MG: 1994 Game of the Year Awards
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Another year has past and it is once again time to present our picks for this year's games of the year. This past year proved to be yet another solid year for Macintosh games, with more titles coming to the Mac then ever. Nineteen-Ninety Four saw a flurry of CD-ROM and arcade games as well as joysticks for the Macintosh. Notably absent, however, were role-playing games and sports games (no surprise there). Hopefully that'll change in 1995, which looks to be an extremely promising year with titles like Super Wing Commander, DOOM II, and X-Wing on the way.

But without further ado, here are our picks for the best games of 1994.

Arcade/Action Game of the Year - Flashback

If there's one category that is overflowing with titles, it's arcade games. Their simplistic yet fast-paced style of play have universal appeal for people of all ages. One of our runner ups, PegLeg from Changeling Software is a perfect example. My first impressions of PegLeg were mixed but I soon found myself playing it for hours on end. Although the game is similar to many classic arcade games, it is the mix of these classic arcade elements that make PegLeg such a wonderful game.

Our other runner up in this category is Prince of Persia 2 by Broderbund Software. Like the original, Prince of Persia 2 once again immerses the player in a fight against good and evil, and more importantly, love against hate. Prince of Persia 2 had all the elements to be our pick for this year's game of the year, like excellent gameplay, music, beautiful art and scenery but in the end we just couldn't forgive Broderbund for cutting corners. Unlike the original Prince, PoP 2 runs at a maximum size of 512 X 384 (PoP 1 ran at 640 X 480). We were also troubled by the slower animation (than the original) and the silly copy protection. Almost, but not quite.

Our award for Arcade Game of the Year goes to Flashback by MacPlay. Similar in style to Out of this World (Flashback is sort of a sequel to OoTW) but with finesse and strong gameplay of Prince of Persia, Flashback is the quintessential action-arcade game that captures the essence of what a Macintosh game should be like. In short, Flashback features incredibly fluid rotoscoped characters, stunning cinematic animated sequences, and engaging

gameplay. We would be remiss to mention that Flashback was ported over to the Macintosh by Presage Software. Yet another outstanding example of how ports should be done on the Mac. In other words, right!

We originally had planned to make this award the Role-Playing Game of the Year category but, frankly, we didn't find any role-playing games worthy of being honored. Correction, we could find ANY role-playing games on the Mac, period. Instead, we decided to substitute the Role-Playing category with the Puzzle/Brain category.

Our award in this category goes to Troubled Souls from Varcon Systems, a   wonderful gothic experience from the mind of Randy Reddig, a 17-year-old programmer. Despite its simple concept, the game becomes engrossingly addictive as you try to form loops from an on-coming barrage of bones. The art alone is nothing short of spectacular. Coupled with an innovative interface, lively music, and feverish gameplay, Troubled Souls stands out among wanna-be brain games.

[dventure Game of the Year - Marathon](#)

Last year Pathways Into Darkness ran away with this award. With the proud distinction of being the first texture-mapped 3D game on the Mac, Pathways proved that the Macintosh was no slouch in 3D gaming. But with increasing competition coming from the like of Sensory Overload and Wolfenstein 3D, the question was whether Bungie could do it again.

The answer is a resounding yes. Despite given the task of being the most anticipated product of 1994, Marathon lived up and even surpassed most of people's expectations when it was released in December. Marathon picks up where Pathways left off, with even better graphics, more intense gameplay, a more engrossing plot, and extremely exciting network play. Bungie Software has once again redefined the meaning of state of the art gaming on the Macintosh. Marathon simply rules! Be sure to see the review of Marathon later in this issue.

ports Game of the Year - Links Pro
This category should really be renamed Golf Game of the Year since it seems the only sports games we ever see on the Mac are of the golf genre. Sorry but PowerPoker just doesn't fit this category. But that's not to say that golf games aren't worthy of honor in this category. Quite the contrary.

Links Pro from Access Software is our pick for Sports Game of the Year. Originally released for the PC/MS-DOS platform a few years back, Links Pro was ported to the Macintosh by the venerable Mark Adams in 1994. The result is a golf game that's even better than its sister MS-DOS counterpart. In fact, it is the best port from an MS-DOS to Mac platform we've ever seen. The game's features include outstanding graphics, realistic gameplay, and a total Macintosh interface, just to name a few. If you've been looking for an outstanding golf game for your Mac, stop looking, Links Pro is it!

[light Simulator of the Year - Out of the Sun](#)
In 1994 Domark Software dominated the Macintosh Flight Simulator market with 2 releases, Flying Nightmares and subsequently, Out of the Sun, our pick in this category. Out of the Sun improves on Flying Nightmares with even better graphics, gameplay, and a totally revamped (and wonderfully done) interface. Despite a somewhat shaky release, Domark's quickly released a 1.1 update that improved on some speed problems and bugs, showing a commitment to the needs of its customers. The end result is a game that is fun yet challenging.

[D-ROM Game of the Year - Rebel Assault](#)
While most of the talk in 1994 surrounded MYST (our 1993 winner in this category), Rebel Assault caught the fancy of many when it was released in August. Although the initial release had some bugs, LucasArts did a great job of squashing them with a number of updates. We were especially pleased when a PowerMac version was released a few months later.

The game itself features outstanding cinematic cut scenes and breath-taking arcade sequences. We'll admit that Rebel Assault might not have the BEST graphics on CD-ROM (keep in mind the graphics had to be downgraded in order for it to run off the CD-ROM), but its arcade element was downright fun, which is what matters in the end. Its only drawback, in our opinion, is that it is often hard to control your ship correctly, but with some practice (and a good joystick) it becomes much easier.

trategy/War Game of the Year - TacOps

It was not a banner year for Macintosh Strategy and Wargame titles. While it seemed grim for a while, all was not lost. Each of three established companies rewarded the faithful with solid products, and a complete unknown released a game which quickly developed a following that is now comparable to addition.

Strategic Simulation Group rewarded their fans with Carriers at War 2 (CAW2). Improving on the original design, and fixing several minor bugs, CAW2 boasted a challenging AI and some excellent hypothetical scenarios. The game was hampered by some dated graphics (essentially unchanged from the original release) and the inability to design scenarios from scratch. Eventually a "translator" was released, which imported scenarios designed by the DOS only "Construction Kit," but many Mac players still felt like second class citizens.

ATOMIC developed a relationship with Avalon Hill, and the first fruit of their cooperation was The World at War: Operation Crusader (OC). This very detailed simulation of one of the most

dramatic battles in North Africa was quickly dubbed by many players as "the game that V for Victory should have been." At last, OC delivered on the promise held out by Utah Beach, the first game released by ATOMIC. Integrating sophisticated rules for supply, leadership, air power, and armored combat in a visually stunning package, OC seemed ready to take the genre by storm. Yet, its conquest would be less than total. The most nagging detractor was the innovative PBE-mail system (2 turns per message), which failed to work consistently. Despite this shortcoming, OC certainly raised the ante for all strategy wargames to come.

It is not very often that a company will have a best seller with their first release. Yet Arsenal's TacOps proved the odds makers wrong. A simulation of modern tactical mechanized combat, Major Holdridge's game set the new standard for wargaming detail and sophistication. This is a game that is "lean" on graphics, but very elaborate on game play. Despite the steep learning curve, TacOps became a runaway hit. All this was made possible by the Major's customer support, which absolutely without equal in the present gaming community. In short order, TacOps released three face-lifts, which incorporated numerous suggestions and minor fixes. Recently, Arsenal released a scenario disk, which adds new maps and fulfills the request of many players by adding scenarios from Desert Storm. The Major and TacOps validate an old maxim: if you build a good product and service your customers, they will come. TacOps is unquestionably the Strategy/Wargame of the Year!

etwork Game of the Year - Marathon
We had mixed feelings about awarding a single game two awards this year but we simply couldn't ignore the fact that Marathon was the best network game we've played this year, maybe ever. Up to 8 people can play networked in Marathon where the object is to kill or be

killed. Simply pointing and firing won't win you many games. Getting good at net Marathon involves quick reflexes, excellent hand-eye coordination, and a lot of bravado.

A lot of kudos also go out to Bungie for including an extra network serial number in every Marathon box so two people can play net Marathon with just one copy. Bungie went even further by offering additional network serial numbers at a substantially low price. Although the first release version does not work with Apple Remote Access, Bungie will soon release patch that will allow people to play over ARA.

[ame Peripheral of the Year - FlightStick Pro](#)
A flurry of game peripherals for the Macintosh appeared in the Macintosh game market this year. ThrustMaster Inc released their popular ThrustMaster controls while up and coming MicroQue unleashed 3 products including the Que Stick I and II, and the QuePad. But the winner in this category goes to the FlightStick Pro from CH Products. The FlightStick Pro is the right combination that provides excellent gaming for not only flight sims but arcade and other types of games as well. Its sturdiness and ease of use make it the right joystick for everyone.

[hareware Game of the Year - Wolfenstein 3D](#)
It was yet another great year for shareware with titles like Chiral, Prince of Destruction, System's Twilight, and Asterax enjoying immense popularity. Our winner, however, is MacPlay's Wolfenstein 3D. Originally released a few years ago as shareware for PC/MS-DOS, Wolfenstein 3D became an instant success when it appeared on the Macintosh in October. For just $14.95 people could order the 2nd Encounter which contained a total of 30 levels.