NASCAR RACING, NASCAR 2

System: PC, Macintosh, PSX

Inaugurated in 1995, Sierra's award-winning NASCAR racing series has set the standard for racing simulations. The realistic graphics, intuitive AI, and authentic NASCAR tracks and drivers bring the intricacies of the NASCAR world home.

Yeah, I was a NASCAR naysayer. I mean how much fun is there in racing around an oval track? There's definitely not much enjoyment, unless you can enter the racing world that is created in this game. The key to the game is learning the performance features of your car and adjusting them to meet the specifications of the tracks. Yes, they are all oval, but each of the 16 tracks has distinctive attributes: Make precision adjustments to your car's tire pressure, gear ratios, air foils and camber to get the extra edge on the competition. The computer versions of the game even have an editor to modify your car's paint job. If this all seems like too much to handle, take a ride on the tutorial courses, where many of the game's nuances are explained.

While the NASCAR 2 (PC) and NASCAR Racing (Mac) are topnotch racing sims and virtually the same, I recommend a rental (as I do with most console games) of the mediocre PlayStation version. However, if you know of Jeff Gordon or can remember Richard Petty's car number, this could be the game for you. Otherwise, only strict simulation fans need apply.--Paul Anderson