

he follow-up to Doom, Quake, will shortly be arriving on the Mac along with Duke Nukem 3D courtesy of Lion Software. Duke Nukem should arrive by the end of the year, with Quake arriving early on next year.

ith Quake currently stunning PC gamers Reality Bytes have decided to get in on the act with its new game, Dark Vengeance. Players must choose a race and profession for their character along with specialist skills, although links with traditional role-playing games end there, according to sources. The new beat 'em up will feature body parts flying and blood spurting and looks like being the Mac equivalent of Mortal Kombat. There will also be the option of network bouts of up to 31 players. The game is due towards the end of the year.

ollowing hot on the heels of Return to Zork, its sequel Zork Nemesis looks like being one of THE games for the Macintosh this Summer. Zork Nemesis requires a PowerPC processor, 680x0 Macs are not supported. A double-speed CD-ROM drive and thousands of colours are both needed as is 8Mb of free RAM, virtual memory is not supported. System 7.5.1 is required too.

The game comes on three CDs and a recommended minimum of 35Mb of disk space is required, however you can run the game on an install of just 23Mb, but the game is likely to run poorly. A maximum install of 86Mb is available - the higher the install the better the game will run.

The game is set in a desolate corner of the renowned Great Underground Empire and you must travel to five expansive and richly detailed worlds to uncover a terrible tragedy and master the ancient science of alchemy - the art of purifying lesser, gross matter into greater, more refined substances. Four of the worlds thematically correspond to the alchemical elements of earth, water, fire and air. The fifth world, an abandoned 17th century-style temple, is where you begin your journey.

To add to the atmosphere Zork Nemesis utilizes Z-Vision and marks the first time that a surround, 360 degree perspective, thousands of animations and 50 minutes of live action footage have been integrated with a pre-rendered game environment. The use of 3D sound also adds greatly to the experience.

To create the elaborate and haunting visual look of Zork Nemesis, Activision teamed with Mauro Borelli, an accomplished production designer, film director and illustrator whose movie credits include "Batman Forever", Francis Ford Coppola's "Dracula" and "The Godfather III". A classically traditional artist, Borelli's original storyboard illustrations for the game were modeled after several distinctive architectural periods.

Both the graphics and sound in Zork Nemesis are truly amazing and are the best yet seen in any

game. Navigating around the different worlds is easy, however solving some of the puzzles is not. If you are having problems you can obtain help throughout the game, however you are made to explore before too much is given away. The live action footage within the game can be rather annoying if either you don't have sufficient RAM, or have chosen one of the lower installs, especially if some of the footage is vital for your success.

Overall the game has a great amount of variety, with over 40 hours of gameplay, you're bound to be at it for ages, unless you're a seasoned Zork guru and even then it'll still take a while to complete. Zork Nemesis is an excellent adventure with great graphics, sound and gameplay making it one of the best games available on the Mac today.

Rating: 92%

echWarrior 2 is set in the year 3057 and features more than 50 battle missions that take place on a variety of worlds with many different terrains and environmental conditions. You have the option to choose between two modes - Trial of Grievance that allows the custom configuration of missions and enables a player to immediately jump into combat, or a career mode where a player joins one of two clans and advances in rank and weight class through ritualistic arena-style competition. Upon successfully completing a career path, a player achieves the status of Khan, or leader of his clan.

A minimum of a PowerPC 601 - 66MHz processor is required, non-PowerPCs are not supported. A double-speed CD-ROM drive is required along with 256 colours and System 7.5.1. It is recommended that you have 78Mb of hard disk space free, although you can install the game in 41Mb, but all the animations and movies run off the CD. There is also the option of installing all the movies and animations onto your hard disk which occupies 113Mb. You will also need 11Mb of free RAM and virtual memory is not supported. So, as you can tell MechWarrior 2 is very memory hungry, but is it all worth it?

The intro sequence is impressive and the overall presentation of the game is good. The pre-game footage all adds to the atmosphere of the game. There are a number of training exercises which you can undertake to get used to the game before you embark on an assignment. The graphics are also impressive, although the in-game graphics have been tailored, as you could expect, so the game runs faster. There are 15 different BattleMechs that you can choose from and each one is customizable. Add-on disks will be available soon to make even more BattleMechs available. You play the game from inside a virtual 3D cockpit which rocks and rolls every time you are hit. Artificial intelligence guides the enemy forces against your every move and simulates real environmental conditions such as gravity, weather, size and weight.

MechWarrior 2 features some superb visuals and sound FX, however it's very memory hungry, which cuts out a large audience. If you do have a capable Mac and you're a blast 'em up fan this game will definitely please.

Rating: 84%

he Elk Moon Murder thrusts you into the role of a detective faced with a brutal murder and a limited amount of time to find the killer. As a detective, you must visit the crime scene, interview potential suspects, gather forensic evidence and frequent local watering holes searching for clues and incriminating evidence. As the list of suspects begins to dwindle and misleading tips lead to dead ends, you must beat the clock and unravel the mystery before it is too late.

A minimum of a 68LC040 33/66MHz Mac or PowerPC processor is required. A double-speed CD-ROM drive is needed along with thousands of colours and System 7.5.1. It is recommended that you have 40Mb of hard disk space free, although you can install the game in 15Mb. The maximum installs is 60Mb. You'll need a minimum of 8Mb RAM and 8MB Virtual memory although 16Mb of built-in RAM is

recommended.

You have five days to uncover the mystery and you are given a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) to help you collect suspects and organize your findings. The game spans over two CDs and has over an hour of 'live' video footage. You can order forensic reports, take photos of evidence and scribble down notes, all of which take considerable amounts of time. A timer counts down your remaining time, visiting people and interviewing all add to the rapid depletion of the timer too. You start the game by going to Police Headquarters and from there you must proceed to the scene of the crime. After that almost every house on the Santa FE map lights up and you are given a free rein to investigate. The video footage seemed to run along smoothly, even on a modest PowerMac. You're never short of something to do and somewhere to go and you can save your progress throughout the game. You can arrange the suspects on your PDA by noting how they are connected to the victim and what may have been their motive.

The whole game is well organised and a lot of thinking is required to find out who the killer is. The Elk Moon Murder is a good game of its genre, but don't expect anything too wild.

Rating: 81%