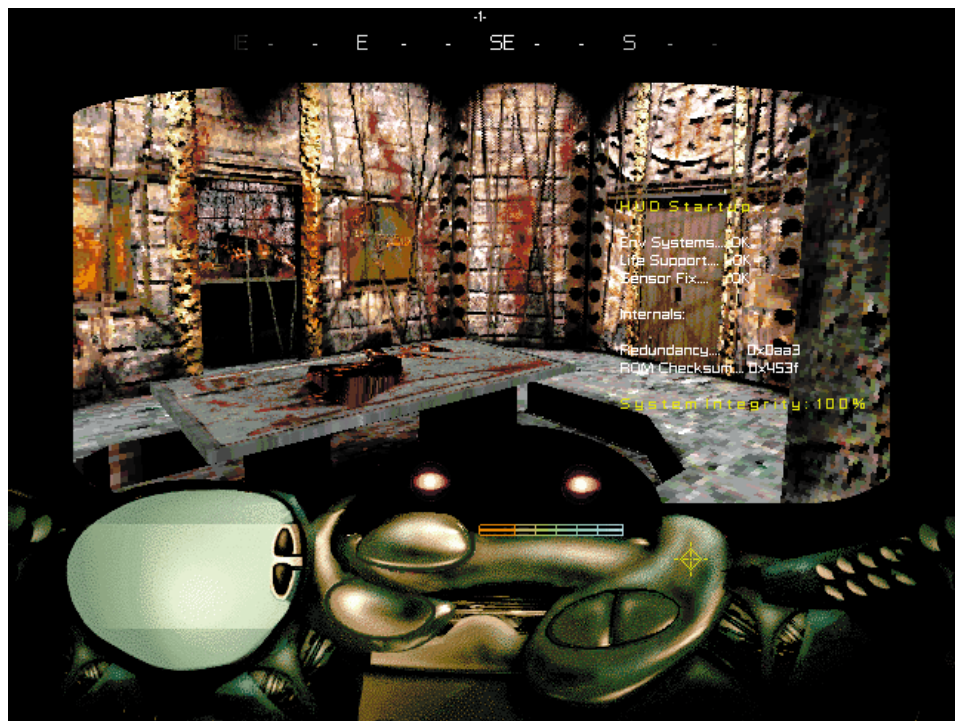
£29.99 (incl VAT)

Microprose: 01454 893900

**F1GP2**

★★★★★

Minimum requirements: 486SX 25MHz, 8Mb of RAM (16Mb if Windows 95), CD-ROM, 9Mb of hard disk space.





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to a thick-pixel mess; stand still and everything suddenly becomes crisp and defined. It's a simple idea, and one that will be appreciated by players with slower PCs.

Both the music and sound effects are above average and, in a darkened room with the volume high, playing becomes quite an eerie experience. **SC**

**Azrael's Tear combines moody graphics and atmospheric sounds to create a convincing environment. The problem is there's another game that does it faster, bigger, better and cheaper: Quake.**

○ £44.99

○ Mindscape: 01444 246333

**Azrael's Tear**

★★★

Minimum requirements: 486PC, 8Mb of RAM (16Mb recommended), 7Mb of free hard disk space and a CD-ROM drive.

### Time Commando



Imagine what it would be like to travel through time. Imagine what it would be like to meet Neolithic man, the high priests of ancient Egypt, medieval Japanese samurais and Roman Centurions. Then imagine what it would be like to kill them with one of 45 different weapons.

If you can imagine this and it gets your fingers twitching in anticipation, then you'll be right at home with Time Commando. The game puts you in the skin-tight gold suit of Stanley Opar, time travel agent. His, and hence your, job is to travel through time, picking up scattered computer chips that are vital to stop the spread of a particularly vicious computer virus. Quite what this has to do with killing historical figures is anyone's guess, but kill them you must, collecting chips on the way.

If Time Commando's plot is a little dodgy, the graphics are at least very impressive. Stanley and his various opponents are smoothly animated (at least on our P166 IBM Aptiva) 3D figures that move through impressive pre-rendered sets. The panning and tracking of the 'camera' as Stanley wanders

along give the game a distinctly cinematic feel and the whole thing looks a treat. Time Commando is also easy to play – there only four types of attack, for example, which means that you don't have to spend a week mastering dozens of key combinations and secret moves.

As far as games of this type go, however, the violence in Time Commando isn't particularly graphic. There's no blood and defeated opponents simply vanish after falling to the ground. Un-

fortunately, the carnage isn't limited to humans – tigers, lions, gorillas and horses all need to be despatched at some point during the game. Sound is disappointing – background noise is convincing enough but the spot effects are woefully inadequate. **JP**

**It may look lovely but the repetitive nature of Time Commando's game play soon turns it into a dull game. The graphics and varied settings help a little, but 'kill, kill, kill, collect, kill' soon loses its appeal.**

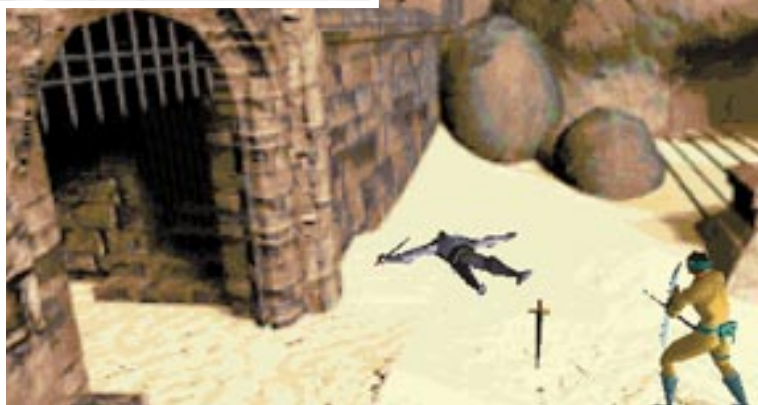
○ £39.99

○ Electronic Arts: 01753 549442

**Time Commando**

★★★

486DX2/66 or faster, 8Mb of RAM, 6Mb of hard disk space, 2x CD-ROM drive, VESA Local Bus or PCI video card. MS-DOS and Windows 95. Windows 95 requires DirectX drivers.



### TOP TEN CD-ROM GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
1	1	Quake	GT/ID
2	2	Formula 1 Grand Prix 2	Microprose
3	3	Z	Renegade
5	4	Theme Park	CD-ROM Classics
6	5	Duke Nukem 3D	US Gold
4	6	Championship Manager 2	Domark
–	7	Encarta 96	Microsoft
9	8	Civilization 2	Microprose
7	9	Command and Conquer	Virgin
8	10	Worms	Ocean/Team 17

### TOP TEN DISK GAMES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
1	1	Aladdin	Virgin
2	2	Jungle Book	Virgin
5	3	Return of Arcade	Microsoft
4	4	Sim Tower	Maxis
6	5	Autoroute – UK & Ireland	Microsoft
3	6	Best of Windows Entert.	Microsoft
7	7	Mavis Beacon 2 (UK Edit.)	Mindscape
–	8	Premier Manager 3 Deluxe	Gremlin Interactive
–	9	First Steps	Mindscape
9	10	Worms	Ocean/Team 17

**Age ratings:** We have assigned viewing suitability ratings for each game. U = Universal; PG = Parental Guidance; 15 = suitable for viewing by 15-year-olds and above; 18 = suitable for viewing by 18-year-olds and above.

18

15

PG

U



Figures for both charts from Chart Track Ltd – week ending 5.10.96