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ot too long ago, all the really cool action games came branded with the dreaded "PC" designation. While there were some nifty creations to tie us Mac users over, many were starving for a title that would blast its way onto the Macintosh gaming scene. Then came along Marathon and the famine was lifted. Mac gamers feasted on this delectable title, relishing it as something the Mac gaming community could call its own. Finally, we had something to hold our own against all the PC ninnies. But hark, could that be Marathon 2 coming off of computer retailer's delivery trucks? Behold, Marathon 2 makes its grand entrance into the holiday season.

#### [A Brief Synopsis](#)

After taking care of business on the starship Marathon, you are placed in a stasis where time stands still. After 17 years in this comatose state, Durandal, a computer capable of sentient thoughts, releases you from your beauty nap. Apparently, Durandal has decided that you should be the one to save the world from the alien race known as the Pfhor. Landing on the planet of Lh'owon, you set out to uncover secrets of a lost clan belonging to one of the planet's ancient races. Naturally, you know nothing, except for one thing: your reflexes are the only thing that'll keep you alive and maybe, just maybe, when it's all over, you'll figure out just who or what you were dealing with.

#### [The Good](#)

Okay, so you are on this weird planet that you know virtually nothing about, but at least you're not alone. Humans (or fondly known as "Bobs" by original Marathon veterans) will drop in from time to time to help you in your mission. Besides screaming in agony as they get crushed by the enemy, these guys also elicit cries of victory and the occasional curt remark as they run around with their pistols smoking. Of course, you have your own pea-shooter, the .44 Magnum Mega Class A1 standard issue, with the opportunity to pick up more destructive methods of annihilation along the way like the Zeus-Class Fusion Pistol and the new WSTE-M5 Combat Shotgun. What's that? Not enough you say? Well how about carrying one in each hand! In Marathon 2, you get the enviable chance to feel high and mighty by romping around with a WSTE-M5 in both hands! Life is good.

Marathon 2 comes replete with superb graphics. After dazzling folks with a fully texturized gaming environment in the original title, Marathon 2 surpasses its predecessor with improved graphics. In the original Marathon, the game took place in the confines of the starship Marathon, the sequel broadens the experience by setting the game on a planet. What does this mean? Well, not only will you revel in the experience indoors and outdoors, you'll also get the chance to explore and overcome the challenges underwater! Those shouting "aww, how hard can it be" will be humbled as all projectile weapons are rendered useless while underwater. This fact leads to learning some fancy swimming evasive actions or else engaging in fistcuffs with water demons who are more than willing to rip you to shreds.

Accompanying all the action is a myriad of impressive ambient sounds. From the howling of the wind to the lullaby of water gently lapping, the sounds within the game add another eerie dimension of realism to this fictional game set on this fictional planet. Although an

argument could be made that an added soundtrack would enhance the game, the ambient sounds represent an excellent alternative.

### Play It Again...

Naturally, Marathon 2 can be played over a network with up to seven other people. Much like other games conducted over a network, the action is fast and furious, all the while testing your strategic skills and lightning reflexes. Those with dreams of becoming a commando will be able to live out their fantasies over the network as they pursue and hunt their enemies. Do whatever it takes: let the cat out, tell your mom you're studying, pay the neighbors to walk your dog, extend the curfew for the kids, call in sick, give the wife the charge card, give your husband basketball tickets, or whatever. You've got to engage yourself in a network game. It's truly worth the effort. And with the game's ability to record and play back a game session, players wishing to rub it in can replay those last shining moments of victory as they take out their (former) friends, bosses, pets, spouses, etc.

### Not Again

While all the positive elements from the original Marathon carried over to the sequel, so did the sole ailing save feature. Various specially marked terminals sprinkled about within the game are the only means of saving a game. This can be quite annoying for one single reason: players want to get on with the game and not have to backtrack to the terminal to save. When playing on large and extensive levels, this problem is grossly magnified.

Despite the thorny save feature, Marathon 2 is a welcome sight. With familiar enemies from the original (and a few new surprises), a slew of impressive weaponry, improved graphics, disarming ambient sounds, and heated network play, Marathon 2 will prove to be a proud addition to any Mac Gamer's shelf.

### Pros

- Superb graphics
- Ground and underwater environments
- Excellent sound effects
- Network play
- Ability to save and replay films of previous game sessions

### Cons

- Save feature frustrating at times

### Publisher Info

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