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1. If you find that most of the strategy games on the market today are lacking in character, keep an eye out for Jagged Alliance from Sir Tech. It' s got loads of character ... in fact, it' s got 60 of them. Mercenaries, that is. People who might join your team. And the key word in that sentence is “ might. ” But let' s start at the beginning.
2. The action all takes place on the South Atlantic island of Metavira, which was once used as a nuclear testing site. The intense radiation of those tests mutated a native tree so that the sap, while toxic, could be used in a medicine to fight a degenerative children' s disease.
3. So Metavira became a scientific research center. This mutated tree is also seedless, so it cannot be grown elsewhere. The research team is dedicated to finding the best way to refine the priceless sap while maintaining its potency.
4. Unfortunately, the entire research team does not share the idealism of its leader, Jack Richards. The laboratory and most of the rest of the island are seized by a greedy researcher, **{FLIP}** Lucas Santino. He is determined to control the precious fluid, with the help of his army of mercenaries.
5. Jack and his daughter, Brenda, decide to fight fire with fire and contact you, you mercenary you. You have connections to AIM. No, not the American Indian Movement and not the toothpaste. AIM is the Association of International Mercenaries. Yes, this is where all those great characters come in.
6. You can choose a team of up to eight mercenaries to reclaim Metavira, and you have 60 AIM members to choose from. **{FLIP}** By the way, we' re not just talking about lists of statistics here. **{FLIP}** These are 60 well developed characters, with very distinct digital speech. The voice acting in this game is one of its major bragging points.
7. The characters will have very different attitudes, even toward the idea of working with you. You will have no trouble hiring a relatively inexperienced person, but if you want an expert, you may have to wait until you' ve gotten some successes under your belt. Don' t worry about keeping a resume, they' ll be watching you.
8. This is not just a win or lose game. Its structure is non-linear, and the team you choose, combined with how well you lead them, can make for a completely different story from game to game.
9. While much of the game takes place in real time, there are also phased elements. For example, one of your men has just encountered an enemy. If the game were strictly real time, combat would start right away. But in this case, the screen freezes, this window (opens up) and the character gets instructions from you. Then time starts up again, and you' re treated to a little bloodshed.
10. When a company refers to its game as an “ interactive movie ” , they don' t usually have something like this in mind. But with the beautiful cinematics, like this one, the intriguing plot, and the well-defined characters, Jagged Alliance may come closer than anything else to being both highly interactive and filmic. This tropical adventure should be available to heat things up this winter.

Summary

Sir Tech' s Jagged Alliance lets the player control a team of up to eight mercenaries in a mission to reclaim a tropical island from a power-hungry research scientist. The characters are very detailed and each speaks in a distinctive digital voice, with a distinct attitude. The non-linear structure allows for a different game every time. Jagged Alliance will be available this winter.

Also Try

Dune 2: Battle for Arrakis, X-COM, Merchant Prince

Game Specs

OS	Enhanced CD-ROM and MS-DOS 3.5" High Density w/optional speech pack
<i>Required</i>	IBM & 100% compat, 80386/33 or better, Mouse 4 MB RAM, 15 MB free Hard Disk space
<i>Graphics</i>	256 Color VGA
<i>Music</i>	AdLib Gold, SoundBlaster/Pro/16/AWE32, Pro Audio Spectrum, Gravis Ultrasound, Roland MT-32, LAPC-1, MPU401-interface General MIDI
<i>Digitized speech</i>	above
<i>Recommended</i>	80486/33 or better, 8 MB RAM