

neak Peek: Rebel Assault

by Tuncer Deniz

NOTE: Screen shots and information presented in this article are based on a pre-release version of Rebel Assault and are subject to change before final release. This article is not a review.

It's no secret that Americans have had a love affair with the Star Wars saga since the first movie was released in the late 1970s. And even though its been over a decade since the last Star Wars movie was released, we still seem to be fascinated by the movies, the special effects, and the heroic characters. Recently, interest in Star Wars has once again been gaining monumental strength with computer games like X-Wing and Rebel Assault for PC-compatibles and the recent announcement that George Lucas, father of the Star Wars trilogy, is working on the next Star Wars movie. Good news for everyone, but let's face it, Mac users have been left out of the picture with Star Wars games like X-Wing and Rebel Assault, until now....

LucasArts officially announced Rebel Assault for the Macintosh at the Consumer Electronic Show in Las Vegas this past January. This fast-paced arcade game takes full advantage of the CD-ROM platform with over 400 megabytes of breathtaking 3D graphics, full screen computer-generated animation, actual movie footage from "Star Wars," and dramatic voice-overs.

t's Not A Flight Simulator. If you're looking for an X-Wing type game, you'll have to look elsewhere. Rebel Assault is in no way related to LucasArts' X-Wing and it is definitely not a flight simulator. The game is, however, a cinematic arcade game composed of a series of 15 chapters. Each chapter consists of a couple or more "missions" you must accomplish in order to move on to the next chapter. While most of the chapters are straight forward "point and shoot" missions, a few chapters require flight and maneuvering skills.

Rebel Yell. In Rebel Assault, players step into the shoes of Rookie One, an aspiring Rebel fighter pilot. Before climbing into the cockpit, players have the option of making Rookie One male or female. So, for example, if you chose to be a female the character's voice and physique change accordingly. Players also have the option of choosing a difficulty level between hard, medium, and easy.

When you begin the game, movie-like cut scenes help develop the plot using video clips taken from the first two Star Wars movies and custom made computer-generated animations. The end of a cut scene places you at the beginning of your mission. The beginning chapter puts the rookie through basic flight training which consists of a ride through Beggar's Canyon on Tatooine. Here players must cautiously maneuver their T16 Skyhopper through a maze-like canyon.

After basic training, the real action begins. In the chapters to follow, players must aim, maneuver, and blast their way through missions that involve destroying a Star Destroyer, chasing TIE fighters through a treacherous asteroid field, blasting through a Rebel base overtaken by stormtroopers, and a shoot-out with Imperial Walkers. The player's final

mission involves a trench run on the Death Star in an X-Wing starfighter.

Gameplay. As stated before, Rebel Assault is not a flight simulator but there are scenes where you have to maneuver your ship through obstacles. This is achieved by using a blend of traditional animation and video clips. As you move your mouse or joystick to control the vehicle, you are allowed minimal movement with which to dodge or fly through the obstacles. You can't, however, control the flight path. In other missions, the flight path is pre-recorded and your goal instead is to use your controller to aim and shoot at targets.

Overall, game play is challenging, exciting, and sometimes very frustrating. Some missions are nearly impossible to complete without some degree of luck (or a cheater program). Luckily, if you fail the mission the first time you are given the chance to re-try it. However, the game does not offer a disk-based save-game feature. Instead, the player is given a passcode for the next chapter at the end of the current chapter. So, when you return to the game at a later date, all you'll need to do is enter a passcode to start the next chapter.

Graphics. The graphics in Rebel Assault are impressive and surprisingly smooth. An innovative streaming mechanism allows Rebel Assault to be accessed directly from the CD-ROM without compromising gameplay speed. The beautifully rendered cut scenes are wonderfully detailed and just a joy to sit back and watch. Once the action begins, the full screen graphics remain smooth and fluid. It is safe to say that Rebel Assault contains some of the best graphics and animation ever created in a computer game.

[se The Force...](#) With ultra-realistic graphics, visually breathtaking interactive scenes, and smooth animation, Rebel Assault stands to deliver a visual feast unlike one we've ever seen on the Macintosh. Rebel Assault will no doubt be a winner when it hits the stores this Spring. Maybe now Macintosh gamers will be satisfied with Rebel Assault and stop their complaining about X-Wing not being on the Mac, but I doubt it. After all, Macintosh fanatics demand the best and LucasArts has at least delivered part of their all-star PC game line-up to us. But who knows, maybe one day, one day, we'll see X-Wing on the Mac. Hopefully it won't be in a long time, in a galaxy far, far away.....