ave Wareing

Dave Waring is the author of Swoop, an action packed arcade game the Ambrosia recently agreed to support and distribute. Ambrosia is proud to add this thoroughbred action game to its stable of high action shareware.

mbrosia Times: Where do you live, what is it like?

Dave Wareing: I live in a suburb of Adelaide, South Australia. It's a fantastic place. We live near the beach and it's great being able to go for a dip on hot summer mornings. Adelaide is a pretty low key sort of place as far as cities go. Population of about a million. Great weather.

Ambrosia Times: Wow, sounds a lot different than the frozen landscape of upstate New York where we are. How long have you been programming?

Dave Wareing: nostalgia mode on I've been "into" computers and video games for as long as I can remember. My first console was a dedicated Pong box. Various decks followed, including an Atari 2600, an Intellivision (great graphics, lousy controllers) and a Colecovision (good Donkey Kong cart). My first experience with any programming was with BASIC (of course) on an Atari 600XL. Later came an Amiga 500 and various other toy computers. Geekdom started early in my life. :-)

I was introduced to the Mac in 1990. My new job as a company drone had plenty of the beige boxes. I took an instant liking to them. After a few years of stuffing around on the Amiga, the Mac seemed like a godsend. One word summed it up — professionalism. Everything worked properly and it was well thought out. Like many others, I started with HyperCard (a wonderful product) and went with it for as long as I could. After a while I realized that more powerful tools were needed. I printed out most of SpInside Mac on a laser at work (that's a lot of pages!) and took them home at night to study them along with an SE on loan.

Ambrosia Times: You certainly have a lot of experience. Is it your "day" job, if not what line of work are you in?

Dave Wareing: Well it couldn't be called a "day" job but it's definitely full time and then some. :-) After leaving the company a few years ago, my wife Sheryn and I decided to take a risk and start up our own programming shop. We invested in an LC (fairly new and expensive at the time) and a bunch of software and got to work...

Ambrosia Times: Sometimes you have to take risks to reach your dreams. What have you worked on besides Swoop? Was Swoop the hardest thing that you have done?

Dave Wareing: Before Swoop I had been doing multimedia work. Kiosk/information-booth type of stuff. The projects would be created in products such as HyperCard, SuperCard and Director, and then I would rewrite the whole lot from scratch in C. This allowed us to escape the limitations of traditional authoring programs and let us introduce fast special effects and speeds which are impossible in something like Director.

Swoop came about as a fairly natural consequence of the multimedia work. Much of that work revolved around speed issues and real-time graphical feedback, which is pretty much the basis of your average arcade game.

Was Swoop hard? Yep. But the learning curve became more manageable after a while. Persistence is 90% of writing a game I think.

Ambrosia Times: You must have a good handle on real-time graphical feedback, Swoop is real smooth. What sort of system are you running and what is attached?

Dave Wareing: I've got an LC520 on the desk with a 100Mb external drive. Time for an upgrade methinks, but it has been a good development machine with some nice features. I wouldn't mind a Quadra 630 or a next generation PowerMac. I'm hoping that Apple will continue with some of the 630's video features in future Macs and expand them somewhat.

Ambrosia Times: What do you consider your wisest Mac purchase?

Dave Wareing: Without a doubt, my first modem. It was slow (2400bps) but the most useful thing I've bought. I didn't have much money in the beginning with which to subscribe to all the developer programs or buy thick textbooks, so I read the newsgroup comp.sys.mac.programmer religiously and grabbed anything and everything I could from other Internet resources such as FTP sites. I did all my learning on a shoestring budget, on the original LC with a whopping 40Mb drive. The modem and various network accounts were a superb investment.

Ambrosia Times: Our whole business revolves around the use of modems, I can see your point. Besides Swoop, what is your favorite game?

Dave Wareing: Both Marathon and Hornet are great games. I'm looking forward to some very interesting netplays in Marathon. Hornet's speed is outstanding as is the accuracy. Sadly though, I don't get much time to play these games. Tsuji's Pacman clone is still a favourite. It's good for a 5 minute game every now then I need a break from work.

Ambrosia Times: Marathon has put a huge, gaping hole in the office productivity. It is very easy to lose track of time when one is running from a maniac with a flame thrower.

What are your hopes for signing on with Ambrosia, what are you trying to achieve?

Dave Wareing: Name exposure mostly. I think shareware is a great cost effective way of advertising your services by releasing a cool product to millions of potential customers who can try the game thoroughly before buying. It's a win/win situation for all concerned. The great thing about working with Ambrosia is that I can get on with doing what I want to do — writing games.

Ambrosia Times: Well, we are certainly happy to help. Swoop is a great addition to our product base. What can Mac gamers expect from you in the future?

Dave Wareing: Definitely more games. :-) I love programming games for the Mac and seeing them come to market. The Mac games scene is exploding at the moment and I intend to be there producing quality games. There are many types of games that for various (mostly technical) reasons haven't made their way to the Mac yet. Games such as scrolling platformers and scrolling
shoot-em-ups which are very dependant upon CPU speed. The PowerMac is going to make an excellent platform for these types of games.

Ambrosia Times: We are excited about the new PowerMacs as well. A lot of people I know are closet Mac enthusiasts but have to have access to a Windows machine for work. Besides the obvious speed advantages, the PowerMacs will allow people to be more flexible. Were you familiar with Ambrosia before you signed on?

Dave Wareing: Oh absolutely. Maelstrom had made its considerable mark in

the Mac games scene well before I conceived of Swoop and Ambrosia had made quite a name for itself as the premiere Mac shareware outfit.

Ambrosia Times: Thanks for talking with us. I can not think of a better way to bring this interview to a close.