


review: Maelstrom 1.03

Reviewed by Tuncer Deniz

Type: Asteroids Arcade Game.
Publisher: Andrew Welch/Ambrosia Software.
Shareware Fee: \$15
Requires: System 6.07 or later, 256 color/gray scale monitor.
IMG Rating: 

What Does it Mean? What the heck is a Maelstrom anyway? A Maelstrom is — 1. any large or violent whirlpool 2. a violently confused or dangerously agitated state of mind, emotion, affairs, etc. Now that you know what Maelstrom means, let's find out about the game.

Maelstrom is the creation of Andrew Welch, known by many as one of the best shareware authors in the Macintosh community. Although the author has written many shareware utility programs in the past, this is his first shareware game. While the concept of creating another asteroids-type game might not be very original, Maelstrom is none the less rather an impressive accomplishment and fun to play.

Your journey takes you to the Hormel asteroid belt that lies between Alpha Centuri and Beta Carotene. Your mission is to destroy everything in sight including asteroids, shooting comets, multipliers, and Shenobi fleet ships. Your ship is equipped with plasma cannons and a force shield that slowly loses its energy when you use it. In order to advance to the next wave you must destroy all the asteroids, but it's not as easy as it sounds. During your asteroids-killing mission, other "nasty's" will enter your domain, making your mission even more challenging. These nasty's include the steel asteroids, Shenobi autonomous (auto-what?) mines, supernovas, and vortexes. But these nasty's are rather **malicious**, so be prepared. You would think with all these **wicked** bad-guys flying around trying to destroy you, you might not have a very long career as a border recon pilot. But wait, help is on the way!

s your battle with the asteroids and bad guys rages on, some floating objects periodically show up to help you gain points and make your ship more powerful. For example, just run over an ACME supply canister and you suddenly have a substantially better ship. These ACME supply canisters can contain: shield power, retro-thrusters, long shots, triple shots, machine gun shots, or luck. To earn more bonus points, shoot a comet and multipliers. And if you're feeling at all altruistic, run over a stranded border patrol recon pilot for more points.

Shoot' em Up? Is Maelstrom just another boring shoot' em up game? The answer is a definite no! The game uses fabulously 3-D rendered graphics and has some of the neatest (and funniest) sounds I have ever heard in a game. However, you can only play Maelstrom in 256 colors or 256 greys, so owners of B&W Macs will not be able to play this game.

The game can be rather challenging but with a little practice, you'll be blowing chunks off asteroids left and right. Overall, the game is a delight to play and is well worth the \$15 the author requests for it. In fact, we were so impressed with Maelstrom, we are including it in the IMG Disk Version as the Shareware Game of the Month. This just might be the best arcade game in the shareware market. :->

Pros.

- Great 3-D rendered graphics.
- 256 colors/greys.
- Cool sounds.

Cons.

- No black and white version.
- Can get repetitive.
- Some bugs (version 1.04 will be released soon).