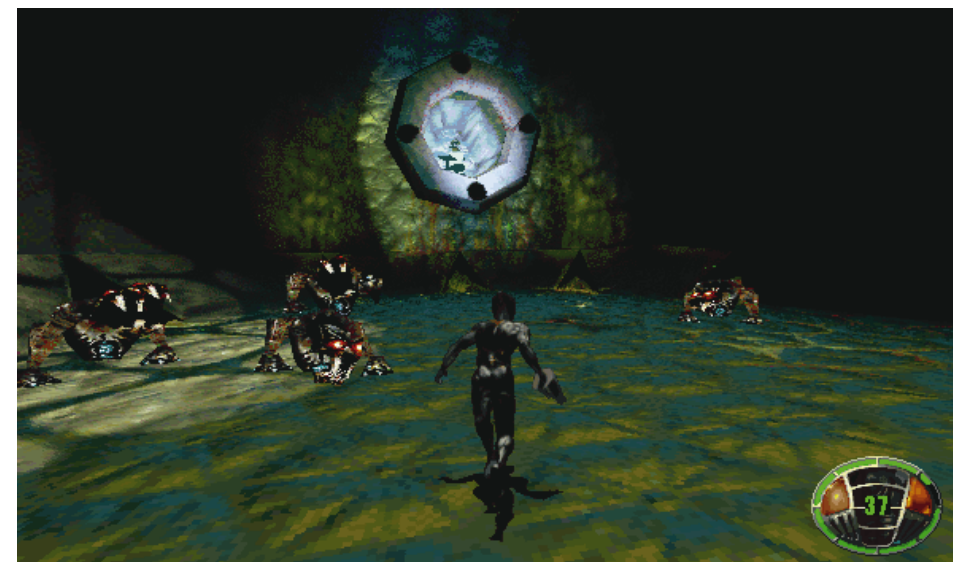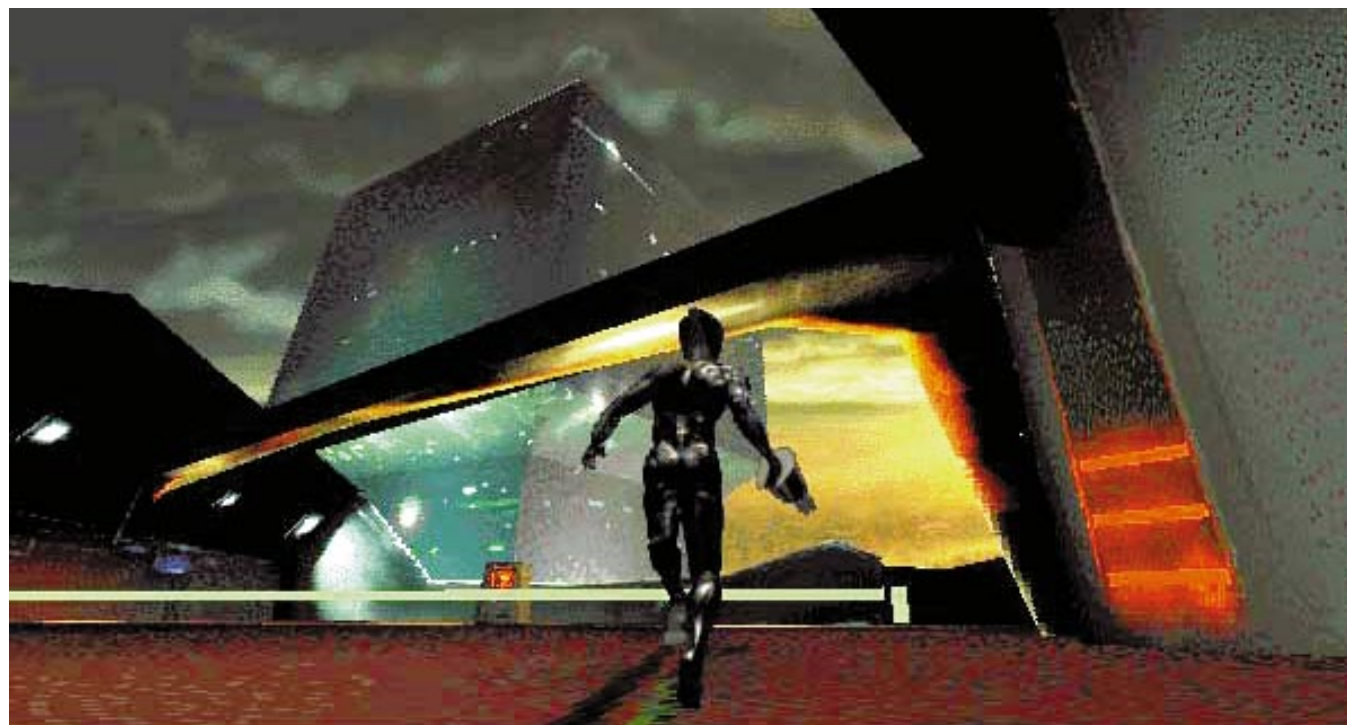# after hours

This month you can have a go at ridding the Earth of aliens, cruise along the highway to avenge your sister's death, and track down some outlaws in the Wild West

MDK

PG

Given that during its development the initials MDK stood for 'Murder, Death, Kill', it should come as no surprise that this is a game of big guns and explosions.

MDK's plot is hardly original – aliens have invaded Earth and you must try to get rid of them. The style is tried and tested too – everything is viewed from above and behind the armoured protagonist Kurt, who runs around and shoots things.

What is different, though, is MDK's appearance. In a word, it's incredible. Imagine the animated sequences that precede many CD-ROM games and you wouldn't be far off MDK – except, of course, that you get to control the action.

Unfortunately (or fortunately, depending on how you like your games), there isn't that much action to control. MDK's dazzling graphical implementation isn't just an excuse for a shoot-'em-up and although there is scope for widespread carnage using weapons of mass destruction, the gameplay is actually fairly linear.

The action takes place in six worlds, each containing several stages or 'arenas' and careful attention to detail is required to progress through them. Essentially, completing an arena involves solving one or more puzzles – these can be as simple as blowing up a door with a grenade, collecting a weapon, shooting several objects in sequence or dodging enemy fire.

Kurt is capable of the usual array of actions – running, jumping, plus a couple of special moves that involve among other things, a parachute. Weapons are numerous and there's also a crafty 'sniper' mode, complete with crosshair sight, used to pick off distant targets.

The approach is reminiscent of such games as Fade to Black and Tomb Raider and, if you like those sort of games, you'll appreciate MDK. Despite the graphical complexity, MDK is also playable on a machine that conforms to the minimum specification. Things do slow down when there's a lot going on but switching to low-res mode solves that problem. **JP**

MDK looks fantastic and there's a lot of game for your money but, although the experience can be thrilling, once the game is complete, there's not much to bring you back to it.

○ £44.99 (inc VAT)
○ Interplay: 01628 423666

MDK
Overall ★★★★☆

Minimum requirements: Pentium (90MHz recommended), 16Mb of RAM, 17Mb of hard disk space, DirectX 3-compatible video card.

Interstate '76

15

It's a hot day as you cruise the Interstate in your dead sister's car, an orange Picard Piranha, the window down and funk pumping from the eight-track. Ahead of you your wingman Taurus pilots a Jefferson Sovereign, silver and as big as a boat. Casually, you fire a burst from the machine guns on the roof, and Taurus speaks over the CB, 'Watch that sh*t, cowboy.'

There's work to do under the hot Texas sun, protecting America's oilfields from the auto-mercenaries – or creepers – led by Antonio Malochio, your sister's killer. The police are corrupt, and in this alternative 1976 it is only auto-vigilantes who uphold the law.

You are Groove Champion, motor racer and learner vigilante. Taurus will teach you to drive and fight; Skeeter the mechanic will repair your car, and the funk soundtrack will put you in the mood to

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games news

Microsoft has launched the first official expansion pack for **Flight Simulator for Windows 95**. Costing £29.99, it includes details of the terrain and airports in Southern California, together with 3D versions of all the major buildings in Los Angeles and San Diego.
Microsoft: 0345 002000

New from Interplay is **Redneck Rampage**. In an effort to rescue your prize porker, Bessie, from the evil clutches of aliens who have pignapped her, you rollick round America, drink beer and whiskey, and blast aliens, cows and chickens with a variety of illegal and occasionally impractical weaponry.
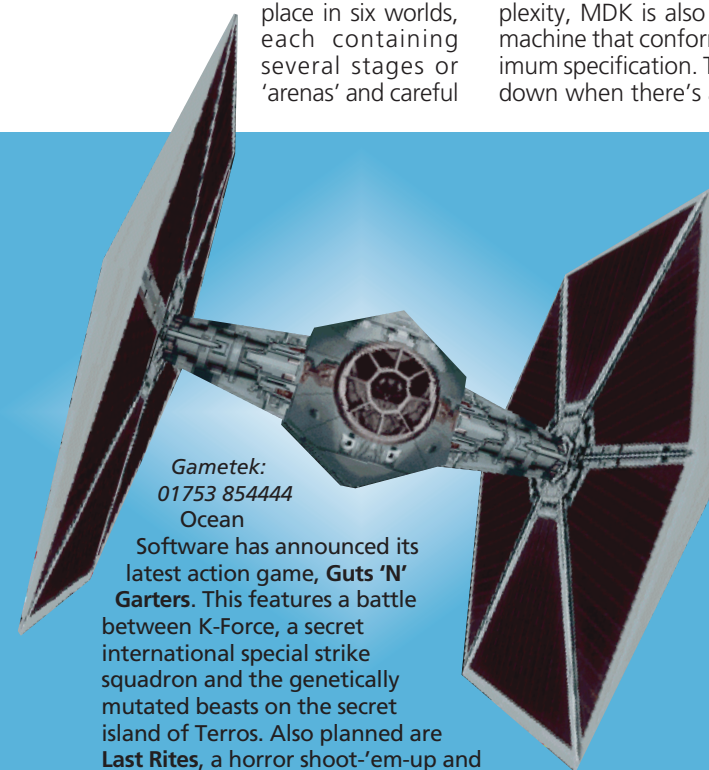*Interplay: 01628 423666*

E-On, the subscription-only on-line gaming channel, has opened a free public beta area. Surf to www.e-on.com to test games in the Beta Zone before they are generally available.
Entertainment Online: 0990 133007

Internet play for new games from LucasArts will take place in a dedicated area on **Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone**. For hints, tips and easy access to the Zone, contact www.rebelhq.com. The first games will include Outlaws, reviewed on page 127, together with Star Wars titles such as **X-Wing vs TIE Fighter** and the forthcoming **Jedi Knight: Dark Forces II**.
LucasArts, distributed by Virgin: 0171 368 2255

In **Dark Colony**, an action military strategy game from Gametek set among the stars, players have the option of controlling human forces or their alien opponents in the struggle to guard their own planets and resources, and expand into other worlds. The game, featuring detailed graphics and variable viewpoints, should be available soon.
Gametek: 01753 854444

Ocean Software has announced its latest action game, **Guts 'N' Garters**. This features a battle between K-Force, a secret international special strike squadron and the genetically mutated beasts on the secret island of Terros. Also planned are **Last Rites**, a horror shoot-'em-up and **X:Treme Velocity**, a compilation of three best-selling flight sims.

No Respect, the latest shoot-'em-up from French publisher

Infogrames, promises fast-paced action courtesy of a new 3D game engine.
Ocean: 0161 832 6633

TEAC's **CD-C68E** 8x six-disc CD-ROM auto-changer is available as a retail kit complete with all cables and manuals. Priced at £175, TEAC views the kit as an ideal solution for gamers.
TEAC: 01923 225235

and manoeuvrable, while the big yellow school bus is a ponderous lump of metal. It's, um, interesting to drive off-road, weighed down by its armour. It can stand up to withering fire and missile attacks though – having to draw the balance between fast or heavily armed cars adds to the game's playability.

Our only criticism is the graphics. Even with all the options turned on, they aren't particularly detailed, and were jerky on our Dell P200: there was also 'pop-up,' where scenery pops into view over the horizon rather than scrolling smoothly.

Nonetheless, the gameplay is superb, and a lot of thought has gone into keeping the player's interest. If you tire of the missions and the struggle to avenge your sister Jade, then it's time to customise a car with the weapons you want,
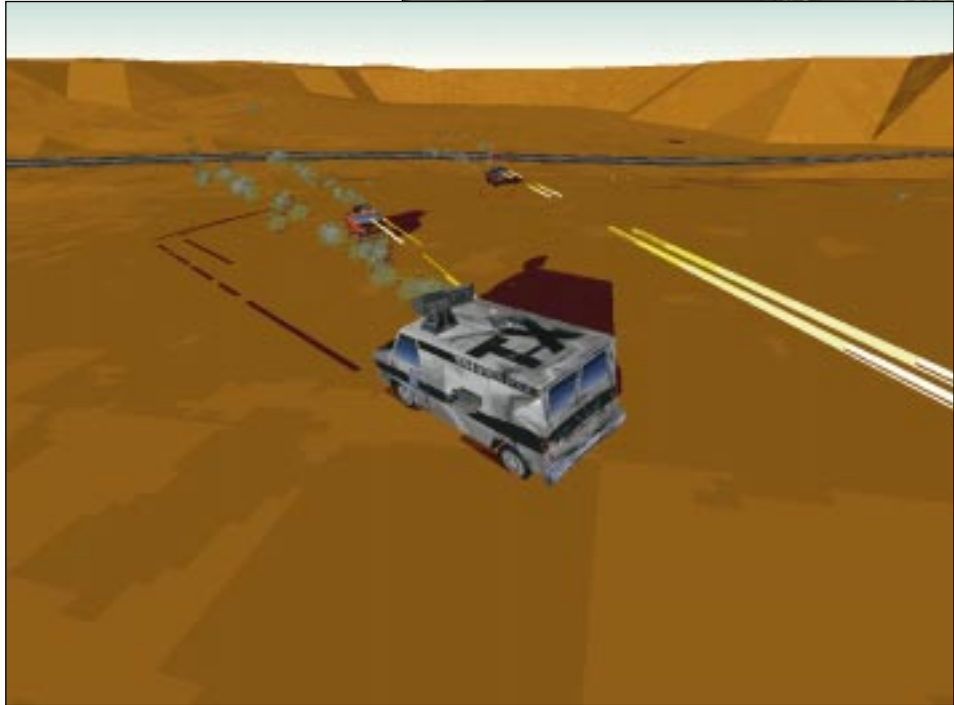

drive fast and live dangerously, fighting as you go.

Interstate '76 is superb. It's *Starsky and Hutch* for the Nineties. From the opening sequence, straight from a 1970s TV movie, through the camera viewpoints, to the credits, everything creates the right atmosphere.

The physics of the game are impressively accurate. Not that any of us in the *What PC?* office do handbrake turns for real, but, if you brake hard and turn, you skid realistically, leaving rubber marks on the road. If you drive over a bump too fast you'll damage your suspension and might roll – and that will affect your car in combat later.

Small cars are genuinely nippy

and blow away yet more bad guys in a multi-melee.

If you're on a network or can access the Internet, then it's possible to play with up to seven other vigilantes. Fighting against human opponents is a greater challenge: the computer drivers are good, but always a touch predictable.

A whole culture has grown up on the Internet: the American Vigilante Association, formed only days after the game's release, regulates combat and holds regular duels and tests of skill. **JS**

Interstate '76 is not for the faint-hearted, but as long as your idea of a good time is driving fast cars dangerously and firing heavy weapons at your friends it is great. Its graphics are flawed but the funk soundtrack is

superb. Buy it today – and die in flames tomorrow.
○ £39.99 (inc VAT)
○ Activision: 01865 456700
www.activision.com/i76/
Home Page of the AVA: www.
drizzle.com/~pusro/ava.html
Vigilante's Paradise:
www.allgames.com/I76/

Interstate '76
Overall ★★★★★

Minimum requirements: Pentium 90MHz, 16Mb of RAM, 80Mb of hard disk space, 110Mb recommended, plus 40Mb for virtual memory unless 32Mb of RAM installed, Windows 95, Sound Blaster-compatible sound card, 1Mb PCI or VESA Local Bus graphics card, 4x CD-ROM drive.

Outlaws

PG 'Sarsaparilla. Another! Those damned outlaws, they've murdered ma wife. Taken ma daughter. Ma innocent, sweet-voiced angel. Whiskey... hey, leave the darn bottle. Burned down ma house, they did. Barman, I'll thank you to take care o' ma badge... dyin's too good for 'em   .'

With that ex-Marshal James Anderson strolls out of the bar and into town, on the payback trail of the outlaws who hold his daughter. And you? Well, you're in control of his every gun-slinging move.

A cursory glance might lead you to think that Outlaws is just another Doom-style shoot-'em-up, and in many respects it is. All the action is portrayed in the oh-so-familiar first-person perspective and on your travels you can pick up the usual array of weapons and power-ups. Some doors need keys before they can be opened, while others swing open with the merest nudge. However, where Outlaws differs from its Doom-like brethren is in the depth of gameplay. Rather than simply wandering around shooting everything that moves, it pays you to move slowly and stealthily around the play areas, picking off your targets one by one. Go all guns blazing into an unexplored room and you might well end up counting the rafters; or feathers, should you happen upon the unsuspecting inhabitants of the hen-house.

Age ratings: We have assigned viewing suitability ratings for each game. U = Universal; PG = Parental Guidance; 15 = suitable for viewing by 15-year-olds and above; 18 = suitable for viewing by 18-year-olds and above.

18 15 PG U

CHARTS
Figures for both charts from
Chart Track Ltd – month
ending 30.4.97

As with most of today's 3D games Outlaws is graphically very smart at its highest resolution (800x600 pixels), but unless you've got a very fast Pentium (at least a 166MHz) then you'll almost certainly opt to play in one of the less-detailed modes. Either way it's quite convincing, and as you creep around the shadows of the timber buildings you really believe you're living the life of an aggrieved lawkeeper-turned-breaker. **SC**

Action, strategy, atmosphere and chickens: Outlaws has them all, and

in no small measures. So then, pardner, as long as you've gotten yourself one of those there newfangled Pentiums, this is a mighty fine way to pass the time.
○ £39.99 (inc VAT)
○ Virgin Interactive (distributor): 0171 368 2255

Outlaws
Overall ★★★★☆

Minimum requirements: Pentium 60MHz (higher recommended), Windows 95, 16Mb of RAM, SVGA graphics card and a double-speed (2X) CD-ROM drive.

TOP TEN CD-ROM GAMES/HOME TITLES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
7	1	Theme Hospital	Bullfrog
4	2	Championship Manager 2	Eidos Interactive
–	3	MDK	Interplay
1	4	Red Alert	Virgin
2	5	Tomb Raider	Eidos Interactive
5	6	Encarta 97	Microsoft
–	7	Duke Nukem Atomic	Eidos Interactive
3	8	FIFA 97	Electronic Arts
6	9	Flight Simulator 6.0	Microsoft
8	10	Rally Championship	Europress Software

TOP TEN DISK GAMES/HOME TITLES

Last month	This month	Title	Label
2	1	Scrabble	US Gold
1	2	Return of Arcade	Microsoft
–	3	Dr Solomon's Home Guard	Dr Solomon's
9	4	Quicken 6.0	Intuit
8	5	Fatal Racing	Gremlin Interactive
3	6	Aladdin	Virgin
–	7	Dr Solomon's Anti-Virus	Dr Solomon's
–	8	Norton AntiVirus	Norton
4	9	Best of Windows Entert.	Microsoft
5	10	Jungle Book	Virgin