

The Inventory

A magazine for adventure games only

Preview

Martin Mystere

Comic Part II

Black Mirror

Interview

Still Life

EXTRA **TOP - 10**
UPCOMING
ADVENTURES



The Inventory

Editor: Dimitris Manos

Authors: Dimitris Manos
Justin Peeples

Host: www.justadventure.com

Cover Layout: Dimitris Manos

Cover Art: A Vampyre Story

Contact Information:

Address: The Inventory Magazine
Grankottvägen 141 A
Örebro 702 21
Sweden
(will change soon)

E-mail address: theinventory@yahoo.com

Phone No: +46702053444

Other Editions

Italian: www.pollodigomma.net/~theinventory

Spanish: www.aventuraycia.com

Russian: www.questzone.ru

The Inventory is copyright Dimitris Manos and may not be reprinted elsewhere without the express written consent of the owner. If anyone sees The Inventory or portions of The Inventory posted someplace without express written consent, then please contact us at: theinventory@yahoo.com

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE 1

PREVIEWS 2

Martin Mystere p. 2

Sam and Max: Case Gilbert p. 3

ADVENTURE GOSSIP 5

ADV. COMICS 6

THE LOUNGE 8

Still Life p. 8

Britton O'Toole p. 15

REVIEW 20

Dark Fall p. 20

TOP 10 UPC, ADV, 22

8 to 10 p. 23

6,7 p. 24

4,5 p. 25

3 p. 26

2 p. 27

1 p. 28

Wrap-up p. 32

INVENTO-MAIL 33

EPILOGUE 35

SPECIAL THANKS:

Autumn Moon Entertainment, Jeff Putnam,
Adam Hearn, Microids, Britton O'Toole

Prologue

During our first year, we had a surprise for our readers 'hidden' in the last issue before the summer (May 2003). We were the first adventure magazine to publish screenshots from King's Quest IX. This second year we have yet one more surprise for you hidden somewhere in the issue you are currently reading. What is the surprise I am talking about? Why don't you find out yourselves!

This month we have a special feature for all of you. We present with you the 10 most awaited upcoming adventures. Out of the many adventures being developed as we write these lines we have chosen the 10 that are likely to give us a lot of entertaining hours and remind us what adventures are all about. After such a bad year for adventure games we sure need such titles!

Apart from this exciting feature, we also publish an in-depth interview with the developers of Still Life. The horror adventure that was recently announced by Microids, looks very promising and the developers are here to share with us their insight on the game. Britton O'Toole, the developer of No-Action Jackson, is also in our lounge to talk to us about his experiences with adventure development.

We also present to you the second part of the Black Mirror comic that was kindly provided to us by DTP, the well-known German publisher. Justin Peoples shares with us his opinion on Dark Fall, the first person horror adventure created by Jonathan Boakes.

Last but not least we have two previews for you. First you can read our first impressions of Martin Mystere, the 3rd person point and click adventure by the Italian-based Artematica. When you are done with the Martin Mystere preview, make sure to check the Sam and Max unofficial adventure, called Case Gilbert. If you're one of the many Sam and Max fans who were disappointed with the recent decision of Lucasarts to cancel the sequel, then this might be something for you.

These are the contents of the last issue before our summer break, which might also be the last issue that is distributed for free. But more on that later on... For now feel free to enjoy the contents of the 16th issue of The Inventory.

Dimitris Manos

Editor

The Inventory

MARTIN MYSTÈRE

Last month we featured an interview with Artematica, the developers of Martin Mystere, which is an upcoming 3rd person adventure based on a famous European comics and television series. This month the developers sent us an early build of the game and we got to play around a work-in-progress version of this new mystery game.

Unfortunately the demo we received was in Italian and the interface features were not polished yet so it was not that easy to progress much in the game. But from the little I got to play, it showed some potential. Apparently I cannot comment on the game's storyline since I didn't understand a single word, and I cannot comment much on the problems that have to be solved or tasks that have to be accomplished in order to progress in the game either.

Since I can speak no Italian whatsoever, although I'd love to, I would rather quote Artematica's Ricardo Cangini from last month's interview to give you a small idea of what the game's story is going to be about: *'It's a story based on man's recurring dreams: everlasting youth immortality. Human mind perversion often leads to odd dark situations that, regardless, trample on human ethics and life universal principles. What would happen if somebody invented a machine capable of transferring a man's mind with all of his memories his sensation his conscience into another man's? Prof. Eulemberg, an important researcher of M.I.T was murdered in his country house...perhaps he had discovered something to*



Outside Martin's room

reach this dangerous and mysterious dream.' Later Ricardo went on to say that the story will be based on Operation Dorian Grey which was, as he said, one of the best issues of the comic strip. But let's talk about the things I can comment on and that I saw first hand while playing the demo, starting with the graphics. The backgrounds, which are pre-rendered, are really beautiful and colourful. A lot of detail has been given in small details.

Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the characters, who are rather blocky for nowadays' standards and their proportions are rather strange. Maybe the developers tried to imitate some sort of exaggeration that exists in the comic version, but if that is the case, it somehow does not translate well in 3D.

There was also a small cutscene in the very beginning of the game and it seemed quite nice but not a lot of conclusions can be drawn in such a small time. As far as the gameplay is concerned it seemed pretty straightforward. Martin Mystere features a quite basic point and click interface. You scan each screen with your mouse and if you find a hotspot you can either look at it or do something to it. When you click on a non-hotspot area Martin will walk there.

There were English voice-overs only during this small cutscene. The standard of that was quite high but whether this is going to be the level of voice-overs used throughout the game is impossible to say. We did not get the chance to listen to any of the music that will be featured in the game. Martin Mystere is more interactive than Syberia but less interactive than The Longest Journey. There are usually 2 or 3 hotspots in each room and the positive thing is that Martin will comment on each one of them. Unfortunately I cannot give you



The front door

much feedback on the comments since I didn't understand much. On the bottom left part of the corner there is an 'i' button that stands for inventory and when you click it the inventory is displayed on the bottom part of the screen.

A small problem Martin had to solve in the beginning was (if I understood correctly) that his car had broken down and he had to call someone to repair the car. Martin already has a phone but he did not know whom to call. Looking around in his house, you will find two pieces of paper that were torn apart from each other and that when put together form a phone number of a repair specialist. In essence it felt somehow tucked in since the two pieces of paper were placed in different parts of the house (how often do you cut a piece of paper in 2, conceal one of them under the pillow in the living-room and place the other one on a drawer in your bedroom?) but on the other hand it was not difficult so it did not really distract from the game.

Whether Martin Mystere will be an entertaining title is very hard to say. Although the graphics are not what you would call breathtaking, if the story is interesting with lots of unique characters to meet and if the problems to overcome are logical and make sense then it might be able to give us some hours of good old adventuring.

I personally hope it will be a worthy title because the audience that is interested in comics is one of the publics that could become attached to adventure games if they came upon some worthy titles. Unfortunately previous titles based on comic series like Thorgal, Salamambo and Largo Winch did not manage to do something like that due to their mediocre quality.



Inside the kitchen



Lucasarts might be dead, but Sam and Max are not! The crazy duo is coming back to our computer screens with the help of some Italian dedicated fans who know better than the management of Lucasarts what constitutes a great title. Sam and Max: Case Gilbert is going to be an adventure loyal to the original Sam and Max with a very similar style in graphics.

The team behind the sequel has recently released a demo in the AGS forums. The game starts with our duo having just solved one more case. A butler after murdering someone in a mansion makes a last minute escape. At the same time he has placed a bomb under the mansion to kill all its residents - and his former employees. The famous duo does not have time to wait for payment and decide to head back to their office before the bomb explodes. When they come back, the phone rings. (By the way you really have to watch that, it's hilarious... you will understand when you see it). On the phone it is the commissioner who has a new case for the crazy duo, to find an abducted man.

But this man is not just any man in the world, this man is Rob Gilbert! Rob has been abducted by George Ducas who is in need of his best programmer. As you might have already



Violence is still an integral part of a Sam and Max story



Chester looks very happy...for some reason

understood from the names used the, game is a parody. Players will get to visit the ... Ducas Arts Palace, to uncover the secrets contained in it, to visit the office of Rob Gilbert and much more.

From the demo of the game it is evident that the interface used is the same with the original Sam and Max: Hit the Road. For those of you who are not familiar with the original Sam and Max here is a description of the interface.

Your cursor can change into different shapes, each one of them representing a different command. The commands you can give are: Walk, Look, Use Talk, Get. On the bottom left corner of the screen there is a picture of an open box. When you click on it the inventory screen pops up. There you can see all your items and you can also manipulate them by selecting one of the commands on the top of the screen.

The developers were hesitant to give an estimate for the final release as the game is being made by just two people. They are also thinking of splitting the game in two parts and releasing the first one earlier and the second one at a later stage. Although as you will see in the demo, some



There they go, down the stairs



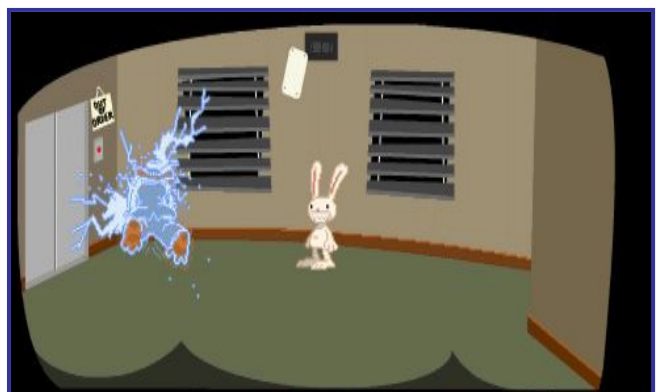
They solved it again

backgrounds of Case Gilbert are taken from the original Sam and Max (like the office for example) the developers promised to use a large number of original backgrounds and characters. The developers are going to use a 320x240 resolution in order for the new graphics to blend in seamlessly with the old graphics. The music is also going to be a mixture of themes from Hit the Road as well as original music created by the developers for the purposes of Case Gilbert.

If you want to try Case Gilbert yourselves you can download the English or the Italian demo from <http://digilander.libero.it/bisland/s&micg.html>.

My only complaint on Case Gilbert (based on the demo) is the translation in English which is poor to say the least. Sometimes it is very difficult to understand what the characters are saying. I hope that the developers will 'hire' someone fluent in English to help them with the translation. There are also some bugs in the demo but we all expect them to be wiped out before the final release. So get your mice warmed up for a new adventure with the most discussed adventure duo in the past year. Sam and Max are coming back.

- Dimitris Manos



Their adventures are never pain-free

The Adventure Company signs Sentinel

The Adventure Company has recently announced 'Sentinel: The Descendants in Time', a first person 3D adventure with in-game rendered graphics. Sentinel is developed from Detallion, the company who gave us the Schizm games (for a review of Schizm 2 read our previous issue). Here comes the storyline description as given in the press release:

'The Tasthan people surrendered to extinction many years ago; their only legacy being the legendary Tasthan Tombs. Much speculation surrounds the tombs; some say they hold invaluable treasure, while others believe great wealth may be attained through the technology left behind by this advanced race. As Beni, players enter the Caverns on a dangerous quest for riches. Along his strange journey, he encounters a sentinel charged with guarding the tombs. This sentinel, a holograph programmed with advanced A.I., awakens only when the tombs are disturbed. She appears to Beni throughout his quest, sometimes with a benign purpose, but other times with calculated intentions. Beni will soon realize that the sentinel is much more than she appears to be. Her dark purpose threatens his very existence.'

The stone of Anamara

The stone of Anamara is a new flash online adventure game. The perspective is from the 1st person and it uses pre-rendered

backgrounds. The stone of Anamara has an atmosphere reminiscent of the game Dark Fall. It is not completed yet but a Spanish unfinished version is already online at <http://www.lapiedradeanamaracom.ar>

New publisher in Germany looking for adventures

BHV software is a German publisher that so far were mostly interested in education titles or games for children. Now they want to expand their horizons and they are interested in publishing adventure games in the German market.

They have already published Journey to the Center of the Earth and they are looking for more adventures to publish and possibly fund. If you are interested send us an email and we will get you in contact with them.

Legacy: Dark Shadows completed

We heard from the developers of the game that the development of Legacy has been completed and that the game will probably be published soon in some European countries. Let's hope to see an English version of the game soon.

For more information visit www.legacythegame.com

The Inventory is looking for writers/sponsors

We are currently looking for more writers to help us create The Inventory. If you are fluent in English, have a lot of free time and would like to write about adventures send an e-mail with a sample review.

We are also looking for sponsors. If you would like to advertise your product/company in The Inventory send us an email at theinventory@yahoo.com

The Sealed Lips project is looking for a programmer

If you have followed our magazine you probably already know that we have formed a team which develops a 3D point and click adventure game. We are currently looking for one more coder who can code in C# to join our efforts.

We have recently changed our engine once more, but this time our decision is final as we have already started rendering models in the engine and we have already entered the production stage. We will be using the Axiom Engine (<http://axiomengine.sourceforge.net/>)

If you are interested in joining our team or have a question about the project drop us a mail at sl_adv@yahoo.com

- Dimitris Manos

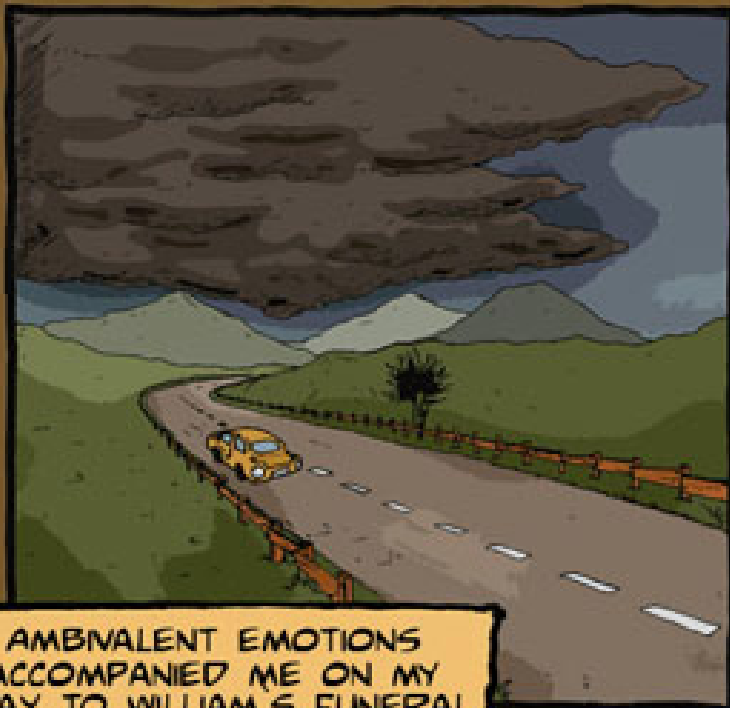
BLACK MIRROR

The Prologue



#3

by
Lichting



AMBIVALENT EMOTIONS ACCOMPANIED ME ON MY WAY TO WILLIAM'S FUNERAL.



ALTHOUGH I HAD ALWAYS FELT UNEASY IN THE CHURCH WARMHILL. I WAS GLAD THAT MY JOURNEY LED ME THERE FIRST INSTEAD OF BLACK MIRROR.



THE CHURCH LOOKED LIKE I REMEMBERED IT. NOTHING HAD CHANGED.



WITH A HEAVY HEART I GOT OUT OF THE CAR TO FINALLY FACE MY PAST.

TO BE CONTINUED!

BLACK MIRROR

The Prologue



I ARRIVED JUST IN TIME FOR WILLIAM'S FUNERAL. VICTORIA AND THE OTHERS WERE ALREADY AWAITING ME.



OUR FACES WERE MARKED WITH THE EXPRESSION OF GRIEF WILLIAM'S ALLEGED SUICIDE HAD CAUSED IN US.

BUT NOW IT WAS TIME TO SAY GOODBYE TO HIM FOREVER.



AFTER THE FUNERAL VICTORIA ASKED ME TO ACCOMPANY HER ON THE WAY HOME. SO I TOLD OUR BUTLER BATES TO BRING MY CAR AND MY LUGGAGE TO BLACK MIRROR.



HOW WAS I SUPPOSED TO KNOW AT THAT TIME WHAT DEMONS I HAD ALREADY UNLEASHED AND WHAT TERRIBLE BACKGROUND WILLIAM'S ALLEGED SUICIDE REALLY HAD? SOON I WOULD FIND OUT, WHETHER I WANTED TO OR NOT. AFTER 12 YEARS I RETURNED TO BLACK MIRROR TO FINALLY FACE MY DESTINY.

LEARN HOW THE STORY IS CONTINUED IN THE EPIC ADVENTURE-GAME "BLACK MIRROR".

WWW.BLACKMIRROR-GAME.DE

Interview with the Developers of Still Life

Still Life is a new 3rd person thriller adventure from Microids that was announced only a while before this year's E3. The official site features a teaser for the game that will give anyone who watches it the creeps. We rushed to contact Microids and we invited Mathieu Lariviere, lead designer of Still Life to this month's Lounge. Let's see what Mathieu has to tell us about this upcoming adventure.

Yourselves:

Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

I would rather present the team which I'm very proud to have been a part of. Jean-Francois Pelletier worked on Post Mortem as project manager and is now doing the same thing on Still Life. Former animator on Post Mortem and Syberia 2 Elspeth Tory is lead animator on Still Life. We have Stephane Cyr as lead integrator who was doing the same on Memorick, The Apprentice Knight. Terence Chiu is now lead programmer on Still Life and whom I have worked with in the past on Tennis Master Series. Finally Hubert Corriveau and Jacques Marcoux shared the role of lead artist on the project.

Now let me say a few words about the respective teams. Still Life was very fortunate to have the best-assembled integrator team ever imagined. Let's put it this way, if they were a hockey team they would make the Canadian Olympic Hockey Team look like posers. As for the animators... they rock! Thanks to them, Still Life has motion and action never before seen either in-game or in

cinematic cut scenes. The programming team made what seemed impossible actually happen. Last but not least, the art team who made the Syberia series so breathtaking made Still Life even more beautiful with an eerie atmosphere.

Have you worked for any other games or adventures before?

Yes, I've worked on Tennis Masters Series, PC and X-Box, by this company. This is my first adventure game.

Do you play adventure games in your free time? If so which ones are your favourites?

Free time, what's that? Grim Fandango is probably my all time favourite adventure game. I absolutely loved the story, the film noir-Mexican folklore setting and the great dialogue! Manny Calavera is, to me, one of the best adventure characters ever. The three-part story was brilliant. I expected them to make another one but it never came.

Still Life

Could you describe to us the story of Still Life?

Victoria McPherson is a brilliant young FBI agent who's investigating a serial murder case. The body count is now at five and with the lack of real leads and a mountain of circumstantial evidence, Victoria is beginning to show signs of fatigue and stress.

She decides to take a break and go rest at her father's home in suburban Chicago; after all, it is



close to the Christmas holidays. However, Victoria does not find rest. Instead, she finds one of her grandfather's old case files and begins to read. Oddly enough, Victoria's present case resembles the one from the past, right down to the killer's MO...

Could you tell us some things about the main heroine of the game?

Victoria is the main character of Chicago 2004. She comes from a wealthy background. She is the daughter of Patrick McPherson, DA of Chicago and the grand daughter of Gustav McPherson, Private Investigator.

Victoria went to the best schools and graduated with honours. Her education primarily focused on psychology and criminology. She decided to enrol at the FBI academy in Quantico and become an agent. She passed once again at the top of her class. However, Vic's gift for profiling killers gets her a desk job chasing serial arsonists, serial rapists and serial killers. Although disappointed at being stuck behind a desk and not out doing fieldwork, Vic soon got her chance.

Today, Victoria is working her second serial murder case as a field agent. Her first case was against the infamous Mississippi Crawler, who strangled and raped young women. He would dump their bodies on the banks of the Mississippi. Now she is assigned to a case in the streets of her hometown, Chicago.

In Still Life we'll be able to play as a second character. Could you describe him to us?

“Besides Gus McPherson, nothing from Post Mortem is recycled. Still Life is not a sequel to Post Mortem, but more of a spin off”

Gus McPherson is originally from New York. Gustav left New York for Europe after a case that went sour on him. He was accused of murder but the charges didn't stick. Gustav didn't chance it and left for Europe shortly after the affair. He then decided that PI work wasn't fit for him and wanted to forget the past. So he picked up the brush and started painting. He was living in Paris when an

irresistible case fell on his lap. The Whytes affaire; a couple murdered in their hotel room, which led to an occult artefact.

Fearing accusations of murder once again, Gustav had no choice but to leave Paris and find work elsewhere. The Whytes case rekindled his passion for PI work, and the thrill of the chase pumped through his veins once more. Gustav ended up in Prague, where he met the love of his life, Ida Skalickova. Now he is on a new case hunting a serial killer who's murdering prostitutes. Ida and her friends hired him to help stop the bloodthirsty killer.

Does the game's story delve into the supernatural?

No. Unfortunately, serial killers are not fictional. They are a very real aspect of our society. According to the FBI, there are between 50 and 500 serial killers currently active in the US.

There have been mentions of links to the Post Mortem story. Post Mortem featured a story about the Templars. Will Still Life have anything to do with esoteric societies?

Victoria discovers a secret S&M club during her investigation. That's all I can say about that.

Will we get to meet any other characters from the Post Mortem franchise?

Besides Gus McPherson, nothing from Post Mortem is recycled. Still Life is not a sequel to Post Mortem, but more of a spin off.

How many characters will we meet in the game and how many locations will we get to visit?

You will meet 24 characters in all: 11 in Chicago and 13 in Prague. As for environments, we have 7 locations in Chicago and 11 in Prague. There are



over 300 camera shots that cover the different environments.

Will the story be linear or non-linear?

The story is non-linear. When Victoria finds her grandfather's journal and starts reading it, we are transported to Prague of the late 20s. Then we start playing Gus. There are a number of chapters in the game, moving between the different time periods (2004 Chicago and 1929 Prague). Cinematic cut scenes that create the bridge between the two time periods. The game is linear though. The player cannot switch from one period to the other whenever he or she wants to. The switches are predetermined.

Is the game's story inspired in some way by movies, books or other games?

The first inspiration would be Patricia Cornwell's Portrait of a Killer: Jack the Ripper Case Closed. I found her Walter Sickert theory to be very interesting, so much so that our killer in Prague is an artist. Anything that John Douglas wrote, but more specifically The Anatomy of Motive. His books are an absolute must if you ever create a murderer as a character. There were a lot of movies that inspired us but the one that was the most referred to was undoubtedly Se7en. There is an Internet site I have to mention is www.crimelibrary.com, which was an important source of information.

The game seems quite gory. What kind of rating are you hoping for?

It does tend to get the gory reputation but I assure you that it will never be gratuitous. Still Life does have murder scenes and dodgy subject matter but I

believe that we stayed out of the horror genre and remained in the thriller genre.

Post Mortem used a 1st person perspective while Syberia, which rumour has it that it was more successful than Post Mortem in terms of sales and critical acclaim, used a 3rd person perspective. Did this success play any role in your decision to use a 3rd person perspective, or did you take this decision for other reasons?

Post Mortem was the last 1st person adventure game that Microids produced. With the creation of Syberia came new expertise and a better engine. We simply wanted to continue what the Syberia 2 team accomplished.

Will Still Life use 3D characters on 2D pre-rendered backgrounds?

Yes, Still Life uses 3D characters on 2D pre-rendered backgrounds.

In what ways is the engine of Still Life improved compared to the engine of Syberia 2?

Still Life is similar to the Syberia series in its basic point-and-click gameplay, but we have added some notable features. The dialogue system has totally changed. Another addition is the full-screen inventory with two new features - an examine (with zoom functions) and a combine button. Shadow effects have been greatly improved. The path finding has improved also (less slipping and sliding).

What is the highest graphics resolution the game can reach?

800x600.

Will Still Life feature numerous cinematic cut scenes like previous Microids titles did?

Since pre-rendered scenes and point and click gameplay doesn't allow for much action, (though I liked what they did on Broken Sword), we concentrated in bringing the action and a great deal of suspense to our cinematics. We have 15 breathtaking cinematics for Still Life.

In Syberia 2 there were usually 2 different camera angles used during each dialogue. Do

you plan to use similar cuts in Still Life, use even more cuts or use just a fixed camera throughout the whole dialogue?

Certain dialogues will use the dynamic approach and others will use a fixed camera. There were certain environments that were impossible to have more than one shot.

Microids have got us used to great soundtracks for its releases. What kind of music will you use for the purposes of Still Life and how much time will the total soundtrack last?

We know that Still Life needs great music to keep players on the edge of their seat. Fortunately, we have terrific musicians that will give Still Life just that! The people who scored Syberia 1 and 2 are back for Still Life. They will be scoring all the cinematics and all the in-game sounds. We have Tom Salta, who will handle all the ambient in-game music, which will chill the spine of any thriller fan. As for the soundtrack's running time, I haven't a clue because they haven't finished it yet.



Do you plan to use voice-actors that have appeared in previous Microids titles or are you going to hire a whole new cast?

We are very happy to have Sara Leger back with us. She played a small role in Post Mortem (Bebe, or Berenice). Now Sara Leger will play Victoria McPherson. For the other voice talents, I'd rather not comment because we are still in the casting process.

Adventures from Microids have been praised for their technical standards (graphics and music) but when it comes to gameplay they

have received their fair share of criticism from adventurers. First of all, some adventurers claim that the Syberia series for example is lacking a bit on interactivity. For example there are many screens where the player cannot do anything else but walk through them, i.e. there are no objects to look at/interact with or persons to talk to. Will there be such 'empty' screens in Still Life or do you plan to increase the interactivity level with this new title?

Still Life will have less empty spaces simply because Still Life is very different from the Syberia series on many levels, especially the narrative pacing. Syberia is an epic voyage, making it important to make things a little "slower" and create breathtaking environments. It would be boring in a game like Syberia to give everything right away. The goal was to witness Kate Walker's voyage to Syberia and her personal evolution throughout her journey. However Still Life's story revolves around an investigation of a series of murders in the streets of Chicago (and Prague). The narrative structure in Still Life is one that leads players to a series of cliff-hangers, due to the switches from one time period to the other. Most objects we find in the game are used on location.

Some of the mechanical puzzles in Syberia 2 were quite illogical and gave almost non-existing feedback to the gamers. Will Still Life feature mechanical puzzles or will you base gameplay more on investigation and character interaction?

There are no mechanical puzzles in Still Life. However, Still Life is not a CSI clone, where Victoria has to collect evidence throughout the entire game (it happens only once). We have what I like to call classic adventure style puzzles, and some that are very original. We took great care to integrate the puzzles into the storyline.

2 puzzles from Post Mortem that were deemed impossible to solve by many adventurers were the portrait puzzle and the lock pick puzzle, both due to non-existent feedback to the player. I.e. when you presented the portrait you had drawn you just got an answer that it is not the right person instead of pinpointing which part of the face you had drawn wrong so that you know what you have to change. Do you

plan to take better care this time of giving feedback to players?

Yes. Victoria will say things to point the player in the right direction without it being a walkthrough of course. Also, depending on the puzzle, there will be sound or actions (taken by Gus, Victoria or NPCs) that will let the player know if he's doing things right or wrong.

If we say that Syberia 1 was an easy game while Post Mortem and Syberia 2 leaned more on the difficult side would you describe Still Life as an easy or a difficult game?

It is hard to determine whether a puzzle is difficult or easy. Some players will breeze through one while others will be stuck for hours. That's why Still Life will go through extensive focus groups to give us a good idea of the level of difficulty. When the results from the focus groups come in certain aspects of the game will be adjusted. To me Syberia 1 is the easiest one, Syberia 2 was a bit harder and Post Mortem is definitely the hardest of the three. My personal prediction is that Still Life will be like Syberia 2 in terms of challenge. The puzzles are difficult, but logical.

“Victoria is quite different from Kate Walker. She does have a tendency to give her opinion about certain things in her environment”

Do you plan to use any new and innovative kind of tasks/challenges/puzzles for Still Life that has not been seen before in adventure games?

I don't know if this has ever been seen before but there is one puzzle that the team is proud of; the robot puzzle. Victoria “borrows” a small experimental robot from the bomb squad. The goal is to navigate the little robot through a maze of lasers so that the robot can shut them down for Victoria.

Kate Walker from the Syberia series remained quiet for the most part of the game not commenting on her surroundings and the objects that she picks up, unlike what some other adventures have got us used to. Will the

main characters of Still Life make more comments or will they be ‘silent’ like Kate Walker?

Victoria is quite different from Kate Walker. She does have a tendency to give her opinion about certain things in her environment. For example we have Victoria commenting on a couple of dolls. The dolls are hanging from a noose in an abandoned building (crime scene) and when the player clicks on them Victoria says: “Nice Christmas decorations.”

Could you describe to us the interface of the game? Is it similar to Syberia?

As I mentioned earlier, the inventory interface is now full screen. This will have two new features. The first one is a examine button. This will allow players to get an up-close view of the object that can even reveal clues. The other is the combine button. This will allow players to combine two objects in the inventory like for example combining film to a camera.

Do you plan to use a new dialogue interface for the game? If so could you describe it to us?

The conversations are divided into a right click and a left click of the mouse (or left and right arrow key on the keyboard). The left click represents professional subject matter, so for players who want to get to the point quickly and move on, they may do so. The right click is for more personal or off beat subject matter that adds depth to the characters and the story line.

During the dialogue shot, there will be a mouse icon to the left of the screen showing the player if the left or right click is available. When the player gets to a certain point into the conversation he or she can always quit the conversation when the exit icon appears. It appears when the player has the necessary information to continue.

Will the choices made by the players affect the story? Are there multiple endings like in Post Mortem?

No, we have no side quests or alternate endings.

Many adventurers do not like action elements in adventure games. Will Still Life contain action elements or will it be a pure adventure?

Still Life's action will be handled by the cinematic

Minimal configuration: Pentium III 500 MHz, 3D Video Card 16 MB compatible DirectX 8.1, 128 MB RAM, 400 MB of available space on hard drive, CD-Rom 16X, DirectSound compatible sound card

Recommended configuration: Pentium III 800 MHz, 3D Video Card 32 MB compatible DirectX 8.1, 800 MB of available space on hard drive, 256 MB RAM, CD-Rom 24X, DirectSound compatible sound card

“Victoria reacts whenever she passes near a clickable object, catching the player’s attention, who can then take a closer look”

cut scenes and not in game. Still Life has no action in-game, but it will have plenty of atmosphere. I think adventure gamers will appreciate that.

One thing that most gamers despise is pixel hunting. Do you plan to use any special techniques to avoid extreme pixel hunting?

We addressed this in a pretty unique way, I think. Victoria reacts whenever she passes near a clickable object, catching the player's attention, who can then take a closer look. For fans of more traditional adventure game play, moving the mouse over the screen works as in most adventure games as a concession to those who do enjoy pixel hunting.

Post Mortem featured a nifty notepad option where Gus McPherson would keep notes of all-important finds he would make and keeping track of all-important events in the game. Will we see this feature in Still Life also?

We will have this feature, but it will be slightly different. Victoria (and Gus) will both keep a personal diary throughout the investigations. Their personal thoughts are available to the player. It will act as a sort of reminder for the player if he or she ever loses track of the investigation. Also, the entire dialogue script is recorded. This also will help the players if they get lost.

What will the minimum system requirements be for Still Life?

When will Still Life be released? Is it going to be released simultaneously worldwide?

Q1 2005, we intend to release Still Life simultaneously worldwide.

And do you plan to release a demo or a trailer to the public before that?

We've already showed a playable demo at E3. We will release a more polished demo, and of course there will be a trailer.

Is Microids going to publish Still Life or are you going to co-operate with XS Games as with Syberia 2?

This is still under discussion.

Are you going to publish Still Life exclusively



for the PC or are you going to publish it for consoles as well?

We are producing Still Life for the X-Box at the same time as the PC version. We intend to launch both around the same time.

Is there anything else you would like to add concerning Still Life?

What we tried to create with Still Life is a new standard in story telling, cinematics, graphics, and animation for the adventure genre. We believe we have achieved this by adding to the formula some great puzzles, rich characters and dark and mysterious environments. We hope to give players an experience of gaming they won't soon forget.

Adventure Games / General

answers by Edouard Lussan, Publishing Director

How many copies has Syberia 2 sold so far?

US+Europe, 215 000, all platforms, and 100 000 PC copies in Russia

What is the feedback that you have received from gamers so far regarding Syberia 2?

Excellent, just go visit the forums that will give you an indication! Honestly, the feedback has been incredible and we're quite pleased.

We have heard that since Microids faced bankruptcy problems a lot have changed in the company. Would you like to talk to us about those changes?



The main change at Microids, under the new management, is the new editorial focus towards universe-based games, mostly adventure games. We'll focus our efforts on what we do best.

Do you plan to continue supporting the adventure genre in the near future?

Indeed, this is the new direction we intend to take.

Do you have any other adventures in development right now apart from Still Life?

We currently have two adventure titles in development, and another original DVD project in the works, but it's too early to go into details.

Some previous members of Microids have founded their own company in France called White Birds Productions. Are you in contact with them nowadays and are there any plans for some sort of publisher/developer cooperation between Microids and White Birds Productions?

We are in contact with the White Birds team, and we are currently discussing potential partnerships and projects.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Microids' strategy will focus on the adventure genre, but will also take advantage of the convergence phenomenon we are witnessing in the multimedia industry, adding the online component, and DVD projects. There is a large online community of adventure fans, and this is an avenue we will develop.

Interview with Britton O'Toole

First Cirque De Zale, then No-Action Jackson. AGS adventures keep surprising us more and more often. Britton O'Toole, the man behind No-Action Jackson is invited this month to our Lounge to talk about his game and his future plans. If you haven't done that yet then go to <http://66.96.236.220/noaction/> and download this great adventure for free. Now let's go on to see what Britton has to say to us.

Yourself:

- Tell us a bit about yourself.

My name is Britton O'Toole, I live in Southern California, and I would describe myself as an aspiring artist.

- What are your all-time favourite adventure games?

Monkey Island 2 was my first and favorite. Day of the Tentacle, Sam n' Max, Indiana Jones, Full Throttle... I also played some of the Sierra ones like Kings Quest, Space Quest, Gabriel Knight and some of the more random ones like Goblins, Neverhood.

- Have you played any recent adventures that you enjoyed?

I really enjoyed Pleurghburg, KQ2 remake, and the demo for Revenants (which I'm waiting for). The most recent adventure I bought in the store was Monkey Island 4 which I didn't really get through.

No-Action Jackson

- Is there any specific reason behind the title?

I realized that it was pretty boring for a lot of people, there really aren't any gameplay elements to it aside from puzzles, so I just went with that as a title. There's the term 'action/adventure' that

covers a newer genre of games with both gameplay and adventure elements, so it's sort of no action, just adventure.

- How long did it take you to create No-Action Jackson in total?

Hehe, this is a tough question because it took a ridiculously long time for me to make. I started working on the game that turned out to be No-Action Jackson back in the roomedit days of AGS (many versions ago).

- Is the main hero really inspired by DOTT's Bernard as most fans and reviewers have pointed at?

In a sense yes, my brother actually made the first version of what Jackson looked like and he basically took Bernard and made him look like himself. Since he wasn't involved with the project though, I had to make my own version of that character (and animate him obviously, the tough part), so I completely redrew him and went from there, but he still has that look.

- There are a lot of RPG references in the game. Are you an RPG fan yourself?





I definitely was back in the day, around the time I was playing all these adventure games. I was a big pen & paper RPG fan, AD&D and Rifts were probably my two favorite - I tried most of them. I also created a couple simple pen and paper RPG's of my own growing up, it was definitely a big hobby of mine.

- Apart from DOTT, did you have any other influences while creating No-Action Jackson?

“There was an early version of the game with a backyard, and that’s where you took over the action after falling out of the window”

Generally I wanted it to have that old Lucasarts adventure game feel, because those were what I enjoyed growing up.

- Why did you decide to use a Lucasarts-style interface?

For whatever reason, that was always my favorite interface look. It seems less serious.

- Who are your own favourite characters from No-Action Jackson?

I liked the dialog for the fitness professional, I thought Rufus and the hot dog hireling had some character too them too.

- No-Action Jackson features also a large amount of well-integrated inventory-based puzzles. What is your most and what is your least favourite one of them?

It’s hard for me to pick favorites, I play tested it so much the puzzles are all a little stale for me... generally speaking I like my puzzles tough and fair in that order.

- What programs did you use to create the characters and backgrounds for No-Action Jackson?

They were all originally done by mouse in Photoshop.

- Did you record the sound effects for the game yourself? In that case could you describe to us the process of these recordings?

I ended up editing and tweaking most of the sound effects in Sonic Foundry rather than recording them. I had so much energy put into other elements of the game that it would have been hard for me to set aside time to mess with that. I did do some short music tracks with Jeskola Buzz that end up kind of being used as sound effects or flourishes.

- Is there any chance we might see a speech add-on for the game?

Most likely not, not because I’m opposed to it, but I need a little fresh air as far as the project is concerned, I was definitely getting burnt out towards the end of it.

- If you could develop the game all over again from the very beginning, what would you do differently?

Ho-ho, I would definitely think the whole project over very carefully! I had no idea how much work it was going to be, and I definitely underestimated the amount of time the whole thing would take. I basically started working on it without a good idea of where I was taking it, I had a couple puzzles that I had thought of, but hadn’t really flushed the whole idea out.

There was an early version of the game with a backyard, and that's where you took over the action after falling out of the window! After sitting down and considering where it was going and the amount of time I had already put into it, I ended up basically redoing everything I had up to that point. After that things started getting done more efficiently, but it still took a long time.

- What do you think of the feedback you have received so far for No-Action Jackson?

“I would definitely be looking to work in a team on future projects though, I couldn't do it by myself again”

The feedback has been really good. From friends or people who aren't familiar with adventure games it's more of a spectacle I would say. It's very unique looking, a compliment for me, but they aren't really interested in playing it. I enjoy the feedback from people who enjoyed older adventure games though, because I think they appreciate the time I put into the puzzles.

- How many times has No-Action Jackson been downloaded so far?

It got mentioned on the games section of Slashdot the other day, my old host had around 5,000 downloads before it pooped out. I think the new host has had several hundred since then.

- Is there ever going to be a No-Action Jackson 2?

I have some ideas. I think I could come up with a more interesting story arc and longer puzzle structure, but after spending so much time on this



one, I want to make a good decision about whether it's something I'll stay interested in and be able to complete. I would definitely be looking to work in a team on future projects though, I couldn't do it by myself again.

- Most AGS developers decide to showcase parts of their adventures by releasing demos or screens throughout their development. You however chose to release the game without a lot of fanfare previously. Why did you prefer that?

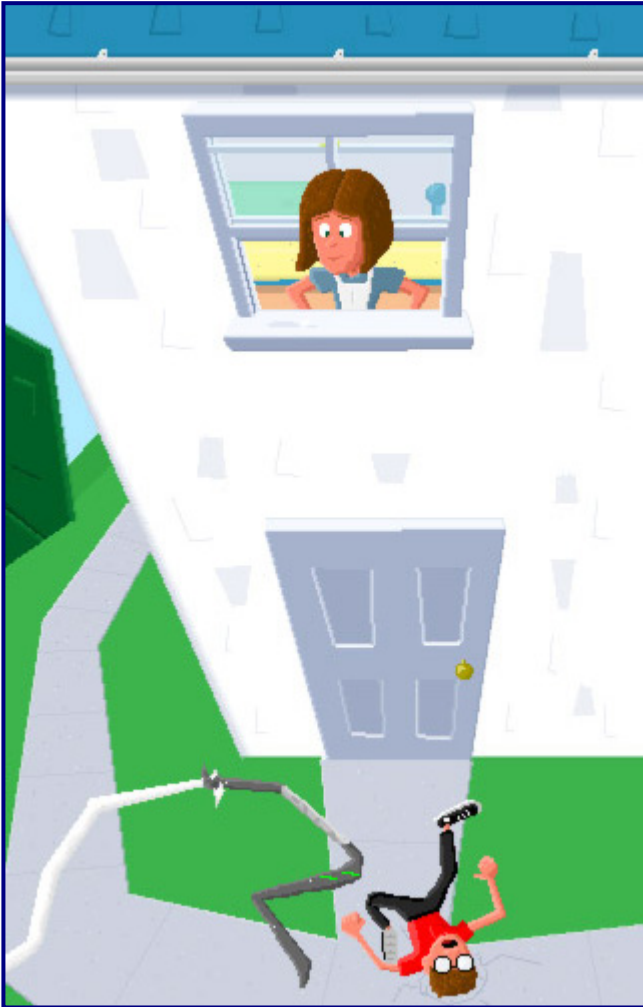
There was that temptation when I first started. I did in fact make one post with some screenshots of the game I had been working on (what turned out to be No-Action Jackson) in the AGS forums and it got a couple replies. Soon after that I began redoing things. I wanted to make sure it was finished before I showed anything again.

AGS games

- What are in your opinion the best adventures created with AGS? Which one of them is the very best one and why?

I really liked Pleurghburg and the Revenants demo. Both the King's Quest remakes were very well done (I hadn't played the originals). Apprentice, Cirque de Zale, and the Maniac Mansion remake were the most recent ones I downloaded and was impressed with, I think the games are getting better and better. I'm probably forgetting a couple, I generally play any that get good feedback in the completed game section of the AGSforums.

For me (and it's different for everyone), my favorite AGS game was Pleurghburg, even though I was unimpressed initially, I thought it was really interesting how the game managed to keep pulling you in. I did need a walkthrough for that one, though. I never really played the police/investigator adventure games before so it felt new to me.



- What do you think is the biggest disadvantage of the most AGS games out there?

I think the disadvantage is the amount of time that it takes to make an interesting game is really a lot more than people would expect, even though AGS does so much for you. In the end a good game takes a lot of focused work and time.

“Everyone would like to see original titles with the same quality as the old school adventure games but it’s not reasonable to expect that based on what the return is now.”

- We have seen one or two attempts to release independently developed games as commercial products. Do you think it is possible that we will see companies in the near future turning into profitable businesses by selling independently developed adventures?

I would say it’s possible, but not easy. It’s definitely a risk out there for someone to take.

- Which upcoming AGS adventures are you mostly looking forward to?

I’ve mentioned Revenants a couple times, also the unofficial Indy sequel, and Apprentice sequel.

General

- Apparently you are a Lucasarts fan. What do you think of the current situation in Lucasarts and all the recent cancellations?

I was a subscriber to the Adventurer, and enjoyed other LucasArts titles (X-wing, Tie Fighter..), so at one time LucasArts really represented quality to me. They got away from that somehow and alienated their fanbase, sort of a parallel to what happened with the Star Wars films.

- Recently a team of former Lucasarts fans have released a VGA remake of Maniac Mansion 1. Have you played and if yes what do you think of it? What do you think of remakes in general?

I downloaded and am currently playing it and I’m very impressed (I also played the Zak McKracken sequel he made once it came out in english). I think the more quality, focused games that are out there, the higher the standards are for what’s going to follow. Ultimately, everyone would like to see full-length, original titles with the same quality as

the old school adventure games (with their own sequels!) but it’s not reasonable to expect that based on what the return is now.

- Do you see yourself co-operating with other AGS developers to create bigger productions in the future or do you prefer to work alone?



Now that I already have one big project under my belt, I would love to work on a small, motivated, well co-ordinated team.

- Do you plan to create new adventure games in the future?

I would like to. I have a couple ideas that I may work into smaller projects before I get involved in something full-length.

- Former Lucasarts vs former Sierra. What's your opinion?

Since it's a personal opinion, I would say Lucasarts, because those just happened to be the adventure games I started with.

- Point and click vs direct control. Which one is in your opinion the most suitable interface for adventure games?

“It seems 3D is just more complicated, and it's harder to add genuine character to a game.”

Point and click is what I prefer for adventures.

- After your experience with the development of No-Action Jackson, what would be the best advice you would give to a developer-wannabe?

I wouldn't think about starting work on a game without literally having the whole plot and puzzle structure completely written out beforehand. You need that in place before you start putting man-hours into graphics, programming, sound etc...



- Commercial adventures nowadays seem to disappoint the fans and there is a certain 'magic' missing, a special kind of magic that adventures of the 80s and early 90s used to have. A lot of adventure fans seem to agree that nowadays companies seem to focus too much on 'spectacle' and too little on gameplay and story. What is your opinion on that? What do you think is it that is missing from recent adventure games?

I would agree with that, I'm not sure it wasn't inevitable because of where the other genres were going though. It seems 3D is just more complicated, and it's harder to add genuine character to a game. Nothing really draws me to the newer titles, so maybe that's what is missing from them.

- Do you think that the adventures created by the AGS community can bring back the classic

entertainment that fans used to get some years ago?

I hope so because it has the best opportunity at doing it, AGS is becoming very full-featured. I think small, focused teams could create some games that approach that level of quality.

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thanks for the interview, I'm glad my game found an audience!

DARK FALL

THE JOURNAL

In a time when so many big name studios refuse to devote the necessary time and manpower to develop a game in a “dead genre” that will never sell, it is extraordinarily refreshing to see one man devote himself to “picking up the slack” as it were, and create one entirely by himself. It is even more heartening to see when a developer finds said independent game to be so good that they publish it commercially. However, though Dark Fall is a triumph for the independent developer in the Adventure market, and though it is ultimately enjoyable, it is not without it’s flaws.

Story: The old train station and hotel at Dowerton has a peculiar history. In the years since the owners and guests suddenly vanished without a trace, there have been yet more mysterious disappearances involving the station, all unexplained. Your brother, not deterred by such paranoid fears, goes investigating the structure for future remodeling and construction, but after some time begins to worry himself. “Something is wrong,” he tells you in a frantic phone message, “I can hear them.” He begs you to come and help him, and so you do, unsure of what awaits you.

Not a very original start, granted (Inherent Evil and Amber come to mind) but it gets the job done. As you explore the hotel you find notes and letters that further explore the story, and what happened some 60 years ago. The only problem with this approach to the story is that the player is not really experiencing it, just reading about it. It doesn’t get the player involved, and frankly there is quite a lot of it to not get involved in. Several guests all have their own unique backstory and it’s all there to read about, but ultimately none of it is really important in the context of the game. Some notes have clues important to the game, but the story itself is somewhat superfluous, which is disappointing considering how much detail was put into it.

Gameplay: It’s the standard first-person perspective here. Click forward, go forward, click left, go left, etc. Nothing special, but nothing wrong with that either. The puzzles are well executed, fitting well to the environment. The bulk of the game is spent unlocking and understanding the various clues (Make sure you’re taking notes) and putting the pieces together to solve a series of über-puzzles at the very end. Again, nothing we haven’t seen before, but it works well.

The only real problem with playing ties to the story problem. The game world of the hotel is so vast and open ended that there’s really no direction to follow when you’re just starting out. “Find your brother” isn’t really enough to go on here, as he could be just about anywhere. Even after the bigger problem of “defeat the great big nasty evil force” becomes obvious, the way to do this is so extremely unclear that you still don’t really have any clear direction. The game seems to be structured such that goals and solutions present themselves after enough exploration of the environment, which is fine, but the environment itself isn’t all that compelling to explore.

Graphics: The scenery is just so static that it’s kinda dull to look at. The prerendered graphics don’t really catch the eye in any relevant way, aside





from their attention to detail perhaps, and this severely undercuts the “creepy” feel to the game. No scene is really dark or eerie enough to be even slightly frightening. Even the obviously intentionally creepy moments, such as a shadow of a man appearing and disappearing in an instant, or a ghost train roaring by, or the phone ringing with nobody on the other end, aren’t really as creepy as they’re meant to be.

Now maybe this is just me, maybe I’ve watched enough *Twilight Zone* that I’m not scared by very much, but I’d still recommend that Mr. Boakes look into horror/suspense movie direction and scene composition, because this one flaw ends up being a serious detriment to the feel of the game. Otherwise the graphics look fine and well detailed, just not fitting.

Sound: Now here’s where the eeriness is done right. There is just about no music during the game, using mostly a series of worrying ambient sounds. Whispers from floors above, creaking floorboards below, crackling electrical lights and low train rumblings, all timed at just the right moment for optimal fright factor. What little music there is amounts to old music boxes, muted piano from the bar, and sudden dry violin notes,



again, all done very well and timed just right to spook the pants off you. I dare say if the graphics were as creepy as the sound effects you’d have one downright frightening game on your hands.

There isn’t much voice acting in the game (it is an *abandoned* hotel after all) but what little there is seems to be just a bit sub par. This is just a minor quibble and probably owes heavily to the fact that the game was independently produced. Better voice acting may come with the sequel, but again, it’s a minor thing.

In a Few Words... Man, I really want to like this game. I *really* want to be able to say that Jonathan Boakes has put together a thoroughly entertaining and frightening game, but it just isn’t quite there yet. Although it is an excellent example of how good a game can be made by a single guy, the game itself just isn’t quite there yet. It shows promise, it shows potential, and it shows can-do spunk, but dangit, it just isn’t quite there yet. It’s still enjoyable in its way, and it’s kinda creepy, but I’d really like to have seen better, and hope to in the forthcoming sequel.

- Justin Peoples

Information	The Verdict
Title: Dark Fall	Story: 78
Developer: Jonathan Boakes	Graphics: 73
Category: Point and Click	Sound: 82
Perspective: 1st Person	Gameplay: 81
Difficulty: Medium	OVERALL: 78
Site: http://www.xxvproductions.co.uk/darkfall/	* Overall = (2 X Story + 2 X Gameplay + Graphics + Sound) / 6
Sys Req: Win 95/98/2000/XP Pentium 233 MHz, 32MB RAM, 32 bit SVGA	



Since it is the last issue before our summer break, we thought it would be fun to create a list with the 10 most awaited upcoming adventures. The first criticism that every top X list gets is that the list is subjective and that the person who created the list did not think of all the publics etc, etc. In order to save you from the effort I'll say it right away: This top 10 list is highly subjective. No even better...it is the most subjective top 10 list you will ever read. Well actually all Top 10 lists are subjective, but anyway, you get the point.

So now that we covered the subjectivity issue let's go on with our perspective. Because it is always prudent when you are about to present your favourites to let your public know under which perspective you look at the issue at hand. First of all the list consists only of pure adventure games. So if you for example wonder 'where the hell is Dreamfall' you might visit the official site of the game and read its description 'Due for the PC fall 2005, Dreamfall is a third-person action-adventure set in The Longest Journey universe'

Furthermore I personally believe that the story is the cornerstone of every adventure game. Why do I play adventures? The answer here is story. I play adventure games to 'live' a great story. How do I

play adventures? This is where the gameplay comes in. I play adventures by interacting with other characters, by accomplishing tasks and solving problems set to me by the game.

So if you want to know why in my opinion Myst IV does not have a place in the Top 10 list just read the above paragraph once more and spare yourselves the time of expressing your hate towards our list by emailing us, calling us etc. etc.

Now to make up the list of the 10 most awaited adventures I had to bear in mind what has been shown to us from the developing companies and what the developers have said in the interviews. One more thing that I took into consideration is the past products that the certain developers of each adventure have produced.

With all that in mind let's see what the ten most awaited upcoming adventures are. We will start with the last one in the list and we will move on until we reach the game that will win our Most Awaited Adventure Game Award. And oh what a surprise this one is going to be ☺

-Dimitris Manos



Runaway: A Road Adventure was a long awaited point and click cartoon game that had to overcome a lot of problems until it found its way for the game shelves. In the countries where it was published however it managed to win a position in the best selling charts. Therefore it was evident that sooner or later we would see a sequel coming up. The German publisher of Runaway, DTP, announced Runaway 2 a while back. Now Pendulo has even provided adventure press worldwide with the first screenshots of the sequel. In these screenshots we see a very similar style of graphics with the first one, which is a very good thing indeed. Hopefully the cutscenes will also be of high quality this time around.

On the other hand we featured an interview with the developers a while back and when they were asked if the sequel would feature a similar amount of pixel-hunting as the first one, the developers replied with a yes and no answer. So since we do not know if the sequel will feature annoying pixel-hunting and obscure puzzles like the first one I am reluctant to place Runaway II on a higher position than 10. I hope for the best and I am looking forward to Brian and Gina's new adventures!



Bad Timing is an adventure very reminiscent of titles like Day of the Tentacle. The **story** of the game begins when a woman and a one-eyed alien from the future crash their space shuttle in Brett Brennenman's back yard. Brett is the main character of Bad Timing. He is a 23 year old average guy who lives with his parents in a boring suburban neighborhood. Brett's parents are away on a two-day trip out of town when the space shuttle crashes. Brett, offers to help the two unlucky creatures from the future to get back to their time. If he manages to do that in time, he might also be able to fix the lawn of his parents before they return from their trip out of town.

The developers promise logical but at the same time challenging tasks. One kind of puzzles that the game will not feature is mechanical ones as it does not suit the theme of the game. In Bad Timing you will be able to listen to over 30 original music tracks. The graphics will reach resolutions of 640x480. The voice actors chosen so far seem to be doing a great job in portraying the characters of Bad Timing. Will this adventure manage to measure up to previous legends like Day of the Tentacle? We sure can't wait to find out.

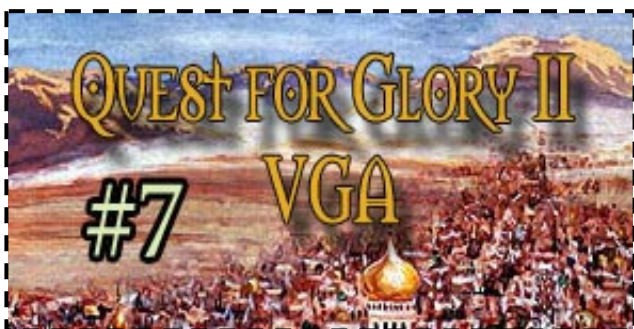


Legacy: Dark Shadows is a 3rd person point and click adventure with 3D characters on 2D backgrounds, much like The Longest Journey and Syberia. The development of the game is already completed and it will be soon released in some European countries.

Let us start with the plot of the game, which according to Razbor Studios, is going to be its strongest point. The story is a blend of science fiction with horror, and spans a very long period of time. The saga of Legacy, starts at the battle of Stalingrad in 1942, where you take control of the first character, Jack Black. Something will happen in this period of time that will affect the future in a very peculiar way. The story jumps 196 years in the future where you take control of the second character, the charming Ren Silver. She works as a PI on a moon station.

The demo we got to play a while back featured an intuitive interface and Legacy reminded me of The Longest Journey in many ways. Promises of an epic storyline with over 40 hours of gameplay place Legacy: Dark Shadows on no 8 of our list. Let's hope it will get published in English soon.





AGDInteractive have already produced two amazing remakes of King's Quest 1 and 2. Especially King's Quest 2 was a masterpiece in every possible way. Amazing graphics, new interface and a new story that most KQ fans considered to be better than the original. I would not know cause I had never played the original but this is what most fans said in the AGDInteractive forums. Now the famous AGDs are working hard on the Quest for Glory 2 remake. This time the AGDs decided to leave the game's story untouched. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Quest for Glory series it is a story about a man who had it in his destiny to become a hero.

First he travelled to the cold north, to the village of Spielberg to rescue the inhabitants from the merciless brigands. Now it is another city that needs our hero's help. This is Shapeir, located in the middle of a hot desert. Will you be able to save this city as well? The Quest for Glory series contained some RPG elements also. In the beginning of the game you get to choose if you will become a fighter, a wizard or a thief. The AGDs have mentioned that they will probably improve the way to move from one location to another that was quite bothersome in the original. If it wasn't a remake, this title would be among our 2,3 first choices. I am sure that when AGDInteractive decides to make an original title they will win one of the first places on the list.

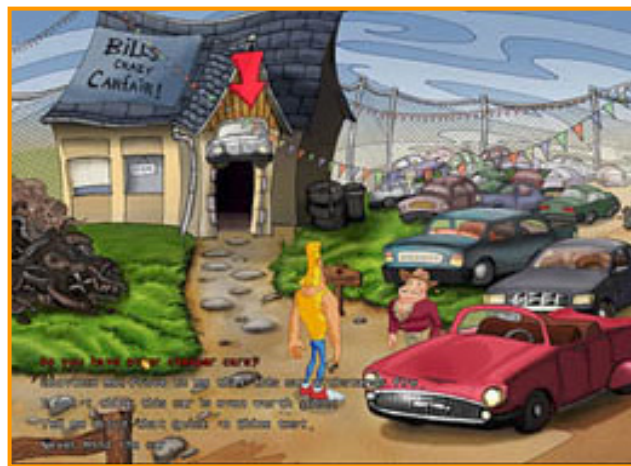


Project Joe is a cartoon 2D adventure. And this is something we have not seen been done right in quite a while. The first showings give promises of a great artistic talent in terms of graphics. Even the voice-overs are sounding extremely professional for a project that until recently was self-funded.

Now rumour has it that the developers of Project Joe are near to sign a deal with a European publisher. A little bird also told us that the game features some of the most hilarious lines ever heard in adventure games.

Joe is a lowlife scum who lives in the unnamed City and is an owner of a joint called Crowbar. When Joe refuses to sell his place to Otto Bay, a wicked influential investor, Otto decides to find alternative ways to take him off the way to financial dominance. Otto takes away the privilege of the bar's ownership by Joe. As if Otto was not already enough trouble for Joe, the local Mafia, who found the Crowbar a cosy place to carry out their proceedings and do not want to miss their good old hideout, demand from Joe to take care of the issue.

The graphics will reach a resolution as high as 1024x728. If this adventure is as good as it sounds then prepare for a lot of fun in front of your monitors! It was about time someone published this one!

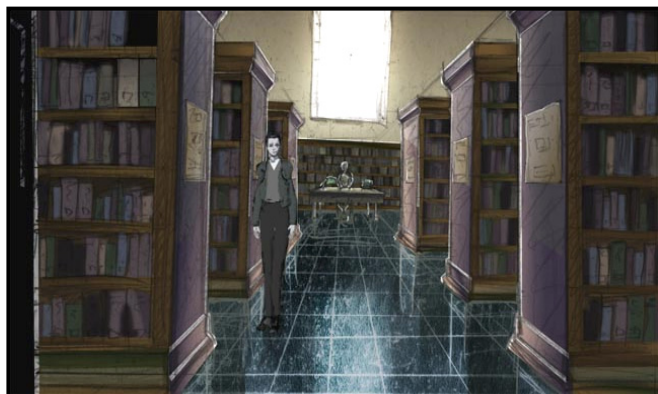




Shadowplay has this off-beat vibe about it that makes it stand out from the rest of the adventures in our list. The original and unusual graphic style draws the attention right away. A story that is inspired by the Gabriel Knight games and by movies of distinguished personalities like David Lynch and Darren Aronofsky. Felix Drott, the developer of Shadowplay sure has put some task ahead of him.

In Shadowplay you take the role of Dinah Burroughs, a film archivist who rediscovers a long forgotten director's film, which happens to have a certain hypnotic effect. Dinah begins her search, reading reviews and interviews, trying to track down copies of Gray's other films. But Gray's career appears as complex as his life: His early German films, censored for their madness; a rumored collaboration with Orson Welles; accusations of Nazi sympathies, then of being a Communist. And finally, his premature death in 1947. The real journey starts when Dinah decides to track down the three people who came to Gray's funeral: the aging movie star, the blind cinematographer and the screenwriter. The story will blend real facts with fiction, just like the Gabriel Knight series did.

With a storyline that sounds extremely intriguing, a unique graphic style, and an innovative gameplay, Shadowplay is an adventure you should definitely keep an eye on.



King's Quest IX: Every Cloak has a Silver Lining is probably the most ambitious and largest non-commercial project with loads of members working on it as we speak. Since the team has received the blessings of Roberta Williams herself I have no reservations of introducing this title in no 4 of our list. The team behind King's Quest 9, dared to try something that few had tried before... an adventure that combines a point and click interface with a 3D environment.

The game begins with Graham, as he travels through the Green Isles looking for a way to break a dark enchantment that has befallen the lands. However, as he delves more and more into it, he starts finding there is much more to what he thought was a simple enchantment. From this point on, the game explodes into a rollercoaster of different adventures, as he and his twin children, Alexander and Rosella, learn a shocking truth about themselves, Valanice and Graham's past, a prophecy that has been expanding for a thousand years and that revolves around the twins, and two strange societies, acting as a mirror to one another, to which they are intrinsically tied.

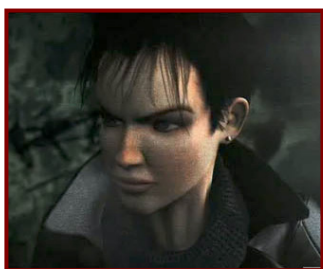
The team behind this game seems to have captured the King's Quest spirit in a sequel that combines new technology with classic adventure elements. They have even held live auditions to hire actors for the game. With so much effort being put into KQ9 one cannot help but have high hopes for it.



#3 Still Life

Microids are probably one of the most supportive publishers for adventure games nowadays. They have released Syberia 1,2 and Post Mortem all in the recent years and as you probably already read in our Lounge this month they have even more adventures in the works. Still Life is one of them and it is promoted as a blend between Syberia and Post Mortem.

The story is somehow related to Post Mortem, since Victoria, the main heroine of Still Life is the granddaughter of Gus McPherson, the male lead of Post Mortem. Actually Gus McPherson is one of the playable characters of Still Life along with Victoria! The developers also promise that Still Life will have similar technical features to the highly acclaimed Syberia series.



Victoria, who is working as a field agent in Chicago, is in the footsteps of a serial killer and she has to trace him through thorough investigation and puzzle solving. The events of the present are also somehow connected with the events of the past, during the time when Gus McPherson was in Prague.

Microids have made quite a name for themselves when it comes to graphics and audio. This is where I believe Still Life will excel as well featuring 3D characters on 2D prerendered backgrounds (like Syberia). On the other hand titles developed by Microids have had serious game design flaws.

Some examples that come to mind are a) the low interactivity, and especially the empty screens and the silent lead of the Syberia series b) the flawed dialogue interface and the illogical puzzles (portrait, lockpicks) of Post Mortem c) The obscure mechanical puzzles that were not intertwined in the story of Syberia 2

However the developers claim that all this will be taken care in Still Life. According to what they stated in the interview in this month's lounge, Victoria will be much more vocal than Kate Walker and she won't have to solve mechanical puzzles that come out of nowhere. The empty screens will be far less than in Syberia and the dialogue interface is different to anything we've seen from Microids so far.

Therefore we have high hopes for this title. No matter how good it will be however, it will hardly be as revolutionary as our next entry in the Top 10 upcoming adventures list.



WESTERNER

#2

2D or not 2D? A lot of developers have tried to produce adventures with 3D graphics but have failed in the process, with Jane Jensen and Gabriel Knight 3 being the only exception so far. Unfortunately lots of developers have a misconception that if you are going to use 3D graphics you must make your game also more action-oriented.

Some Spanish developers however had a different opinion. Some time ago we had received a demo version and a lot of material from Revivtronic and although the demo was in Spanish I have to say that what I played and understood was fun and entertaining in a way that I have not experienced in quite a while. The graphics were astonishing. No blocky characters and the cartoon style felt right in place with the 3D graphics. The interface seemed to work much better than any other 3D adventure I've played to date, albeit with small flaws here and there that did not however ruin at all the gaming experience.

Fenimore Fillmore is one of those characters that you just like from the first moment you see him. Although I did not understand what he was saying I could understand from the way he talked, walked and moved in general that he is one of those characters that are rather naïve but heroic at the same time. From the little tasks I managed to accomplish, I got the impression that the developers tried hard to incorporate the gameplay with the storyline.

In terms of originality the Westerner is both a hit and a miss. A hit because we do not see many games with a western theme nowadays plus a 3D adventure with a point and click interface is something that has not been done before from a commercial adventure developer. It is a miss

because the main character resembles the hero of Toy Story – don't tell that to the developers though cause they will have Fenimore waiting with his weapons loaded outside your door!

The Westerner has received raving reviews in some European countries where it is already released from both adventure and non-adventure press. The most common complaint of the reviewers was the numerous bugs throughout the game. Since however the developers have allegedly managed to correct those bugs for the German version I suppose the same goes for the English one as well.

I personally cannot wait for the game to come out. If the story is interesting and funny, if the gameplay is logical and if the voice performances are at least above average then we will be talking about an instant hit. And if it becomes a hit it might prove once and for all that point and click and 3D is the way to go for adventure games.

Since previous 3D direct control titles have failed to prove otherwise it should not be that difficult. But now let's leave Fenimore Fillmore and let's move on to the big surprise we have for you. The winner of our Most Awaited Adventure Game Award. So ladies and gentlemen we are proud to present to you...



AUTUMN MOON ENTERTAINMENT

presents

A VAMPYRE STORY

*** WINNER OF THE MOST-AWAITED ADVENTURE GAME AWARD ***

- The Inventors, June 2004

We are proud to present to our readers, for the first time ever worldwide, the adventure with the name 'A Vampyre Story' from Autumn Moon Entertainment. What? Who? Where? Let's take one thing at a time. Once upon a time there was a company called Lucasfilms. One beautiful sunny day (actually I have no idea, it might have been raining like hell for all I know...but anyway that's not the point) this company decided that they would create high-quality games for the PC.

This decision gave us the chance to play great masterpieces and best selling titles like the Monkey Island games, The Dig, Indiana Jones, Zak McKracken, Day of the Tentacle etc, etc. And while all was nice and gamers around the globe were happy, suddenly during the 90s the management of the company who have now changed their name to Lucasarts, decided that instead of creating original titles with interesting stories they would produce dull, unoriginal Star Wars spin-offs instead.

The fans were infuriated, and so were some of the developers. Some of them were laid off, others left

on their own. A bunch of those that left however, thought 'hey, it was not the management that created the games, it was us!' So they went on to create their own company called Autumn Moon Entertainment. And what a better way to start their endeavour than a point and click adventure in the style of Monkey Island!!!

Yes my fellow adventurers, you read right. Some ex-Lucasarts developers have formed their own company called Autumn Moon Entertainment and they are currently developing a point and click adventure called A Vampyre Story. Here comes the press release in its entirety as given to us by Autumn Moon.

AUTUMN MOON ENTERTAINMENT FORMED BY EX LUCAS ARTS DEVELOPERS ANNOUNCES A VAMPYRE STORY™, A HUMOROUS GOTHIC ADVENTURE GAME FOR XBOX AND PC

Expected for Release Summer 2006, new Adventure game to Utilize Virtools Engine Technology™

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – JUNE 9, 2004 – Autumn Moon, a collection of ex Lucas Arts adventure game developers

announces that development has been underway on **A VAMPYRE STORY™** a funny and loving tribute to the Universal gothic horror movies of the 1930's and 1940's. It is a traditional gothic point and click adventure game that will have beautifully hand rendered backgrounds with fully animated 3d characters. **A VAMPYRE STORY™** will utilize the acclaimed Virtools™ engine technology made popular by games like The Adventure Company's *Syberia*.

Targeted for release fall 2006, **A VAMPYRE STORY™** will bring back the traditional humorous "point and click" adventure game play popular in the 90's, but with 21st century technology. The player controls a coquettish vampire name Mona De La Fete, and her sidekick, the wise cracking Froderick the bat, as they tromp all over 1880's Europe in quest to return Mona to her home. Traditional movie monsters and villains will challenge them at every turn. The gothic world of **A VAMPYRE STORY™** will be a mixture of the mysterious and beautiful, as well being playful and fun.

About Autumn Moon Entertainment

Autumn Moon Entertainment company is a new developer of interactive, television and print entertainment. Based in San Rafael, Calif., as well as on the Internet at www.amegames.com. Autumn Moon was created in 2004 by a group of ex Lucas Arts developers who wanted to create adventure games and original high quality intellectual properties for television, interactive software, graphics novels and other media.

Autumn Moon Entertainment is a privately held, fully integrated entertainment company. In addition to its adventure game and television production operations, the company's other activities include graphic novels and animated shorts.

We went on and asked the developers a few questions about the game. Obviously since *Vampyre Story* is in early development stages we could only ask a limited amount of questions. The questions were answered by *Mike Kirchoff*, Director of Business Development of Autumn Moon Entertainment.

“Well, being a vampire is cool, but it has its draw backs, namely because your dead, and there are all these vampire rules you have to follow

Could you expand a bit on the game's story? Why is Mona away from her home and what's her connection with the bat?

Mona was an up and coming opera star when she caught the attention of the nefarious vampire, Baron Shrowdy Von Kiefer. He was so taken with



I've got three letters for you...w...o...w

Mona he kidnapped her, turned her into a vampire and spirited her away to his island castle in Draxsylvania, a small eerie mountain country deep in the wilds of Eastern Europe. Froderick was one of the many bats that inhabited the castle belfry. Over the many years of Mona's captivity, Froderick became her closest friend and companion. He likes to joke around a lot and his humor was the only thing that kept Mona's spirits up during that dark time. He likes to hang out with her, literally, because he simply has nothing better to do. Hanging out with a leggy ingénue sounds better than another night of guano fights in the belfry.

What kind of problems are the players going to be faced with in *Vampyre Story*?

Well, being a vampire is cool, but it has its draw backs, namely because your dead, and there are all these vampire rules you have to follow or you quickly get turned into a big pile of smoking ash.

And for some reason everyone wants to help you find eternal rest. Though the 'rest' part sounds good, the 'eternal' part Mona would like to put off, at least until she can star in the Paris Opera, her life's (or rather un-life's) goal. Mona is a bit naive about what has happened to her so she has little command over her unusual abilities.

As the player progresses through the game, Mona will learn how to turn into a bat, hypnotize people,

turn into a gaseous form, and of course, bite people on the neck and drain them of blood, but not too much blood. After all, Mona is a stage performer and she needs to watch her figure. Other powers may be added as well, like the ability to summon wolves, bats and rats, and to control the weather.

The graphic style of the game is very close to the Curse of Monkey Island. Is the gameplay going to be of a similar nature as well?

Very much so. We even like to describe A Vampyre Story as Monkey Island meets Dracula. Since all the people helping design the game are ex Lucas Arts developers, the game will naturally have a strong resemblance to those classic Lucas games of the nineties. The big difference between our game and the old Lucas games is the Gothic horror subject matter. The developers of Monkey Island games wanted the player to actually do what pirates did - find treasure, fire cannons, sword fight, etc.

“We even like to describe A Vampyre Story as Monkey Island meets Dracula”

Similar to that, we want the player to do the things a vampire would do like turn into a bat, explore creepy castles, hang out with your buddies in the crypt, hypnotize people, run from torch wielding mobs, and so on. So many, if not most of the puzzles, will revolve around just being a vampire. We will explore the fun possibilities of such powers and restrictions. And of course humor will heavily factor into the puzzle structure as well.



Monkey Island meets Dracula

Could you tell us how the interface is going to work?

It will be a radial, or ‘coin interface,’ much like Full Throttle and Curse of Monkey Island, but it will be expandable like the radial interface used by the RPG Neverwinter Nights. As the player progresses through the game, more vampire powers will be added to the radial sub menu. This will correspond to Mona’s progress toward understanding what she has become. As she learns about her powers, the player will then get to use them to help solve puzzles. But the rest of the interface will work just like the one for Curse of Monkey Island.

The three exceptions are using Froderick, the hint system, and Mona’s journal. An icon of Froderick will appear in the inventory and can be used to help solve puzzles; very similar to how Max was used in Sam n Max Hit The Road. Also the player can talk to Froderick and ask him for more detailed story exposition or hints for some of the tougher

puzzles. A journal of what Mona has done and what puzzles she is currently trying to solve will also be accessible. This way players who haven’t played the game in a while can easily pick up where they left off.

Do you have a release date planned?

Since we are still in discussion with publishers we can’t say. But we all feel a release date around Halloween of ’05 would be appropriate.

In the press release you state that the company is formed by ex Lucas Arts developers. Could you mention some of the games that these developers have worked on before?

That is a long list, but here goes: Monkey Island 2, Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis, Maniac Mansion 2: Day of the Tentacle, Sam N Max Hit The Road, Full Throttle, Steven Spielberg’s The Dig, Rebel Assault, Outlaws, Curse of Monkey Island, Grim Fandango, Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine, Escape from Monkey Island, and two unreleased Lucas Arts games: Indiana Jones and the Iron Phoenix and Full Throttle 2.

None of the team works for Lucas Arts anymore, but we miss the Halcyon days of Lucas Arts adventure game development. The team wants to experience all that fun again, and we want the player too as well. So many people we have run into the last few years remember fondly that period in adventure games, and share stories of how they and their family or friends experienced those game together, sometimes staying up all night, and how much fun it all was. The team on A Vampyre Story just feels there is no reason why adventure game players can't have that experience again.

Is the computer game industry the only area you aim for or do you plan to move into other fields as well, like television, comic books or cinema?

Yes, Autumn Moon Entertainment is in discussion with a satellite cartoon channel about A Vampyre Story animated series. We think it would be a great series. Many on the team have worked previously in movies and television on such projects as Toy Story 2, Hell Boy, and Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow. And we have a lot of friends and associates who work on animated TV shows. So it just seems like a logical path to explore. Making A Vampyre Story graphic novel is another medium we are considering too.

I think it is obvious why A Vampyre Story won our Most Awaited Adventure Game Award. It seems like the days when we all wished for an adventure game with the high quality standards of the former-Lucasarts to no avail, are about to come to an end.

The people behind Autumn Moon Entertainment have the expertise that was missing for so long from the adventure game industry. A Vampyre Story is the best news the adventure genre has had this year. People were disappointed that Sam and Max and Full Throttle 2 went down the drain. On the other hand people never bothered to ponder whether these two games would be true adventures or another humiliation of



Even the inventory is carefully designed

legendary series like we have seen so many times in the past. These two games were not even made by their original creators for crying out loud. Now however we have the people that made Lucasarts the big company it once was, working on a product tailored for and focused on the adventure gamer.

Imagine this... it is a cold autumn night. You insert the CD and install A Vampyre Story in your hard drive. You run the game and you are instantly transferred into Mona's world. A world where every corner hides another funny incident. A world where you can explore everything with one click. A world where every character will stay in mind for a long time to come.

I hope dear readers that you do not mind my slightly less professional stance in the last two paragraphs. But apart from an adventure journalist I am also a person that loves adventures, a long-time fan. And in these times when a good adventure comes every 2,3 years it is difficult to draw the line between fan and journalist when one of these titles are announced.

Before we finish, I would like to make clear that Autumn Moon Entertainment is in no way related and in no way associated to TellTale games, another company formed by ex-Lucasarts developers. And of course you should expect further in-depth coverage on A Vampyre Story in our future issues. Publishers or members of the press interested in the game might want to contact *Mike Kirchoff*, Director of Business Development at mikek@amegames.com

- Dimitris Manos

TOP 10 UPCOMING ADVENTURES

Wrap-up

Title	Developer	Site
1. A Vampyre Story	Autumn Moon Entertainment	www.amegames.com
2. The Westerner	Revistronic	www.revistronic.com
3. Still Life	Microids	www.stilllife-game.com
4. King's Quest IX	Phoenix Freeware	www.kq9.org
5. Shadowplay	Felix Drott	N/A
6. Project Joe	Synthetix	php.hku.nl/~jeroen16/synthetix/project_joe/
7. Quest for Glory 2 VGA	AGDInteractive	www.agdinteractive.com
8. Legacy: Dark Shadows	Razbor Studios	www.legacythegame.com
9. Bad Timing	Empty House	www.justadventure.com/IndependentDevs
10. Runaway 2	Pendolo	www.pendulostudios.com

Discussion: There were a number of titles that were considered but for several reasons they were left out. Some of these titles that are worth mentioning are Lost Paradise by White Birds Productions, Nibiru and Ron Loo by Future Games, Sherlock Holmes by Frogwares, Indiana Jones and the Fountain of Youth by Screen 7 Entertainment and the unofficial Space Quest 7. We did not have enough information yet for Nibiru, Sherlock Holmes, Space Quest 7 and Ron Loo to judge whether they should be on the list or not. Same goes for Lost Paradise. I had the chance to watch a very early demo of the game but this demo consisted just of a character walking.

As for Indiana Jones and the Fountain of Youth although it looks as an amazing game we do not know if the developers have heard any word from the developers of the original Indiana Jones adventures. On the other hand we do know that AGDInteractive and Phoenix Freeware have both received word from the Coles and Roberta Williams respectively.

You might also wonder why there are no 1st person adventures in the list. Right now there are no first person adventures that look promising under our perspective for the near future. Most of them seem either stuck to a navigation system that is just confusing and totally non-immersive or are plagued by horrible game designs of the 'hmm my game is short, let's put a slider in there to make it longer' sort. The only 1st person adventure that in my opinion might deserve a place in the top 10 would be the upcoming Law and Order game but we have no information whatsoever on that title for the time being.

If there are any conclusions that can be made from the above list then this would be that we have a resurgence of comedy adventures and slowly but progressively developers are widening their horizons. If you notice the story genres in the list are anything from comedy, adventure and horror to western, science fiction and fantasy. Let's just hope that most, if not all, of these projects will be completed and that we will get to play them soon.

Feel free to send us your comments on the Top-10 Upcoming Adventures list at theinventory@yahoo.com

-Dimitris Manos

It's time to see what our readers had to say to us. And keep sending your comments and questions to the team of this magazine at theinventory@yahoo.com. After the summer we will also send a notification email to the people who want to know when the next issue of The Inventory is going to be out and what are its contents going to be. If you want to receive these notification e-mails all you have to do is to send us an email with 'Subscribe' as the e-mail's subject. Now let's move on to the mails we received this month.

Hi, I am unable to give you all the thanks that I've collected since November 2002 to give you for the greatest magazine in the whole cosmos. I always thought that one day would come that I would share the most amazing part of my life with others. Hopefully that day has come at last. It's a bit odd looking but I start from the very beginning.... Mahmud who first saw P.C. when he was a student of class VI, thought that he would play Doom '95 (which he heard from his friends or relatives over thousands of times) when he would own a P.C. After passing class VII he got a new friend and probably the best friend in his life named Tabassum who told him about a game, which had a story of a girl who had nightmares.....

The boy found a copy of that game from a well wisher, and went to a friend's house to play it. Installing the game he came to see a girl wearing a white dress and, yes! That was the start. Along with his best friend the boy finished the game in 7 months carrying a lot of thoughts about adventure gaming. The boy had promised himself to be a collector and a player of adventure games. Believing no matter what would come in his way, the boy took his first step in the longest journey of his life. Now when that boy is writing this mail, aged 18 years he can say that he have all the adventure games that can be found in his country, and he devotes one side of his life for adventure gaming.

Sometime I see straight to the sky to find the apex of my bluish love for the adventure, and when I hear my brother, who is the best boy in the world saying that my love will end one day, I become lost in the maze of my thoughts and come to realize, the unlimited love, emotion and feelings that adventure games are giving me can't be ended. As the sound of tides of the sea from the shell of a snail won't stop, my love for adventure won't stop too. In our country we have to buy pirated games or software, cause here we can't be able to find the original ones. Not only piracy that affects our gaming, but also the volume of game is compressed by pulling out the soundtracks and movie sequences. Believe it or not, our TLJ was of one disc (now I have 4 discs' TLJ)!

Dimit, I don't know how I can say it, I want to be a master like you, although I am a boy with no potentiality, but the only thing that I have is my wish, powerful wish to be the very best. My amma (in our language to call our mother) always said me "Shuvra (my nick name) do what you want to do but whatever you do, give your best try". I always want to begin my story where it ends, but this time the story ends where it begins.

Goodbye,

May the one who've created you to be the very best bless you.

-Mahmud.

The Inventory: Hello Mahmud. I'm absolutely flattered by your letter. But I am no master... I'm just a guy giving his honest opinion about adventure games and dedicating a lot of time on something I love. And don't forget that it is not just me that is writing this magazine, but all the rest of the people who have contributed with articles since the beginning. I don't know what you want to do in your life, but whatever it is I hope you will succeed in it. I also hope that the situation with adventures in your country will get better. Thank you for writing this flattering by all means email.

Hi, I liked your stuff on Midnight Nowhere and Black Mirror but I don't think you where hard enough on Mysterious Journey 2 I played that game and I thought it was the worst I have ever played out the many I have played. It was a FPS with Puzzles and that is a combination that I don't think goes together. An FPS gamer would like the interface and controls but would hate the puzzles. An adventure gamer would hate the interface and the puzzles were too hard besides.

Continued--->

The story was non-existent because so much time was spent fighting the puzzles and the interface that you couldn't keep track of it if it even had one. I have over 350 games, most of them adventures, and I would say that is the worst game ever created. Another thing that was very bad is they named it after a good normal type adventure game making it look like a sequel which it definitely was not.

All in all it was a very good magazine, though and I read them all. Keep up the good work.

Jim

The Inventory: Dear Jim, I was not the person who reviewed MJ2 so I cannot comment on it. Thank you however for sharing your thoughts on the game. Feedback is indeed a funny thing. Not much time after the release of the magazine, there were some people on the JA forums complaining that we rated MJ2 very low. It is quite evident that you can never please everyone when you state an opinion. I just hope that our readers take the reviews for what they really are... opinions.

Hey Dimitris, I'm Flynn from Budapest, Hungary. I read your magazine from the very first time, and all I can say is: congratulations! You've made great interviews, nice reviews (but I don't understand, what's your problem with Chameleon and Uru? The gameplay is one of the most important things which makes them unique). Actually, I'm a little jealous, because the Inventory wasn't my idea. But you made it! And now a lot of people read your magazine in a lot of countries. Keep going! Sorry my bad English but here the time is 1:52 am ;-).

Best Regards:

Flynn, reviewer of HC.Gamer

<http://www.hcgamer.hu>

The Inventory: Hello Flynn and thank you for the kind comments. I can't comment on Chameleon since it was not me that played/reviewed the game but what I did not like about the gameplay of URU is that it consisted only of looking for clothes pieces on walls and solving obscure and poorly integrated puzzles. Furthermore the interface became more of a chore than an asset. Good luck with your reviewing career and thank you again for taking the time to write to us and for your kind comments.

Hello Dimitry, First of all - sorry for my English. I wonder why you paid so much attention to non-profit adventures and absolutely ignore the sector of flash-adventures. For example, forum <http://www.the-geek.com/forum/> filled with links to many good online adventures. I'm personally very impressed by "Arcane" and "Adventures of Dr. Steppenwolf" series from great Sarbakan. And in the end - I will be very glad seeing more info about LucasArts adventures. I think what you're too concerned on games from Sierra. And in the very end - you do a great job, we all with you.

Best regards,

Totoro

The Inventory: Hello Totoro. Thank you for the tip on flash online adventures. It is impossible to know about every last adventure produced all around the world on all possible formats. So it is not as if we knew about these adventures and ignored them in purpose. Thank you however for pointing them out for us. I will take a look at them during the summer.

Now regarding too much focus on Sierra adventures and too less focus on LucasArts adventures...if that is really the case then it is simply a coincidence and by no means was it our purpose. If you look at the Top 10 list of upcoming adventures, no 1 is an adventure created by ex-LucasArts developers. We will see what we can do however on covering more old LucasArts adventures. Thank you again.

Epilogue

We are indeed very proud and happy to go away for the summer with the announcement of A Vampyre Story. Let's all hope that the project will be completed and that it will sell well in order for these developers to establish a company that will provide us with high-quality adventures for many years to come. It is a chance that the adventure community cannot afford to lose.

As I said in the prologue this might be the last issue of The Inventory that is being available for free. It is not 100% certain that the next issue will be given for a small fee but everything indicates that this is what the Inventory will turn into from September. Our efforts for sponsorship and donations have failed due to the nature of the publication and the unwillingness of most people to donate. It is however vital for the survival of the magazine that it will return some income for the enormous amount of time spent on its production.

If you want to stay up-to-date with the latest news on The Inventory do not forget to send us an email with the subject title 'Subscribe' . And if you want to become one of The Inventory's writers feel free to send us your applications. If you feel like donating some money for our efforts with The Inventory, you can do so from www.paypal.com (send money to theinventory@yahoo.com)

It has been an unfortunate year for adventure games with many disappointments, mediocre titles and cancellations of promising adventures. But taking a look at the top 10 list of upcoming adventures is filling me with hope for the future. I hope it does the same for you too.

For the future to be brighter though, some things have to change in the adventure community. I addressed some of these points in last month's Hydra column. Let's hope that the situation will change to the better soon enough, before we see more worthy titles going down the drain.

Well, dear readers...that's all from our side. From everyone who has written for The Inventory this past year, have a wonderful, relaxing and invigorating summer. Now it's time for me to turn off the computer and go out to the sun for a change!

Dimitris Manos
Editor
The Inventory

The Inventory

A magazine for adventure games only

WE ARE LOOKING FOR SPONSORS

DID YOU KNOW YOU CAN LINK TO
A WEBSITE FROM A PDF DOCUMENT?

WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADVERTISE
YOUR PRODUCTS IN THE INVENTORY?

IN THAT CASE SEND US AN E-MAIL AT

theinventory@yahoo.com