y Tuncer Deniz

Sir-Tech (800/447-1230) is finally coming back to the Mac market with Wizardry Gold, a complete re-engineering of Crusaders of the Dark Savant, the epic story of a planet on the brink of war. In the game, the fate of the world lies in your hands, and your mission is to find the Astral Dominae, a mystical artifact that holds the secret of life. But you'll need to be careful, you're not the only one after the Astral Dominae. The world is populated with creatures of every complexion. While some will beat you to the price, others will be you to a pulp.

The game will feature high-res graphics, ear-blasting audio effects, full-frame animation, multiple endings, and digitized speech. Look for Wizardry Gold in the spring.

Meanwhile, the folks at Activision (310/473-9200) are readying some new Mac titles. Muppet Treasure Island incorporates cutting-edge techniques primarily used in feature film and television production. Offering children the opportunity to interact in a new way with the legendary Muppets, the game blends live-action footage with highly-stylized 3-D backgrounds. More than 45 hand-drawn backgrounds were created and over two hours of video footage was shot to let children join their favorite Muppet characters in the colorful world of high adventure, intrigue and friendship.

The game stars Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy, Tim Curry, and scores of other popular Muppet characters. The game features over 20 engaging puzzles and activities providing endless hours of interactive play.

Also in the works from Activision is The Elk Moon Murder, the first in a series of role-playing mysteries. The game unfolds as shock and horror sweep through the Southwest town of Santa Fe with the news of a brutal murder. As a rookie detective, the player races against the clock to uncover a sinister conspiracy before another life is lost. To solve the mysterious crime, the player must interview potential suspects, visit the crime scene, gather forensic evidence and frequent local watering holes searching for clues and incriminating evidence. Players must use concentration, memory, knowledge, and deductive reasoning to narrow down suspects and make an arrest within a specific period of time or face serious consequences.

And finally, IMG has learned that Activision is finally working on a Mac conversion of their immensely popular title, MechWarrior II. Featuring incredible high-res graphics and high powered gameplay, Mech Warrior II is expected to ship in early Fall. Other Activision titles like Pitfall: The Mayan Adventure and Zork Nemesis are also in the works.

MacPlay (800/4MACPLAY)has a slew of new Mac titles in the pipeline including Tommy: The Interactive Adventure, Descent II, AD&D Blood & Magic, and Star Trek: Judgment Rites.

Tommy is an interactive non-linear journey through all of Tommy's incarnations, from the original rock-opera to the Broadway stage. With the touch of a finger a wealth of material chronicling Tommy is brought to life through interviews, photographic images, video clips, and so on. The title provides personal interviews with the legendary Pete Townsend and other members of the band, The Who. Tommy should be available in March of 1996.

Riding on the heels of Descent is Descent II for the Macintosh. Scheduled to ship in April or May, the sequel promises to be bigger, faster, and louder. The game will feature 30 new levels that take you through missions on four separate plants and culminates in the enemies' mothership. Some of the new bad guys include intelligent robots that adjust to the player's strategy, hunt the player down and suck up the player's energy supply. In addition to more firepower, an automated scout robot has been added to aid the player through the twisting, turning worlds of Descent II. There's even a "thief bot" that insures even more devious survival strategies.

D&D Blood & Magic is set in the Forgotten Realms world, where the battle between good and evil is played out with a wide range of sinister characters and ever-changing scenarios. In the game, the player must utilize 28 legendary characters to aid his conquest in the adventure. A unique feature allows the player to advance the strength of his army from mere Acolytes to powerful Warriors. Epic battles, character transformation and the exploration of new realms combine to create a continuing challenge in the race to achieve

victory by capturing the enemies' homeland. Look for this title in the first quarter of 1996.

As previously announced in a past issue of IMG, CH Products will be releasing this the CH Pedals, Pro Throttle, and Virtual Pilot Pro this year. At Macworld Expo, CH said it will also be shipping their F-16 Fighterstick for the Mac in the second quarter of '96. With the look and feel of a real F-16 jet stick, the F-16 Fighterstick features 4 eight-way switches, three push buttons, and a trigger. Combined with the upcoming Pro Throttle, gamers will have access to 36 programmable functions on the Fighterstick and 24 on the throttle. The stick will come with pre-programmed game settings for players who prefer not to have to program the stick.

 new start-up called Deilution will be introducing a hot, new first person 3-D action game called Catalyst, sometime in the early summer. This virtual reality game not only supports crouching, jump, climbing, crawling, it even allows you to fly, both for the player and for the enemies, who can hide in water, lava, walls, and ceilings.

The game will come loaded with 30 or so levels. Active locks and puzzles in each level provide challenging game play for gamers. Catalyst is not a simple see-them-kill-them 3D

game, it requires skills and logic to complete the game. The game will also feature 20 or so types of offensive weapons and 10 or more defensive weapons.

atalyst will also feature network and modem play and has been optimized for networks with low bandwidth, allowing players to play over a 14.4K modem. Designed around full object-oriented code, net play is not limited to 4 or 8 players. Catalyst has been tested on LANs of over 25 CPUs. It even allows players to join or leave at any time during game play.

Other innovative features include support for 16-bit color, PlainTalk technology, levels with fully-rendered 3D bridges, curves, and corridors, rendered video during game play by using features on the heads-up display, and the ability of users to provide their own graphics, sounds, music and levels for the game for an experience
other than that which the default game provides.

Look for a sneak preview of Catalyst in an upcoming issue of IMG.

Warcraft fans will be happy to find out that the sequel, Warcraft II, is in the works. Scheduled to ship in the fall, the game will feature a variety of enhancements including tactical combat over land, sea, and air. You'll also be able to play against your Mac and PC buddies over head-to-head network play. The artificial intelligence will also be vastly improved and there'll be a multitude of new units like dragons, submarines Elven archers, gryphons, battleships, zeppelins, and death knights.

Warcraft II is the continuation of the ruthless clash between the Orc and Human civilizations. After the long and bloody war in the kingdom of Azeroth, the Humans ventured across the

Great Sea to escape the cruelty of the Orcish hordes and rebuild their empire. Eager to engage in battle again, the Orcish army constructed sea vessels and summoned flying creatures to follow the Humans and attack their coastal encampment.

As the commander of either the Orc or Human forces, players must successfully construct and rule their medieval empire while engaging in real-time tactical warfare over land, sea and air. The game allows players to compete in a one-player mode by completing a series of integrated scenarios or play head-to-head against opponents using the game's multiplayer option. The sequel offers several new features including combined-arms combat on land, sea and air; artificial intelligence that learns, adapts and responds to players' actions; and a multitude of new units such as dragons, submarines, Elven archers, gryphons, battleships, zeppelins and death knights.   The game also includes a new strategic "fog of war" feature which allows players to only see activity within their units' line of sight.

New World Computing is working on a cool new game called Chaos Overlords. The governments of the world are bankrupt and private corporations now run the show. To keep the peace and maintain order a ban has been placed on alcohol, cigarettes, smut, drugs, guns, music, dancing, and just about everything else. The world as we know it is gone, replaced by oppression and despair. The present: 2050 A.D. Mobs of enraged people, fed up with being under the government's thumb, are turning cities everywhere into playgrounds for mass brutality. Chaos is running rampant with gangland killings, looting, and extortion.

s a Chaos Overlord, the city lies before you like a lamb before the kill. The thrill of absolute control and domination makes you one of the most ruthless overlords in the city. However, there are five other Overlords trying to capture the city which is rightfully yours. To remain in

power utilize your mercenary gangs to run the black market, bribe the cops, expand your influence, extort money, and eliminate anybody who gets in your way. Before long, the fools will realize just who runs the show around here.

Chaos Overlords is a strategic playground. With multiple game options and extensive "replayability", Chaos Overlords is sure to please. The game was created with the feel of a classic "expand and conquer" board game and a point-n-click easy to use interface. Chaos includes excellent high res graphics capitalizing on "DirectDraw" technology, multi-player capability for up to six players, and more options than you can shake a stick at.

New World is also working on Emire II: The Art of War, the latest chapter in the battle-proven Empire series. Empire II does not limit you to rehashing the same famous battle over and over again. It challenges you to develop and then apply philosophies and tactics in ultra-realistic scenarios.

Put your warfaring skills to the ultimate challenge with Empire II: The Art of War. Tactical skills are put to the test as you experiment with various types of technology, equip troops with primitive and advanced weaponry, supply lines, account for weather conditions, and confront such personnel issues as fatigue and low morale. Empire II also supports Network and Modem.

And finally, New World is looking to release Heroes of Might and Magic soon. It creates a medieval world filled with enchanting landscapes to discover and conquer and daunting enemies to overcome. Three warlords have risen to power and players must summon their heroes and lead their armies to victory. Through strategic use of resource management and battle savvy, players must achieve world domination. Heroes of Might and Magic pits players against up to three computer controlled warlords. Each warlord will recruit, hire and cajole numerous "Heroes" to lead their armies to victory in this fast paced strategy game.

Heroes provides countless hours of game play. The difficulty level is customizable, allowing players to progressively tailor the game as they improve. Heroes also features easy-to-understand interface and intelligent computer opponents that learn from their mistakes and make battle management a challenge. Further enhancing the game experience are fully rendered animation SVGA graphics and environmental sounds and sound effects.

One of the most popular games of 1995 on the IBM compatible platform is coming to the Mac. Command & Conquer, developed by Westwood Studios, plans a fall release of this incredible strategy warfare game.

I must confess that C&C was my favorite game of 1995. Unlike most strategic games that use a top-down view, C&C features a 3/4 view similar to SimCity 2000. But that's where the similarities end. The game is an action packed game. Electronic assaults and guerilla warfare are the weapons of choice in an all-out race for global control. You can choose to be the humanistic Global Defense Initiative or bring the world to its knees with the Brotherhood of Nod.

Your mission is to take control of the opposing base in a particular sector of the world. You usually start out each mission with a few troops and tanks. Once you set up base, you'll need to build a nuclear reactor, barracks (to develop more troops), and a Tiberium factory (to raise cash to build troops, tanks, helicopters, etc). When you've amassed a large contingent, it's time to go about your mission and infiltrate the enemies' base.

Movement in the game is simple. Just click on a grenader, tank, hum-vee, or other unit and

point with your mouse to the destination you want him to go. Or if you want that unit to attack something, click on your unit and then the enemy troop or tank. He'll usually respond with a, "Got it" or "I'm on it." By clicking and dragging your mouse over a large area you can select all your troops and tell them to attack something making massive troop movements easy and manageable.

But where the game really shines are the graphics and animation of the cars, tanks, troops, etc. For example, when troops are fired upon, they'll drop to the ground and crawl their way to the target. When they have nothing to do, you can often catch them cleaning their rocket launchers or taking in a few push-ups. This game is solid all around.

Shipping on two CDs (when you finish playing the GDI on disc one, you can play the NOD on disc two), C&C also features network and modem play so you can do battle with friends and foes. I can't wait...

ther Cool Stuff
In addition to Hexen, GT Interactive will soon be releasing Mortal Kombat 3 for the Mac (yes!). The portal is open...and Shao Khan will finally have his revenge on Earth. You must pull out all the stops and join the Kombatants as you rip into the most action-packed confrontation yet. Eight new characters join the fray on 12 new 3D rendered backgrounds. Secret moves, encryption "Kodes" and a slew of wild new "Alities" put you in command as never before.

Also look for Thrustmaster to shore up their joystick line up in the near future. Rumor has it

Thrustmaster will soon be releasing the Thrustmaster Pro, F-16 Flight Control System, and the Formula T-2 steering wheel (right around the time Indy Car Racing II is released for the Mac).

More Marathon

We'll finish up this report with some news from Bungie. IMG has just learned that Bungie Software plans on releasing Marathon Infinity in the early summer. This stand-alone product is based on the Marathon 2 world, and consists of three elements crucial to extending the player's enjoyment of Marathon ad infinitum.

First, the saga continues. Marathon Infinity will elaborate the Marathon story, laying bare many of the mysteries raised in the first two games about Durandal, Tycho and the player. Either a single player or a networked group can play through the story and of course the game will also include maps designed specifically for multiplayer network combat. Never-before-used enhancements will free the player from the strict linearity of previous games, and different physics models will be applicable to consecutive levels, making the environment even more unpredictable and demanding.

Second, the tools. Bungie's Lab will unleash the Map Editor that was used to create the Marathon experience. Bungie's powerful and easy-to-use Map Editor will revolutionize the already active creation and distribution of maps online by Marathon players. The Editor features a fully-integrated texture mode so mapmakers can walk through their blank levels, painting textures on surfaces at will, and a straightforward point-and-click lightsource tool. Also included will be a Physics Editor and Shape and Sound Installers which allow users to customize the very nature of the Marathon world to their taste.

Third, the Marathon 2 : Durandal Strategy Guide. Written by yours truly, Tuncer Deniz, the Strategy Guide gives the player not only instructions for completing Marathon 2: Durandal, but affords a glimpse into the way that Bungie's level designers produce outstanding levels. Revealing floorplans, secret rooms, items and traps, the Strategy Guide will be an invaluable resource for understanding Marathon 2.