

The Inventory

for adventure games only



tony tough 2 REVEALED!!

First in-game screenshots
and interview with the developers
and the publishers of the game

Bad Brain Entertainment

Interview with the new German
company that shook the adventure
world in our birthday party with the
announcement of A Vampyre Story

The Inventory Awards 2004

Find out which adventures released
in 2004 won one or more of our 17
awards in our extra PDF booklet that
we release this month

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Prologue

Credits

Editor:

Dimitris Manos

Authors/Contributors:

Alex ASP

Ben Keeney

Dimitris Manos

Justin Peebles

Oliver Gruener

Hosts:

www.theinventory.org

www.justadventure.com

Layout:

Dimitris Manos

Cover Art:

Tony Tough 2

Contact Information

Address:

The Inventory Magazine

Grankottevägen 55 A

Örebro 702 82

Sweden

E-mail address:

theinventory@yahoo.com

d.manos@theinventory.org

Phone No:

+46702053444

Other Editions

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The holidays are just around the corner, and it is time for everyone to look back at this year and ponder about how did it go, and how can things go better in the next year. You have a good chance to get a wrap-up of the adventure world in 2004 in our Awards 2004 booklet.

Speaking of 2004...those of you who missed our birthday party, well you just about missed the biggest adventure event of the year. What else would you call an event where Autumn Moon Entertainment announce that they found a publisher, where Microids say that they are thinking about releasing Syberia 3 and where Bad Brain Entertainment, publishers of A Vampyre Story, announce that they are in negotiations with Lucasarts about an adventure game that we all wanted to get in 2004 but we never did - except from a fine trailer (hint: do the names Sam and Max ring a bell?). And that's not all... but you can get a nice recap of the party in our issue, where we summarize the main news from each developer.

And since Bad Brain just about fired up every adventurer out there with their announcements, and they are currently funding the most hyped up adventure right now, A Vampyre Story, how could we ever let them get away without an interview? Wolfgang Kierdorf from Bad Brain and Bill Tiller (yes the Bill Tiller of The Dig and the Curse of Monkey Island fame) from Autumn Moon, talk to us about A Vampyre Story, that game with the trailer and all the other projects of theirs in an interview spanning 10 pages!

Another exciting publisher/developer duo, DTP and Prograph reveal through the pages of The Inventory for the first time ever, in-game screenshots of the prequel to the comic adventure Tony Tough. DTP and Pippo from Adventure-Corner.de offered us one more comic, this time based on Tony Tough.

Star Heritage is a very interesting upcoming 1st person adventure coming from the Step Creative Group. Our reporter from Russia, Alex ASP, tells us all about it. In the reviews this month, we take a look at Law & Order: Justice is Served, the English version of The Moment of Silence, and Weekend at Capri.

Well time for me to log out. We hope that you enjoy our last issue for 2004! And don't miss our offer to the adventure community on the back cover of this issue.

Dimitris Manos

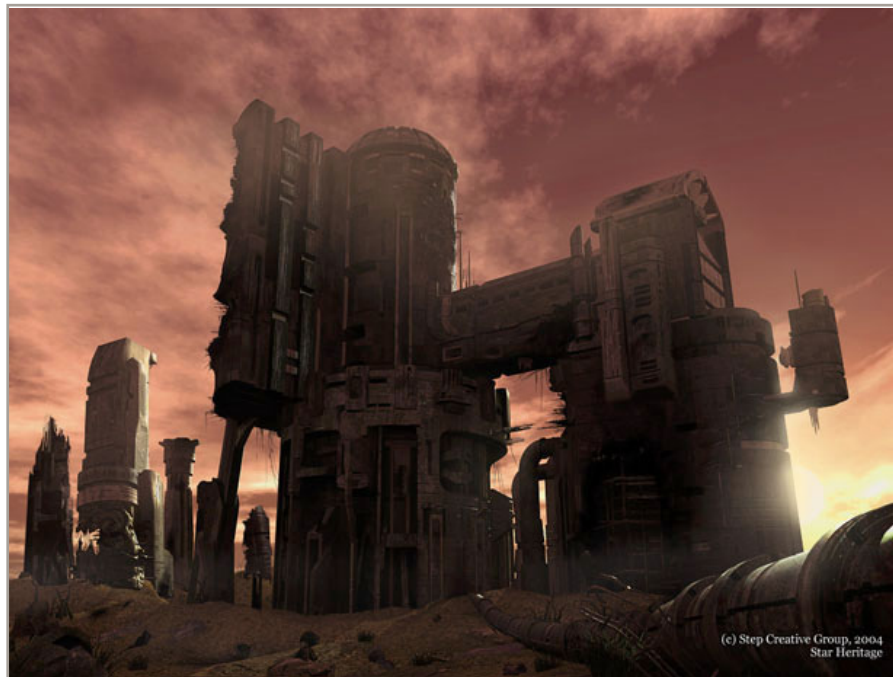
STAR HERITAGE

How do they start space operas? Oh, this way... "Long, long ago in the Galaxy far, far away..."

In 1995 a Russian company Step Creative Group released Star Heritage, an adventure game for the ZX-Spectrum computer, which was very popular at that time in ex-USSR. The game quickly became a hit and even non-adventure players found it quite interesting. Now, 10 years after the release of the original game, Step Creative Group returns with a PC remake of this space adventure.

"The Universe was plunged into darkness. Toadlike creatures, invaders from the depths of space, armed with powerful weapons and supertechnologies, managed to subdue Mankind. However, several centuries of occupation and unquestionable reign of the Artangs hadn't broken the humans' spirit. The Earth was secretly preparing for War. Weapons were smuggled onto unprotected planets by space trade lines. Secret agents of the Earth, disguised as common merchants, carried out important missions for the Resistance. Opposed by omnipresent Artang patrols, those caught violating the law immediately met death. Our hero however managed to survive in this unequal fight. Having lost his ship, communications, and the secret cargo, he found himself on an unknown planet..."

In this game you play the role of Earth's secret agent, helping



The clouds will be animated in Star Heritage

the human coalition in the struggle with alien invaders. As fate would have it, you have found yourself on an unknown planet, not registered in any space catalogue, a long way away from any space trade lines. Your main goal is to leave the planet and continue the struggle for Mankind's freedom. However, the way home is long and hard. Your travels as the protagonist become a sequence of surprising finds and discoveries, which unexpectedly reveal to him the most treasured mysteries of the Universe. This newfound knowledge may yet play a key role in the struggle against the Artangs".

First of all, time is not standing still in this game and it has a

great impact on the story line. So, going a dark lane at night, you can encounter a local gangster grouping, but if you pass the same place in the afternoon or in the evening you'll meet nobody. Second, you can solve some problems in different ways. Moreover, authors of the project plan to add even more global alternative ways of moving through the story. It may turn out that the protagonist will start to work for Artangs either involuntarily or by his own will. In all cases the game will end at the same location but how - it will depend on what have you done while playing. That will be several "right" endings, not that "right" and "wrong" ones.

The game is designed for a

1024x768 resolution and has a 1st person view. You'll see animated pre-rendered backgrounds: the clouds will move in the sky, the birds will fly, the grass will sway etc. Just imagine The Black Mirror without a Samuel Gordon or Syberia without a Kate Walker on a screen, and you'll understand. As time is not a static thing in this game, you'll see that appearance of places you visit will change as time passes by. It is quite possible that weather effects will also be implemented in the game. How many video cutscenes will be in the game is still not decided but authors promise at least 3 of them. All characters (and foes you'll meet) will be presented as 3D models with 6000-8000 polygons each.

Soundtrack will consist of 15 music pieces in electronics/ambient style which fits the game quite nice. One of these tracks you can download from the official site of the game (though it is a bit hidden - it is for some reasons not in a download section but linked in the news <http://stepgames.com/index.php?newid=16>). The soundtrack will also be available as an audio CD. later Authors promise high-quality 3D sound and special effects. Nothing is known about voiceovers except that they will be present in the game.

Prepare yourselves - there is combat. It is an Adventure/RPG game and that is why you'll not be able just to run through a bunch of locations - you'll need to find food and to rest. The protagonist will have 3 parameters: Health, Strength and Stamina. If your Health falls to zero, you die. The higher the Strength, the more powerful is your attack during combat, the higher the Stamina - the

lesser enemy will damage you. All the parameters are interconnected and can be improved during the game.

The main principle of combat sequences is a turn-based fight. You see a 3D monster, choose a part of its body you want to attack and then click your mouse button. You'll have a limited amount time to make an attack and then the enemy will attack you. While aiming an attack you also need to pay attention to the Hit Power parameter and click the mouse button when it has a higher value. Each monster has its own vulnerable zones, hitting them will make more damage to monster. The weapon you attack with also has an effect on the damage you make. You'll not be able to buy or sell your weapon neither will there be armor as an item that will increase your stamina during combat. One may wonder how often you will have to fight in the game. Authors say that in the first episode there'll be at least 4 fighting sequences - the maximum depends on the way you choose to play.

Going to puzzles, the game

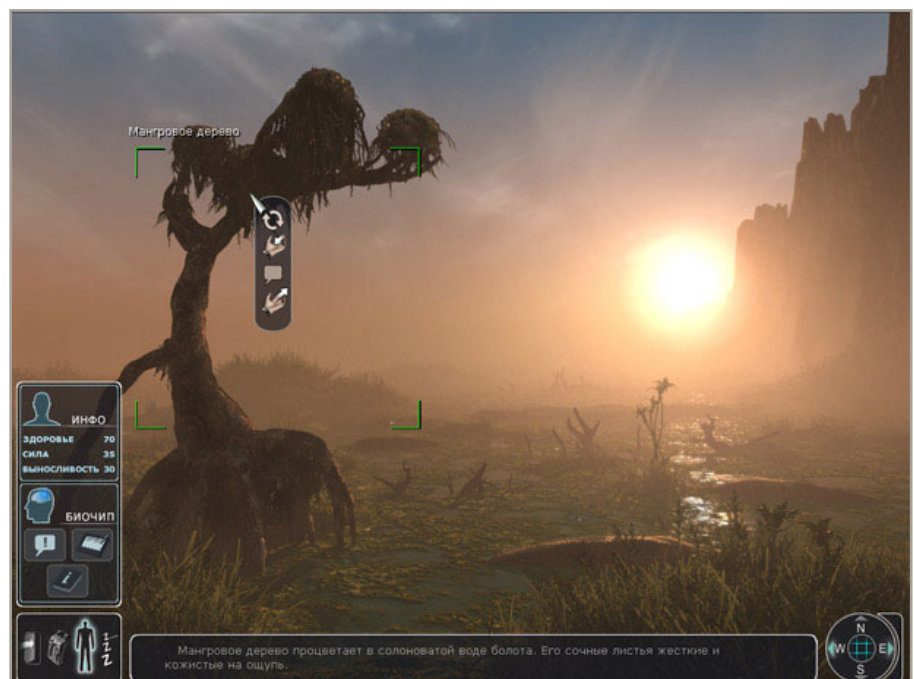


Another jaw-dropping view from Star Heritage



This is an entrance to a tunnel

Below: This is how the interface is going to look like





Some kind of nest



You will be able to visit each location both during day and night

will feature different ones. "First puzzle you'll find right at the first location. The protagonist is severely wounded due to the crash of his spaceship, so he'll be not able to exit the first location without finding a regenerative ampoule in the remains of the spaceship". As I mentioned earlier there will be some puzzles that you can solve in different ways and some of these ways will be tied to the time of the day. The time of the day changes when you move over long distances or while you rest. Walking inside the "big" locations does not have an effect on the timeflow.

The interface of the game is intuitive. In the bottom right part of the screen there is a compass (which is used for moving from one location to another) with a map button in its centre. When you enter a new location it will automatically appear on the map. The map in this game is for information purposes only - you'll not be able to travel using it (due to gameplay features). In the central bottom part of the screen a description or other text information is given. In the bottom left part of the screen there are info

and biochip panels. Using the right mouse button will call a context menu (take, talk etc...). You can get a description of an object simply by clicking it. There will be no pixel-hunting. If you ask what the gameplay of Star Heritage feels like, I would say it reminded me adventure games of Legend Entertainment, and Shannara in particular. The game will be long enough. Authors promise more than 200 game screens. Estimated length of the gameplay from 50 to 70 hours. The game is to be released in the 1st quarter 2005 in Russia, the release date of English version is unassigned - Step Creative Group is still in negotiations with the publishers.

Finally, after the release of ZX-Spectrum version of Star Heritage, Step Creative Group planned to release the second part of the game but it never happened because of the decay of interest to this platform. All that survived from that time is a scenario, 25-30% complete. So if everything will turn out right, we have all chances to see a sequel of this game for the PC platform.

- Alex ASP



On the left you can see Jameson, one of the game's characters and on the top you can see his pub

THE INVENTORY BIRTHDAY PARTY 2004

If you missed our birthday party, well you just about missed the most important online event for the adventure community this year. Over 25 developers and publishers of adventure games from all around the world, visited our forums (www.theinventory.org/forum) to share with our fans lots of news, secrets, details about their upcoming adventures, opinions on the state of the adventure genre and to even give some presents to the readers of *The Inventory*. The party took place on the 29th and the 30th of November. The party was so succesful, that in 2 days we managed to fish the 3 biggest adventure news for the year 2004.

So what were those 3 biggest news of the year? Here we go:

1. Bad Brain Entertainment picks up A Vampyre Story

The most hyped up adventure right now, *A Vampyre Story*, has finally found an investor called Bad Brain Entertainment. Bad Brain Entertainment is a new company, located in Germany (probably the leading-front country of the adventure game industry) and they actually have even more adventure games coming up in the near future. More about Bad Brain Entertainment in our Lounge where we invited them and Bill Tiller of Autumn Moon Entertainment to talk to us about *A Vampyre Story* and the rest of their projects.

2. There are discussions in Microids about a possible Syberia

Everyone thought that we had seen the last of Kate Walker in the end of *Syberia 2*. However, when Mathieu Lariviere from *Microids* (producer of *Still Life*), was asked by a fan if we will see a return of Kate Walker in our screens sooner or later he answered "The only thing I can say about that is it's under discussion...". On the other hand, Michel Bams from *White Birds Productions*, where Benoit Sokal is currently wor-

king, said on a similar topic that a return of Kate Walker is not impossible, but the final answer belongs to *Microids*.

3. Bad Brain Entertainment is in negotiations with Lucasarts about Sam and Max 2...

...or that game with the trailer as BBE prefers to call it. Wolfgang Keirdorf from Bad Brain Entertainment joined the party during its second day and he blew everyone away when he said: "*There are negotiations with LucasArts but I can't get into details here. Maybe this will be the surprise release of 2005. The game you all wanted but didn't get (except for a fine trailer).*" Well you all know what

Wolfgang meant right?

Was that all? Certainly not. There were a lot of other great news from other developers and publishers as well. Here is a recap (developers are in alphabetical order)

AGDInteractive

The people behind the award-winning *King's Quest 1* and *2* remakes, gave another beautiful screenshot from *QFG2* as a present to our readers. A fan stated that he found some of the plaza screenshots not as impressive as some others from our preview last month because he thought they were too similar to the ones in the original. The AGDs answered that they had asked the Coles in the beginning if they would

Below: This screenshot taken from QFG2 VGA was the present that AGDInteractive had prepared for the readers of *The Inventory*



Bad Brain Entertainment and Wicked Studios open up forums

Bad Brain Entertainment, the German company that is going to bring us A Vampyre Story and is currently negotiating Sam and Max 2, as well as Wicked Studios, the developers of the gorgeous upcoming fantasy adventure Keepsake, opened up recently new forums. Where? At the forum of The Inventory (www.theinventory.org/forum). Both companies will feature polls, contests and the developers will pass by quite often to check feedback from their fans and to answer some questions.

Bad Brain has already started a puzzle that will reveal a hint about Sam and Max 2. The puzzle is: ultrapinkoetisch. So far our readers have been unable to solve the puzzle. Join their efforts at our forum: www.theinventory.org/forum. For more information on Bad Brain Entertainment read the interview in our Lounge this month. For more information on Keepsake read our preview in issue 19.

change the layout and style of the plazas if they were to make a remake and that the Coles replied they would have left them exactly the same. Thus the AGDs decided to go that route with the plazas. Regarding future projects, AGDInteractive doesn't rule out anything yet, while they even hinted at the fact that the favourite King's Quest of AGD1 is King's Quest 3. The AGDs did not give any release date for QFG2 VGA. They just said that they will probably not be done with alpha-testing before the end of the year. They also ruled out the possibility of translation packs.

Al Lowe

The biggest announcement that Al Lowe made during our party was that he is writing a book and that he's almost finished. The book is called 'You've Got Laughs - Al Lowe's Big Book of Internet Humor' and Al is shopping for a publisher right now. A fan asked Al if it would be possible for him to buy the rights for the Larry series from Vivendi. Al replied that he would like to, but Vivendi is uninterested in selling the

rights. Al Lowe also said that he would love to work on a new game and that he hopes a publisher will soon realize that humor does sell.

Autumn Moon Entertainment

We've already mentioned that Bill Tiller announced that they have found an investor for A Vampyre Story. Apart from that, Bill said that they are currently in a preproduction phase and that they would go into full production as soon as all the details with BBE are worked out. He said that he and his colleagues started developing the AVS storyline in 1995 (which was before they started working on Curse of Monkey Island). Bill also mentioned 3 other potential games coming from Autumn Moon Entertainment, which will be in different story-genres than A Vampyre Story, but still adventure games as this is the genre they love the most! He also said that they are thinking about moving A Vampyre Story to other mediums as

well, like a TV-show, a movie or a comic but right now the game comes first.

Bad Brain Entertainment

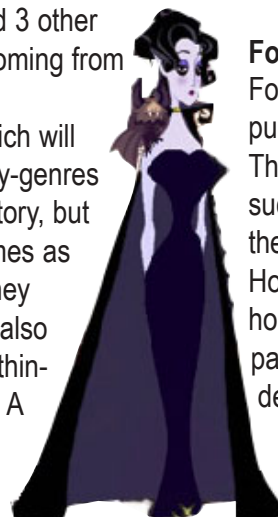
Well there is one thing that is for sure. Wolfgang Keirdorf knows how to stir up a party :) . We've already talked about A Vampyre Story, while you can read more about Sam and Max 2 in our interview with BBE in our Lounge. Wolfgang also talked about the other projects that they have in development right now, like I-jet and Quizzoid. He also said that fans will get the chance of getting their name on a gravestone that will appear in A Vampyre Story. Stay tuned at the forum of Bad Brain Entertainment to learn more about that.

DTP

The publisher that almost single-handedly revived the adventure genre in Germany, said that they will be releasing Runaway 2, Tony Tough 2 and Nibiru this year in the German market, except for Tony Tough 2 which they have acquired worldwide rights for. They also mentioned that they are in negotiations with even more titles and that they will acquire worldwide rights for even more adventures after Tony Tough 2. We wish them the best of luck!

Focus Home Interactive

Focus is one of the biggest French publishers of adventure games. They said that Runaway has been successful in France and therefore they are trying to get the rights for Hollywood Monsters right now, although it is difficult because the company that had the rights is now defunct.



Frogwares



Top and Left: These are the first screenshots of *Around the World in 80 Days*, the first adventure by Frogwares to feature real time 3D graphics

Frogwares was also very 'hot' when it comes to announcements. They were kind enough to give as a present to The Inventory for our birthday, the first screenshots ever of their upcoming *Around the World in 80 Days*. *Around the World in 80 Days* is the first adventure from Frogwares where they will use Real Time 3D graphics, which is a step forward for the Ukraine-based adventure company that gets better by every new title they develop. In *ATWIED* you will play an adventurer named Olivier and your trip will bring you to Cairo, Bombay, Yokohama and San Francisco. Time is a very important concept in this new adventure, and it will be always displayed on your screen. It is very important for the player to manage his/her time, as some of the main activities in the game will be eating, sleeping and finding money. So finding ways to do things faster and to avoid time-loss is a task in itself intertwined with the rest of the gameplay (something that we have seen previously in adventures like *Quest for Glory* and *The Westerner*). They also announced that they are working on *Sherlock Holmes 3*, and that it will also be in full 3D! This time *Sherlock* will travel overseas.



Future Games

The developers of the best adventure in 2003, *The Black Mirror*, are right now hard at work on *Nibiru*. The developers said that *Nibiru* will be slightly easier than *The Black Mirror* and that the characters will have improved animation and they will look better. They also said that they are developing another adventure game that is going to be even darker than *The Black Mirror*, while they didn't rule out a possible sequel to *The Black Mirror*.

GMX Media/Artematica

The publishers of the upcoming *Martin Mystere*, announced that it will be released in Q1 2005. They said that the game will be much more in the style of comics than the TV series.

Gnosis Games

The developers of the *Broken Saints* adventure, which is based on the award-winning online flash series said that the emphasis of their game will be on good old school adventure exploration and problem solving with elements of psychologically haunting survival horror and simple but

immersive action sequences. As far as the frequency of the action sequences is concerned, they said that it is similar to the web/flash version of the property (which I can reassure you is minimal). Although the game will feature the same story as the online series, the gameplay will make it a unique experience as the players now will get to interact in a much deeper sense with the world of *Broken Saints*. Gnosis Games said that they would like to create even more adventures in the future as they like genres that have the ability to offer an experience with the potential depth and emotional resonance.

Himalaya Studios

The Studio that was created as an offshoot of AGDInteractive, that gave us the magnificent *KQ 1* and *2* remakes, said that they will be releasing *Al Emmo* and the *Lost Dutchman's Mine* sometime in 2005. Britney Brimhall, CEO of Himalaya Studios said that the project started sometime before *King's Quest 2* VGA was released. Himalaya Studios also said that they have not decided yet which distribution met-

hod they will finally choose (CD or download) but they might finally opt for both of them.

House of Tales

Martin Gantfoehr, the man behind the Moment of Silence, which is going to go head to head with The Westerner for adventure game of the year in our awards, said that a sequel to TMOS is possible but right now they have other plans (but still within the adventure genre). He mentioned that their next project will be announced in Games Convention 2005 (in Germany) and that it will be a point and click adventure.

Josh Mandel

Josh said that he recently worked on Hasbro's *Trivial Pursuit: The Saturday Night Live DVD Edition*. He designed many of the puzzles for the game and he wrote many of the questions/answers as well. At the moment he is working on educational software. He recently also designed an educational adventure game with other ex-Sierra employees called *The Adventures of D.M. Dinwiddie, Physician-In-Training*, which teaches first aid to kids. Even more interesting was the fact that right now he has been working along with another developer on a 3D action/adventure. The story is in the horror/comedy genre. Josh also said that although it was fun to be part of several fan-made adventure projects, it has sort of backfired on him lately (in legal terms) so he is thinking of not getting involved in the near future with fan projects.

Legacy Interactive

Christina Oliver, the producer of *Law & Order: Justice is Served*, announced that Legacy Interactive is working on one more Law and Order



Another present from Himalaya Studios this time. The screenshot depicts AI Emmo at the Indian Encampment hanging out with the wily Indians

title apart from *Criminal Intent* that we already knew about. The name of the new Law and Order game is Special Victim's Unit. It is a 3rd person adventure and you can choose if you want to control Detective Benson or Detective Stabler. The story is going to be more complex than the ones they have developed for the Law & Order series, because it is about a sniper. This means there will be multiple bodies, crime scenes, sets of witnesses, etc. It also means that some witnesses may end up getting killed during the course of the investigation, depending on how the game is played. Since the show SVU doesn't emphasize trial generally, the game based on the show won't either. But there will still be twists and turns and legal challenges that will weaken your case. Christina talked a lot about the jump from 1st person to 3rd person. She said that the 3rd person perspective allows players to be the main character of a known franchise rather than be his/her partner.

Christina also claimed that it also gives the developers more flexibility, because it is real time, so the animation doesn't have to be pre-rendered.

Microids

Mathieu Lariviere, Lead Game Designer of *Still Life*, except from stirring everyone up with his rumour about *Syberia 3*, stated also that *Still Life* will be released on March 2005. The demo of the game will be available a month prior to release (so logically in February). Mathieu talked a lot about the dialogue interface of the game. The players can choose if they want to get to the point of the conversation or if they would like to hear some off-topic discussion as well. This can be done by left and right clicking during dialogues. Left clicking gets you to the point while right-clicking makes your character talk about issues that are not totally relevant to the case (i.e. personal promotions, weather, hobbies etc). He also said that the main characters of *Still Life*, Victoria and Gus will make much more comments than Kate Walker did in *Syberia* to make players connect with the main characters better.

Pendolo Studios

Rafael Liategui, said that Brian (the main character of *Runaway*) will evolve in the second part as he will meet different characters and he will also learn that life with Gina is not

that easy. The graphic engine of the game has been improved with visual effects and other features. Rafael claimed that they have learned that most people are not fond of pixel-hunting and that they will try to avoid it in the sequel. Pendulo has even more projects planned for the future but right now they would rather focus on Runaway 2. Their future projects however may not be all point and click classic adventures as they would like to explore 3D engines as well.

Phoenix Freeware Online

The people behind the unofficial King's Quest IX were kind enough to stream some music from their upcoming fantasy adventure, and the fans were more than just pleased with it. There was also a lot of discussions around the magic system that the developers are going to incorporate in the game. Magic however won't be used for combat as it has been traditionally used in RPGs, but you will be able to solve puzzles with the use of magic. There will even be whole chapters where you will have to use magic to make your way through. This reminds a bit of the gameplay in Loom, however the difference here will be that the magic system of KQ9 will have over 50 spells, divided in different 'houses of Magic'. Cesar Bittar, project leader of KQ9 said that they will be announcing the release date of the game soon.

Razbor Studios

Razbor Studios was not shy on announcements either. They first of all said that they are working on a new adventure, Here is the description of the storyline: "This is a tale of Eve, a young student who arrives at her father's farm for the weekend. Her father, a world-renowned archaeologist, has purchased the farm a few years ago to rest and write his books there. While searching for him around the farm, she discovers a strange portal, which transports her to a mysterious new world, both beautiful and frightening in all its oddity. In her search for her father and a way home, she will travel all-round the strange new world, visit many odd places, face many dangers and meet many extraordinary creatures such as the mighty giants, the dreadful fire-spewing dragons, the terrifying witches and many, many others in the adventure of her life." Razbor Studios also said that Legacy: Dark Shadows is only the beginning of an adventure, meaning that we will probably see a sequel in the near future.

Steve Ince

Steve said that it was a great experience editing the script for The Westerner, and although he is not sure whether a sequel is in the works, if he was asked to do it again he would love to. He said that right now he is very pleased with working as a freelancer and that he is currently employed by a company

which wanted their game to have a really strong story and characters.

Step Creative Group

Since we preview Star Heritage in the same issue, I won't repeat a lot over here. The developers emphasized that the game is focused on storytelling and combat is only there to spice up the gameplay. Regarding the ratio adventure/combat the developers mentioned the old gem Shannara, while they said that Star Heritage has more focus on storytelling than what the Quest for Glory games did. The developers also mentioned that one of the game's strongest points is its non-linearity. First of all the player can choose if they want to play a good character or if they would like to choose the Dark side. Apart from that, gameplay also depends a lot on timing, for example a player might walk through a spot during the day and just walk by while another player might walk through the same spot during the night and he will have to fight monsters. On top of that, there will also be multiple puzzle solutions. The Step Creative Group was also kind enough to offer two music samples from Star Heritage during the party. Star Heritage 1 might not be released yet, but they are already working on the sequel!

Tale of Tales

Michael Samyn and Auriea Harvey said that 8 is not really a classic game and they would also hesitate to call it a classic adventure. There will be two kinds of activities, one called Gameplay and the other will be called Toyplay. Activities are designed by International Hobo (Discworld Noir). Gameplay consists of a small set of simple puzzles that will allow you to advance in the game. You will be given a limited

The Inventory Radio is now live!

Did you always want to listen to adventure tunes but you never got the chance? Now you do, at The Inventory Radio. All you need to do is to head over to our website at www.theinventory.org and click on the Tune In button in our Inventory Radio section. If you have a program that plays .pls files (such as Winamp) you will be listening to over 400 adventure tunes whenever you feel like it!

number of tools to help you solve these puzzles. A fictitious example would be to use scissors to cut the rope that holds a door closed, etc. The "toyplay" is the more important part of the game and it involves things that you do just for fun. There's two kinds of toyplay. One involves having the Girl interact with objects in the world, which will often uncover a narrative element. The other involves casting magical spells to restore the palace and the things in it. 8 will be both 3rd person and 1st person, think Gabriel Knight 3 where the player can control separately the camera and the main character. Although the girl is deaf and mute the player will be able to hear noises and music since the player and the main character are two separate entities in 8.

TellTale Games

Well although the forum for TellTale Games featured the largest amount of topics, it was ironically also the one where developers gave away the least information. TellTale Games were not aware of the fact that Bad Brain is in negotiations with Lucasarts about Sam and Max 2. Another small bit of interesting information was what Heather Logas said about pushing the genre forward: "I will say that making adventure games better does not mean ignoring what made them great in the first place. Pushing the genre forward does not, to us, mean alienating the very people we are trying to make games for. So never fear."

Wicked Studios

The imps from Canada had three wallpaper-presents for our readers. They also shared quite a lot of information about Keepsake. First of all, they seem to have changed their mind about the number of charac-

ters to be featured in the game, and now the characters won't be just four anymore. The main characters will be four but there will be even more secondary characters in Keepsake. They also added that there will be a large variety of gameplay from mechanical puzzles, to inventory-based tasks, mazes and riddles. As for inspirations for Keepsake, the developers mentioned the King's Quest and the Quest for Glory games as well as the Myst series.

White Birds Productions

Michel Bams from White Birds Productions, claimed that Lost Paradise is 40% complete right now, and that the game will probably be released in the end of 2005. Michel also talked a lot about Aquarica. The plan right now is that Aquarica will be both a movie and an adventure game. The story: One morning, the residents of Roodhaven, a once flourishing and prosperous whaling port, find a mysterious boat washed up on shore, assembled from miscellaneous pieces of whaling ships lost at sea. On board there is a young woman named Mary, claiming to be the great-granddaughter of the captain of the Aquarica, a schooner which was long ago the pride and joy of the port city. In an antiquated language full of forgotten expressions, she speaks of her people, who live on remote islands in the middle of the ocean. These islands move imperceptibly and their direction has shifted North, as if they were alive and have responded to a strange and incomprehensible call. What if the legend of the mythical mammoth whales was a reality.

In retrospect

Of course this was just a summary of the discussions that took place during the party. If you would like to read all the conversations you can visit www.theinventory.org/forum and read them for yourselves - it is the last section on the forum. A most sound success our dear readers. Therefore we have decided to turn The Inventory's Birthday Party into an annual event! That's right, in November 2005 we will do it again. And next time we promise it will be even better than the last. Some people were asking after the end of the party, how could we top that event? Well all we can say right now, is to be patient. You have not seen anything yet :)

I would like to finish the party wrap-up with some funny quotes from the party discussions. First one is from Wolfgang Keirdorf, talking about A Vampyre Story: "AVS will be one of the greatest Adventures of all times. Bill Tiller is a great artist and the story is great. You will see. The team is top of the tops and there is no f**king way in hell this game will not be great". And the second one was from Khaveen in a discussion about pixel-hunting with Rafael Liategui from Pendulo, Rafael says in defense of Runaway that old classic adventures featured more pixel-hunting than Runaway. Khaveen's response: *Well, don't forget old classical games had larger pixels :)*



Concept art from Razbor's new adventure game.

Tony tough special

This month we have a Tony Tough special. The material for this special feature was provided to us by DTP, the publishers of Tony Tough 2. Tony Tough 2 is first title that DTP acquires the worldwide rights for. You can read more information about that later on in the Lounge. For starters you get to read a Tony Tough comic strip designed by Pipo from www.adventure-corner.de. On the next page Stefano Gualeni, the creator of Tony Tough, writes an article about the story of the four-eyed detective and he also says a few things about the sequel of the game. We kept the best part for the end as you will get to read the interview with the publishers and the developers of Tony Tough 2 where they reveal the first in-game screenshots of A Rake's Progress. But first let's begin with the comic, which is actually the first of many to come in the next months. Enjoy.

Tony Tough Comic:



THE STORY OF TONY TOUGH

As probably some of you already know, Tony Tough was born - as a game character - in 1995, in a cellar dolled-up to look like an office, from the twisted minds of two seventeen year-old students. Believe it or not, our pint-sized detective was initially designed to be a secondary character (a sort of robotic book-worm) for a sci-fi platform game.

It was just six months later, when the idea for that game shipwrecked and the point and click idea came up that he was recycled as the main character for the surreal and crazed investigation that is known as "Tony Tough & the night of Roasted Moths".

Not a typical creative process for a non-typical main character: weak, scared, almost uniquely stuttering out jangly apologies, mystery-enthusiast Tony Tough faces bravely the virile videogame avatar stereotype and the most absurd cases that are not rarely a sheer production of his fervid imagination.

The main features of our four-eyed detective were originally derived from my Italian literature teacher, whose personality and legendary notionism got distorted and hybridized by and through me to become even more irritating and paradoxal.

The main ideas that underwent the first project were quite clearly explicit in the game itself: we tried to propose to the videogame scene a kind of experience we missed firsthand. It would be rather sterile to cite here all the well known games and series we've taken inspiration from, don't you think?

Moreover I tried to feature the game with a rather distinctive kind of humor (both verbal and situational) which would have, together with the plot, in our hopes, replaced the commercial attractiveness of contemporary games' explosions and polygons.

I don't know if we managed to pursue this purpose. Played today "Tony Tough and The night of Roasted Moths" seems to me to be too illogical to be fun to play, but its beign rough and crazy might have been the reason

of the unexpected success of a game that, indeed, was old and aged even when it was being conceived. A modern classic? That's a topic I wouldn't want to touch with a ten-foot pole.

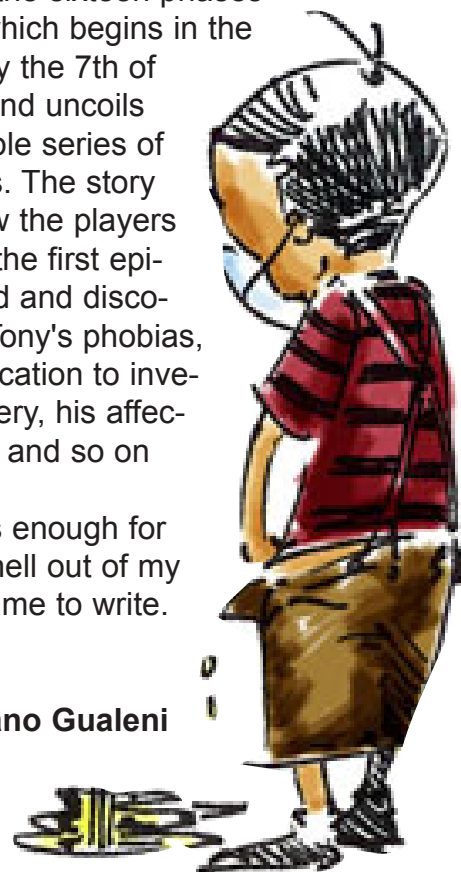
The main set of ideas for the new game regard trying to make it a more mature and innovative experience, but at the same time to keep the strong points of the first episode: cartoon graphics used for an adult game, flippant sarcasm, the character of Tony Tough and technological understatement. To this base we're adding a more refined and attractive graphics and architecture, a more complex, convoluted and surprising plot and an overall more logical and approachable gameplay.

Mostly linear, this new episode will be a preque titled "Tony Tough in a Rake's Progress", will grant space for multi-puzzle resolution phases that will remind of the previous, although ironically subsequent, chapter.

A series of prints by David Hockney literally structures the sixteen phases of the adventure which begins in the morning of Monday the 7th of September 1953 and uncoils around a remarkable series of misunderstandings. The story will by design allow the players who dabbled with the first episode to understand and discover the origins of Tony's phobias, his obsessive dedication to investigation and mystery, his affection for Pantagruel and so on and so forth...

I think that's enough for now, now get the hell out of my house. I have a game to write. No, really...

- **Stefano Gualeni**



Interview with DTP/Prograph

The first interview we ever featured in The Inventory was an interview with Stefano Gualeni, author of Tony Tough and its format who collaborated with Prograph, which was the company behind the cartoon point and click adventure Tony Tough and the Roasted Moths. Now, with the helping hand of dtp (the biggest publisher of adventure games in Europe) Prograph and Stefano Guialeni are working on a prequel to Tony Tough. We are happy to be the first publication that reveals in-game screenshots from the new Tony Tough game, that you are able to see in this interview with both the developers (Marco Pacifico, head of development and lead programmer, Stefano Guaneli Game-designer, art director, story writer) and the publishers of the game (Christopher Kellner, International PR Manager for DTP).

Yourselves

Has the team changed from what it used to be when you developed Tony Tough 1?

M.P. A lot of time passed since we developed the first game with Tony Tough. When we thought of making a new game, my first goal was to have the most important people behind the first episode. The result is that about a half of the team working on TT2 is the same of TT1, and we're happy about that.

Will you publish Tony Tough 2 only in the German speaking countries like you used to do until now or are you going to publish the game in other countries too?

C.K.: As we own the international rights for Tony Tough 2, we will be the publishers in all other countries too. In the next months, we will try to find a publisher and/or distributor for TT2 in every other territory. As our contacts are very good right now, we are optimistic that all of you all around the world will be able to play Tony next year. If there`s



any publisher out there wanting to sign TT 2 just get in contact with me over c.kellner@ntp-ag.com.

Tony Tough 2

- Could you describe to us the story of Tony Tough 2?

S.G.: As I've already pointed out, it is indeed quite awkward to summarize its

storyline in just a few words, as it consists of many parallel storyline-threads which are, as a matter of fact, sewn together by our anti-hero himself: young Tony Tough. "Tony Tough in a Rake's Progress" is in fact a prequel to the first adventure we've developed with Prograph and it is set in New Mexico in the early fifties. In the game Tony has just turned thirteen and, through a very twisted plot full on malcontent and misunderstandings, will have to face a very queer and significant day of his adolescence during which the players who faced the first episode will definitely understand and share many of the obsessions and phobias which characterize our pigmy private eye.

- Is Tony going to be the only character we will be able to control in the game?

S.G. Yes. Believe me it's going to be much more than enough. The plot was planned to be movie-like, and the attention of the game direction will be often diverging from the main character.

- Is it essential for someone to

play Night of the Roasted Moths before playing A Rake's Progress?

S.G. Not the slightest. They are indeed very different experiences, even before being different adventures. The connections between the two, their collaboration and the unsolved parts of the plot of the "Night of the Roasted Moths" can definitely all be enjoyed in "A Rake's Progress" by the players who played the first episodes and will pay close attention to both its details and its structure.

- Are there any locations from Tony 1 that the players will get to visit again in Tony 2?

S.G. As I've said, the two games are different for what regards their time/space localization. The first was set in an amusement park settled in the outskirts of some major U.S. city, this prevalently takes place in the small and lonely village of Washington, a fictional desert town in New Mexico. The answer is: no.

- What is the meaning behind the title "A Rake's Progress"?

S.G. As you might remember from the previous interview, I was planning to go to Mexico to develop my final thesis in Architecture. For roughly a year I have dedicated my time and energy to the study of ancient Mexican architecture and the related philosophy and myths. One of the two legs of this game is an ancient Mexican ritual, the other is "A Rake's Progress". A rake's progress is indeed the progress young Tony goes through during the adventure, but the idea for this game came from a novel by Johnatan Swift with the same title. Swift's work was inspirational for a series of prints by the English painter and engraver William Hogarth (1735) titled "A Rake's Progress" which represented the progressive fall of the profligate young dandy, and a humorous small opera by Igor Stravinsky in the late 1940's titled "A Rake's Progress".

Between 1961 and 1963, the famed English painter David Hockney re-proposed his vision of "A Rake's Progress" and, basing upon Hogart's prints, developed a personal series of 16 plates. I decided, in 2004, to continue this historically recurrent "progression", using the 16 plated by Hockney as "key-frames" for the plot of this new game, maintaining their titles for the different phases of the development of the story. Tony Tough 2 follows by design an analogous path of humanity loss.

- Why did you decide to develop Tony Tough 2 in 3D?

M.P. Before Tony Tough 2, Prograph worked on a new point & click adventure engine used to develop a game based on an Italian cartoon license. We were very proud of the result, so that we thought to use this engine with our most famous hero,





giving him a new "style" and a more modern look.

- What is the highest resolution that the graphics will reach and how many polys are the models made of?

M.P. The resolution is fixed at 1024x768, and each model has a number of polygons that range from 3500 to 5000, depending on the characters.

- Are the camera angles going to be predetermined or will players be able to move the camera themselves?

M.P. While developing our engine we took the choice to mix the "old 2D style" with the more modern 3D technologies, and our idea was to use fixed cameras which allow us to have more detailed backgrounds and add more polygons to the 3D models. The result is that the main character can go around with predetermined cameras which allow the player to have a better control of what is happening in the game.

- Most critics thought that one of the best features of Tony Tough 1 (at least the English version) was the acting provided by the AudioGodz studio. Are you going to contact them again for the purposes of Tony Tough 2 for the

English version?

CK. This depends on how our deal for the UK and US versions will look like. I think the publishers or distributors we will choose for these territories will be able to decide themselves, but there's enough space and time to talk about this. As TT2 will be our first international major adventure-project we will have a close look on the quality in other countries as well.

- Are you going to use a similar style of music in Tony Tough 2 as in the first game?

S.G. No. The whole game will tend to a more mature and minimalistic approach. The graphics as well as the music will not be a noisy and ramshackle addition of parts (like the amusement park and the music style of the first episode), but will try to be discreet, minimal and realistic as the graphics in the game. Of course I am talking about the background graphics, the choice made for the characters was, as you can see, quite different.

- The interface is usually an issue

"We took the choice to mix the "old 2D style" with the more modern 3D technologies, and our idea was to use fixed cameras which allow us to have more detailed backgrounds and add more polygons to the 3D models."

“The Night of Roasted Moths was too dispersive and illogical. This new episode, as already mentioned, will be more mature, logical and linear.”

with 3D adventure games. Could you describe to us in detail how the interface is going to work?

S.G. The player will interact with the game through a very intuitive and "light" interface to match the graphic style and, more broadly, the whole game philosophy. It will be very similar to the one we've used in "Prezzemolo in una giornata da incubo" only applied to an "object interface" which will not deal with "simulacra" of the items our character owns but with the ideas of the objects our character has in his mind. The player will not, hence, "PERFORM THE ACTION" for Tony Tough but will "SUGGEST THE IDEA OF WHAT TO DO"... If you think about it, it's a radically different approach which will indeed have a very original reflection on the gameplay, dialogues and texts in general.

- One of the biggest complaints made by critics on Tony Tough 1 were some vague problem solutions. Will Tony Tough 2 be easier than Tony 1?

S.G. I agree. "The Night of Roasted Moths" was too dispersive and illogi-

cal. It although matched the idea of freedom (both of reasoning and of action) which identified Tony's previous chapter. This new episode, as already mentioned, will be more mature, logical and linear... But don't worry, still plenty of action will be granted the player... Only in a way which I expect will lead to a more aware and pleasant gameplay.

- Could you give us some examples of tasks that Tony will have to accomplish in his new adventure?

S.G. As for the previous interview: give more money and ask again!

- Stefano, you have to stop! You're getting more expensive on every interview we have with you! Will the gameplay be linear or non-linear?

S.G. Mostly NON-LINEAR, but significantly more linear than the previous episode.

- Will players be able to choose a difficulty level in the beginning of the game as they could in Tony 1?

S.G. No. It could be arranged but thinking about it gives me the hives...

- How long will Tony Tough 2 be? Do you plan for a longer game than Tony 1?

S.G. I reckon it will all in all be a little shorter but a lot richer.

- Will we be able to play a demo of Tony Tough 2 soon?

C.K. Maybe we will release a demo shortly before the German release.

- What is the release date for Tony Tough 2?

C.K. We are now scheduled for April



in Germany. I think the other language versions will come out at the same time or a little bit later.

- Is Tony Tough 2 going to be released for consoles as well or do you develop a PC-only version?

C.K. There are no concrete plans for a console version yet, but who knows...

- Is there a possibility that we might see a Tony Tough 3 in the future?

C.K. Let's see how TT2 does and we'll decide on that.

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

S.G. Three simple things:

1 - I am a freelance designer with more and more sinister games in mind, I hope Tony 2 and your interest might help me find a way to release them or to keep working with perverted passion on games.

2 - You can follow the development of "A Rake's Progress" and access official art and shots at www.tony-tough.com

3 - The things they say about me are just half truths!

General

- What are the future plans for Prograph? Would you possibly create an adventure game that is not Tony Tough related?

M.P. Of course we're planning to work on

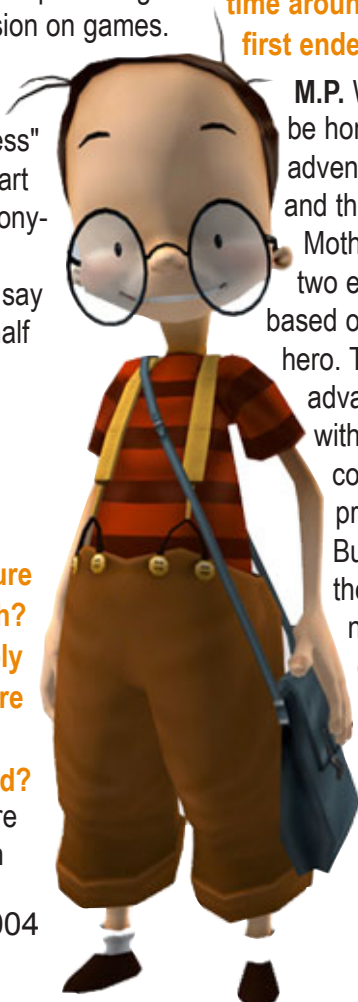


several other games, not necessarily adventures or anyway related to Tony Tough. But we're focused on TT2 right now, and we are doing our best to make a great job.

- This is the second adventure game you are making. Do you think the process is easier this time around compared to your first endeavour?

M.P. Well, you're wrong. To be honest this is our 4th adventure. After "Tony Tough and the night of Roasted Moths" we have developed two episodes of an adventure based on an Italian cartoon hero. Tony Tough 2 gets advantage of our experience with these games, and of course our team is well prepared on adventures. But this doesn't mean that the process to develop a new game is easier. We can always get into difficulties and thank Stefano for his insane puzzles that make us nuts :)

“The things they say about me are just half truths.”



Interview with Bad Brain Entertainment

During our online birthday party, Bad Brain Entertainment was in the spotlight of attention! First and foremost, Autumn Moon Entertainment, the company that develops the most hyped adventure right now, A Vampyre Story, announced on the first day of the party that they found a company to fund their efforts. The company as you probably guessed already is Bad Brain Entertainment, which is based in Germany. As if this wasn't enough to stir the adventure community, Bad Brain Entertainment joined the discussions in their own section of the forum, and they threw a second news-bomb just one day after the previous one, stating that (I quote): "Also there are negotiations with LucasArts but I can't get into details here. Maybe this will be the surprise release of 2005. The game you all wanted but didn't get (except for a fine trailer)". Well those of you who didn't get it yet, search the net! The information is probably all over it. We invited Dr Wolfgang Kierdorf, CEO of Bad Brain Entertainment and probably the best graphics artist working on an adventure game, Bill Tiller from Autumn Moon Entertainment, to talk to us about this cooperation that might be a milestone in the history of adventure gaming.

Yourself

- Tell us a little bit about yourself

W.K. Hi, my name is Wolfgang Kierdorf and I hate adventures! Ohh, did I write that loud? Hhmm. Let me start that over ... My name is Wolfgang Kierdorf and I love adventures! I am 31 Years old, gemini, married and I own Germany's largest DVD Collection in private hands. Please excuse my bad english. It's been a while. I am getting better again every day now.

My computer relationship started with the early Commodore 64 back in the 1980s. Since then I took my very personal computer evolution from the Amstrad CPC to the Commodore Amiga and finally the PC (back then a 80286 with 12Mhz). Boy was I happy. I started programming Videogames at the age of 14 or 15. Back then there were magazines in germany which printed the sourcecodes ("listings" as they were called back then). That was the start of it all. Due to the fact that I was born in a terribly

poor family I just got the computer, no floppy and no tape. So I had to start programming my own games because there was no way to get a game on that stupid thing without having one of these. After nearly a year I got my tape. But nothing changed. Sure I played from time to time, but I was stuck with programming, in my opinion one of the greatest possible art and expression of creativity (next to the graphics design (which I like too, but only use for my websites)).

So when I was 16 I wanted to start into professional game programming. Back then there was only a crippled hand full of persons needed to do a game. So I gave it a try and learned C-Programming for the Amiga. And I liked it. It took me some time to switch from Basic to C, but after a while I loved it. Along with the PC C++ came. I worked mostly as an author for magazines and as Lead-Programmer or Project-Manager for a lot of different companies and products. Along with the Web Java



came too. Loved that one even more. At that time I started to study information-science & economics (in germany it's called "Wirtschaftsinformatik" and I don't know what it means in english). It took me two years to finish and I was back in the business again. Meanwhile I wrote three books about programming in C, C++ & Java. The Book about Java was the first in germany and got me a lot of good contacts and job-offers. This time as a manager. I worked for huge industrial-companies and also for smaller web-agencies. Then after the big internet hype everything f**ked up and I started my own business again. I did that before but wasn't too successfull in my early twenties.

Right now I own three companies: abracus GmbH (which sells my Project-Management Web-Tool which took me about 5 years to develop it), kCreations KG (a Business-Consulting company focused on the improvement of Service in companies (in german there is a real lack of that) & in sales & marketing optimizations). We also do business-development and that leads us

to the third one, Bad Brain Entertainment. I have a cat (I called him BYTE) and a wife (she already had name (which is Tatiana)). I currently have no kids, but am working on it ;-).

- Do you play adventures in your spare time? If you do, could you name some of your favourites?

W.K. Yes I do. My all time favourites in no specific order: DOTT, Indy 3+4, ZakMcKracken, The Dig and for sure A Vampyre Story (remember: I know the story ;-))

A Vampyre Story

- What was it mainly in A Vampyre Story that caught your interest?

W.K. The Team & the theme. When I first read about AVS the idea of a game about vampires made total sense. Vampires are a trend since years. And movies like Van Helsing, Dracula etc. show that there is an interest. Monsters are timeless anyway. So I wrote an Email to Bill Tiller and he told me that he does need a

publisher but even more than that he needs an investor. So I got all the infos I needed (The Story Line, The Demo (yes, there already is a Demo ;-), concept Art etc.).

I was blown away by the graphical style and the humor and I thought well, if p&c adventures can be brought back to vital live, it has to be done by the guys who made it best. And so the idea of having a team of ex-Lucas arts, Pixar, Disney etc. guys & gals was just mindblowing. What was the question again? Ahh. yeah, to make it a short one: it was both the team and the theme!

- Are you going to only fund the development of the game and cooperate with another publisher for the distribution of the game or are you going to take care of publishing as well?

W.K. Well we didn't decide yet. depends on quite some factors. we are talking to a lot of publishers and distributors right now. We could handle it, but the question is: does it make sense? There are people who have the knowlegde and the channels and why not use them.

- Bill, in what way is the development of the game affected by the fact that you have found an investor?

B.T. Well, the first thing is, now I can actually PAY people instead of begging them to help me out. It is amazing how more productive people are when you pay them. Who would have thought? Actually I have been very fortunate in that people seem to really like this game and want to work on it. They keep saying "this project looks fun! Can I work on it?" And I say "Sure, but I can't pay right now" and that generally didn't faze



them. I had friend who was amazed how much I had gotten done on no budget. I told him I just asked for help and people came through. Now I get to pay them back with jobs! It has been great but I feel a little guilty, and having an investor will allow me to pay these talented people for their hard work and skill.

- Has it been easy to find a publisher?

B.T. Actually yes, it was, thanks to you, your magazine and others. So that shows me that a lot of publishers saw value in this type of game,- a game done in the classic Lucas Arts style. But I made the mistake of going with a common US business strategy for developers, which is to A. make playable demo, B. shop it around to big publishers and C. then get them to fund 90% of it. But I discovered that is different for smaller games like ours, where the model is the developer has to find A. venture capital, B. gets 90% of the game done, and then C. go find a publisher to buy it for their market areas. The first model is how most console game developers work. Not to say a developer

couldn't fund their own game but one has to do it correctly. Take Suck Punch Studios for example. They funded the development for their first game Rocket: Robot on Wheels, a well respected fun N64 platformer game published by Ubi Soft.

But they made a bit of mistake by finishing the game before they found a publisher, so when the game was done most publishers didn't want to buy it because Dreamcast and Playstation 1 were just coming out and publishers didn't want to publish anymore N64 games. Fortunately Ubi Soft picked it up. Sucker Punch didn't make that same mistake again with the Sly Cooper games. So I tried to learn from their mistake and find a publisher first. Luckily Bad Brain and Autumn Moon found each other and are exactly what each other needs. It's all good!

- Does BBE fill all the requirements that game developers of your level have from a publisher?

B.T. Well let's see, they are paying for the game, publishing the game,

distributing the game and promoting the game, and they seem to like me! So yep, they fulfil all my requirements!

- What has been the initial feedback you have received from adventure fans and press for your decision to support Autumn Moon Entertainment.

W.K. Well, some just had a smile on their face, which said: "poor you, adventures ..." but some also loved the idea of having ex-lucas arts people doing another adventure. The fans just loved the idea. There was no negative feedback at all. But i guess that's what defines a fan?!

- Are you going to opt for a worldwide release date and if yes what date would that be?

B.T. I would love that, but this question is better left for Bad Brain.

W.K. Well yes. But it's a logistic challenge to do it. I would be very happy if we can make it possible. The date is not fixed yet. We currently plan Q1 or Q2 2006. And some minigames one the way there that introduce the characters and set the mood.

- Are you going to think about online distribution of the game or would you rather sell it exclusively in stores?

B.T. I think both would be great. But I would feel better about downloadable content if all the major kinks were worked out and it was a smooth experience for the player. Lets just say STEAM left a bad taste in my mouth.

W.K. The game will definitely be available online in our shop. maybe there will even be some pre-load phases ;-). The shop will start with

the merchandising on January 2nd 2005. T-shirts, cups, caps etc. will be available.

- A Vampyre Story is right now the most hyped up upcoming adventure game in the adventure community. The fans' expectations are sky high, due to the magnitude of the titles that the developers from Autumn Moon Entertainment have produced in the past (Curse of Monkey Island, The Dig, "the game with that dog and the rabbit you all love that much" etc). Does that scare you at all or are you confident that A Vampyre Story will just blow every one away just like those old titles used to do?

W.K. Did you see the screenshots? it's art man, it's art! And i guarantee that you will love the story and the humor!

B.T. Well I have been on hype games before like Steven Spielberg's The Dig, and THAT scared me because I knew what was going to happen: casual gamers would hate it because they expected a full motion interactive Spielberg movie, but hard core gamers who like serious adventure games would love it. But I don't think there are too many false expectations about A Vampyre Story because fans know the games I have helped make and know what to expect.

- During your negotiations with Autumn Moon Entertainment about AVS, was it something that you required from them in terms of the game's qualities?

W.K. Yes, we got everything including urine samples of each and everyone involved. ... yes, we got timelines, storyboards, the demo, concept art etc. everything you need to have

a good feeling. and last but not least there is Bill who kindly offered his first born in exchange.

- BBE is based in Germany while AME is based in the US. Does that make communication and work between the two of you more difficult? Is it possible that one of you will relocate closer to the other in the future?

W.K. No, it's ok. The startup is always a bit rocky, but I guess the Internet helps a lot. I guess there will be meetings both in germany and in the US.

B.T. I think my in-laws would kill me if I took the grandkids to Germany, though I wouldn't mind it. I always wanted to go to Germany and live in a foreign country for a while. Though I think the autobahn would kick my butt. Most of my team lives in Petaluma, California and have kids too so we'd have a whole riot of pitchfork wielding grandparents at our doorstep if we relocated.

- Ken Williams, founder and president of Sierra for many years, once said that during his ruling years, Sierra never planned to make a profit with the first installment of any game. The target was to break even with the first title (due to the high costs of marketing and the whole effort of raising awareness about the game) and to gain considerable profit from the sequel instead.

Generally game companies nowadays are betting a lot on the sequel-making business. Do you also plan for A Vampyre Story to turn into a series with many sequels or would you rather work on a new IP instead after AVS has

been released?

W.K. I would love to make it a series, but only if there are good stories. I guess both Bill and I are not planing on for an adventure-template, but a unique piece of art. We sure hope it will go beyond break even so Bill & his team can make more games and i can buy back my family and my wife from slavery.

B.T. Yes we have plans for a sequel, and we also want to do new IP as well. There are just too many genres to have fun with to stick with just one, but the one we are starting with is very is fertile area to keep exploring in creatively. But no official plans have been ironed out.

I am sure once we are closer to releasing A Vampyre Story we will tackle those issues head on. Lets make this first game good. Then worry about sequels at the right time. Plus we have to make this one a success or no one will trust us to make a second game (Though that doesn't seem to stop some game makers. Grumble, grumble).

- The developers have worked for many popular titles, that are considered heavyweights in the history of gaming. Many would imagine that placing a piece of text on the box saying 'From the developers of Monkey Island' could play a very decisive role in the final sales of the game. Do you intend to take advantage of those developers' glorious past and if yes in what way?

W.K. Yes we sure will. There will be real and alive parrots and monkeys attached to the game package screaming the names of the team members. ... There sure will be a

“I would love to get to as many people as who want to play A Vampyre Story the opportunity to do so. So that is why we have wanted to make the game for PC and Xbox.”

way of doing it, but there is no definitive concept yet. But you will sure hear about it ...

B.T. Yes and no. First of all it is bit misleading to say that ALL the developers of such and such game are making this new game, because obviously not all the developers really are. But then again some of those original developers are on that new game. So what do you put on the box?

It sounds odd to say "From SOME of the developers of such and such games comes this new game." But also, to say 'we worked on previous games' lets the player know what to expect. So we are going to let people know about our experience for sure, but then again I don't want to insinuate that certain people are working on the game that really aren't. Ron Gilbert and Tim Schaffer ARE NOT working on this game. I'd love to have them but they are kind of busy.

But we have Anson Jew doing storyboards (Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis, The Dig, Full Throttle, Curse of Monkey Island), Paul Mica doing character designs (Sam N Max Hit The Road), Gary Brubaker doing technology (The Dig, Curse of Monkey Island, and Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine), Maria Bowen is painting backgrounds (Out Laws, Curse of Monkey Island), Bill Eaken doing set design (Secret Of Monkey Island, Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis, The Dig). And we have more that I can't mention just yet. But the main reason I am working with all these good folks is because we are all good friends, and I am really looking forward to working with them again full time.

- Would you consider porting A Vampyre Story to consoles or

would you rather publish it only for the PC?

B.T. I would love to get to as many people as who want to play A Vampyre Story the opportunity to do so. So that is why we have wanted to make the game for PC and Xbox. I wouldn't rule out any other platforms either, but the economics have to be there. If it is going to cost a \$100,000 to make Unix version, but we sell only enough to make \$50,000, it wouldn't make sense. We are still discussing it, so no platform has been ruled out yet.

W.K. There is some kind of a plan of porting AVS to the XBOX or the XBOX2. It mainly depends on the market. We will do some more research and see if we can get break even there. If not, there is little chance of doing it. But maybe some fans are willing to. I guess both Bill and I would have an open ear for that.

- Michael Land has composed the soundtracks for many Lucasarts adventures. Are there any plans to contact him for the purposes of A Vampyre Story as well, or are you going to trust the soundtrack of the game on someone else?

B.T. I love Michael Land's music a lot, especially his work on Out Laws, The Dig and Curse of Monkey Island. But I never contacted him about it. I figured he was bust at work for the big boys. Instead I turned to two good people, Zach Quarles and Brooks White. Zach did the in game music for our demo and Brooks did the sound track for the opening and cutscene.

Zach got lured back to Raven Soft to work on Quake 4, so unless that finishes up in time I



don't think we will be able to continue working with him on this game. Brooks will fill in, having composed music and sound for many Bay Area theatre companies for years. His specialty was working for murder mystery theatres, so I think that experience is perfect for a Gothic horror game.

- Have you already found the voice-talents for the characters of AVS? (If yes) Could you mention some of them? (If no) Do you have any contact with actors who worked for previous Lucasarts adventures and do you intend to approach them for the purposes of AVS?

B.T. Our current plan is to use professional actors from the Bay Area, though I think, and hope, few 'name actors' will be on the project too. But we haven't worked out the details yet. But I hope we will have a good mix of known and unknown actors doing voices. And I'll probably play a voice- the mime Mona drains the life out of in Paris after he annoys the crap out of her.

- When should we expect the first demo of A Vampire Story?

W.K. There already is a demo ;-)

B.T. The current demo works but the animation is 2d. I'd love to get a new one done for E3 and then possibly release it for download after that. We did that for Curse of Monkey Island and it created very good buzz for us then. But again no formal plans have been made for one yet. But I am pretty sure there will be one because it just seems like a good thing to do (unless your game sucks, then one should keep that fact a secret for as long as possible).

That other game with the trailer

- During The Inventory's Birthday Party you dropped a news-bomb that naturally blew everyone away and became the talk of the adventure community on the Internet. You said that you are in negotiations with Lucasarts on a title that we all wanted to have but we

never did (except from a fine trailer). So let's talk a bit about this game with the trailer ;) . In what stage are the negotiations with Lucasarts right now?

W.K. No comment (I signed an NDA).

B.T. Double no comment (I didn't sign one but I don't want to ruin any negotiations).

- Did the fact that many of AME's employees have worked for Lucasarts before help you get in touch with the management at Lucasarts?

W.K. Well, yes and no. The first contact was made by Bill, then there where loads of people coming and going at LucasArts and right now I hope the guys I am talking to are going to stay until the deal is finished.

- Do you know how complete is that game? How much is there left in terms of development?

W.K. Well, rumors say it's up to 70% done. That leaves 30% plus testing and stuff for us. As far as I know most of the Artwork is done and there is just a lot of the game-scripts missing.

B.T. I have heard through the grape vine all sorts of things so I couldn't answer that definitively. I have heard vertex lighting and a good chunk of scripting needs to be done. But I am no expert. You better ask LEC about that, or Dan Connors.

- If you managed to acquire the title from Lucasarts would you try to hire the developers that had worked on the game until the point it was cancelled or would you hand it over to AME instead



so that they can finish the game's development themselves?

W.K. We would try to have the old team finish it. We are in contact ...

- If it is handed over to AME does that mean that the development of A Vampyre Story would be delayed? And would you alter something on the work done so far or would you only try to finish what is left to do?

W.K. That's the main reason why we would let the old team finish it. AVS should get the best treatment it can. Not 80%, but 120%.

B.T. I'd prefer not to delay A Vampyre Story's production. Then again nothing is in stone. But if I can help get that game out in anyway way shape or form, short of hurting A Vampyre Story production, I would do it. That game NEEDS to come out.

- If you do manage to acquire the rights for the game, do you plan to release it before or after A Vampyre Story?

W.K. I like both ideas. To have such

a game as the first release would be a dream. To get it done later also is a dream. So we will see.

- How would you feel if you were to complete development of that other game with the trailer?

W.K. If that would happen, we would start it over again.

B.T. Well if I can help in anyway get games out the door that people have been dying to play, it would bring me nothing but joy. Plus I feel bad for all my old friends and co-workers at LEC who worked hard on those cancelled games, so I would be thrilled to see their work finally see the light of day. But on the other hand I am really looking forward to working on original game ideas. Those games franchises are great, but A Vampyre Story is where my heart is.

- Did you happen to see any footage of the game or did you happen to play some early build and if you did what did you think of it?

B.T. I have not played the game in

question, though I saw all the trailers shown at E3 in 2004 at the LEC booth. But I know a lot of people at LEC and I have heard nothing but good things about that game. Like I said, it needs to be made and published. I really don't care who does it.

I-jeet

- You mentioned also a third title that you have under development right now, I-jeet. Could you give us some details about this title? Is it an adventure game? What is the story of I-jeet?

W.K. Sure. It's the next big thing in point & click adventures. The idea is: stick with the style & the humor, but extend to the new technology. The story is about 7 people who lost their children.

They disappeared someday and now they want their children back. We hope that we can create a game that appeals both to male and female players. Think of it as a large, playable X-Files Episode with 7 main characters.

- You said it is going to be a multiplayer game. Could you explain to us how this is going to work in terms of gameplay and storytelling?

W.K. Well, you play one of seven characters. Every time you play the game you can decide who to play. the chapter structure is, that there are single player chapters (the first 3 for every character (which sums up to 21)) and multiplayer chapters (10). There will be one more character you can play once you solved some of the puzzles. this character will have 2 chapters. So there will be

33 Chapters (which is a lot). Every character has "a character". And every character starts in a different country and with a different job.

Why is that interesting? It's easy. First: locations. The first 3 chapters of everyone will be set in one's home country. Second: people with different professions see things in different ways. An architect will see other things when he enters a room than someone who is a cop. So everytime you play with a different character the same room will change in terms of infos & items to collect.

So what does that mean for multiplayer? As i stated before, there will be three types of puzzles: single player puzzles, multiplayer-synchronized and multiplayer-asynchronous. The first one are standard puzzles which can be found in every adventure. You can solve them in a single player session, no help needed. The second one can only be solved with two or more people at once (meaning playing at the same time, in the same or another room).

An example is: one character tries to steal something from an office and needs to distract someone behind the table. So a second character has to call him on the phone to distract him and the first one can take the item. The third kind of puzzle is even better. Characters can leave messages & clues for other players. They don't have to be online at the same time. every character has a way to communicate. One will have his own website where he leaves infos for the others. These pieces of information work like items.

Once you have read/heard/received them you will be able to use them and maybe continue at a location that needed something more. We currently discuss if it

is a good idea to have puzzles which can only be solved by more than one person simultaneously. Maybe there will be more than one way to do it.

- Are the graphics going to be in 3D or 2D?

W.K. The graphics are going to be 2D Background, 3D Characters and Movies with real actors as cutscenes.

- What is the release date of I-jet?

W.K. It's scheduled for release in Q2/2006.

General

- While some years ago a lot of people predicted the death of point and click adventures and a jump towards a direct control interface, nowadays we see quite the opposite with more and more point and click adventures being developed down the way. Why do you think the point and click interface has managed to win this battle throughout those last years in the adventure genre?

W.K. Because it's the natural way of using a PC. Maniac Mansion was the early stepbrother of the Windows way to use a PC in terms of the user interface. Personally i don't like to figure out the keys to move a character every time I play a game. Point and click is easy. Click what you want, get what you want. I remember the screams of pain when Sierra introduced the left click/right click- point & click style which is pretty common nowadays. I guess i-jet for example will get back to the superclassic "command buttons". I

“Simply put, point and click just works better. 'Point of view, direct control' games are best for games that emphasize action, where as 'point and click' games are best for games that emphasize story and puzzle solving with an avatar.”

know it's a bit late ...

B.T. Simply put, it just works better. 'Point of view, direct control' games are best for games that emphasize action, whereas 'point and click' games are best for games that emphasize story and puzzle solving with an avatar. One of our major philosophies at AME is "If it is not broken, why spend a lot of our resources - so graciously supplied by Bad Brain - to fix it?"

- Almost every major adventure game nowadays is developed by companies based in Europe. Some examples: The Westerner, Runaway, The Moment of Silence, Tony Tough, Black Mirror, Nibiru, Lost Paradise etc. Even Autumn Moon Entertainment had to rely on a European investor. Do you agree that Europe is the leading front in the adventure genre, and if you do why do you think this has happened?

W.K. I guess it's just a lot less risky in terms of investment to do a game in Spain or some European country. In Spain you can do a game for 1/3 of the price you would have to pay in Germany and in Germany you could do it for 1/2 the price of the US. It's like producing business-software in India. It's all about money and how to get the most for your bugs.

B.T. Adventure games are just more popular in Europe, and it has been that way for a long time. So Europe, as far as Lucas Arts was concerned, has always been a major consideration in marketing and distributing of adventure games. I am pretty sure Europe accounted for well more than half of Lucas's revenue on Curse of Monkey Island.

As to why, I am not sure. But a lot of people have said it is



because Americans like more action oriented games and Europeans like to challenge their problem solving skills more. I am not sure and I haven't done enough research to speak with any confidence on it. But I am sure it is has something to do with the difference between cultures and something to do with economics. That is a tough one to answer. What do you think Dimitris?

Also adventure games have an advantage over expensive mainstream action games, they can be creative and imaginative and take risks and still make money. Whereas the mainstream games have to be just like the last big game that came out, adventure games can explore new genres and themes and still make money. Creativity is almost dead in the mainstream, which may account for why adventure games are so popular in Europe, where creativity and imagination is at a premium.

- Where do you see BBE and AME some years in the future? Do you think that you will be producing lots of adventures every year, in some way replacing the void that

Lucasarts and Sierra have left in the industry?

B.T. That is my goal. I think it will be tough to replace Lucas Arts, if that is even possible. We just had too much talent there to try and replicate that creative environment again. But I want to make cartoon adventure games in that classic style till I die, period. This may sound a little dramatic or cheesy, but I really believe I was born to do this for the rest of my life.

I have loved Disney animated movies since I was old enough to walk. I have loved computer games since Pong, and love doing illustration on the computer since the Apple II came out. This just seems like the natural thing for me to do. But if A Vampyre Story is a success I will absolutely want to continue making more.

W.K. Hell that would be great. I guess an adventure a year would be nice. It's really some kind of art. So don't want to be an industry but a bunch of artists creating a unique visual, acoustic and playable experience every time. Bad Brain wants to gather the finest artists of the



industry to give them a home. A place where they can come to present their ideas, a place where they can come if they want to found a new business etc. We did get a lot of game offers since the Inventory Birthday Party. And we would sure love to do every single one of them. But there is a problem: and it's money again.

First of all we have a budget (that explains a lot). Then there is the possible revenue for a p&c adventure which is mostly a little more than break even if you calculate with the interest, the people involved who are not actually programming, designing etc. If a p&c adventure would sell a million units we could bring you adventures beyond your wildest dreams. But currently we are calculating 100.000 units worldwide (which is really good nowadays). More than 50% of the price that a game is sold, is money that does not even reach the publisher. It's spent for the distributor, the stores, tax (16% in Germany for example), packaging etc. The rest has to cover the costs of development, of the company and of the localisation etc.

Bad Brain wants to do a lot of different games. There is another game in the pipeline which will hit stores in Q2/2005. It's called Quizzoid and it's an online quizshow where you can play with / against others. ... and once a day you can actually be candidate for a live show in which you can win prizes like cars, money etc. Think of it as "a web version of a crossover of who wants to be a millionaire and trivial pursuit". It's also possible to create own sets of questions and answers and sell them for points in the Quizzoid Shop. That way you can buy new Card-Sets, Skins, Sounds etc. You see, there is plenty of room. But there is yet another adventure coming our way. It's called "The Organic Four". It's scheduled after I-Jet and will be a mix of "The A-Team", "A 70s porn movie" and "The Godfather". It will be a Southparkish, comicstyle hyperactive game.

- Do you plan to produce titles for other mediums as well (movies, comic books etc) in the future?

W.K. Yes, there are plans. AVS would make for a nice cartoon

series. And I guess a feature-movie about a dog and a rabbit would be nice. Someone responsible really liked that idea. In terms of Merchandising there will be loads of stuff. A comic for sure.

Maybe a board-game, trading cards etc. I am also thinking about doing a book about everything that happens since I first wrote to Bill until the end of the AVS / i-Jet Game. Maybe we will even have a Web-Diary like the guys over at LucasArts have for Ep. 3. With one video per week showing people in pain & fear.

B.T. Like I have said before I have a lot of contacts in the animation biz, so I am going to try and get my old college buddies to take a look at our TV show pitch and see if it would make a good series. I think it would. Cross your fingers.

- Is there anything else you would like to add?

W.K. Yes! Merry Christmas ;-) And thanks for the opportunity to spam the whole community. Thanks for the opportunity to do this interview. Doing these really helps us a lot in many ways, and Merry Christmas, Kwanza, and happy Hanukah. And happy Winter Solstice for you druids out there (because research has shown that Druids really dig adventure games so I don't want to forget them)!

Law & Order: Justice is Served

In all honesty, it must be admitted, I'm not a big fan of television. Certainly when I want to laugh there are always reruns of *Frasier* or *Cheers*, but I'm not one of those people who seeks effective drama on the tube. There are exceptions, like *Das Boot* and *The Decalogue*, two phenomenal productions made for German and Polish television, respectively. But all of these one hour detective and police procedural shows do very little for me, if anything at all. I adore a good mystery, but the key ingredient for success in my opinion is that character should always come before plot, and that's not the feeling I get with *CSI* or *Law & Order* or what have you. Because of this, I've only seen a few handfuls of episodes over all the years the show has been on the air, and I honestly couldn't tell you much about Lennie Briscoe. Without a doubt my mother could, and she even called me up a few days ago to tell me so, but I can admit my own shortcomings: an expert on *Law & Order* I am not.

Having provided this information, I'm sure everyone can guess that I never played the other *Law & Order* games, so this won't be a review where I get to gush over all of the "improvements" compared to various elements in the previous entries. I tackled this game in a very simple manner using the mind set of someone who just enjoys entertaining mysteries and wonderful



Detectives Ed Green and Lennie Briscoe discussing the case

adventure games. I wanted to see if this release could impress people who aren't built in fans of the show it's based on. Period. So without further delay...

Story: It begins with a murder, which should come as no surprise to fans of the show I suppose. This time, the victim is a female tennis star from Ukraine named Elena Kusarova. The U.S. Open is right around the corner, and within the first thirty minutes of playtime there are possible motives sprouting up everywhere. What are those pills in her locker for? Who is this guy in the photograph with her? What's up with the syringe next to her body? Whose hair is under her nails? How did she get that cut on her forehead? These questions and more will assault you from the word go.

You will find yourself expanding the storyline by going from location to location interviewing all kinds of characters, including Elena's coach, her ex-boyfriend, her lawyer, her mother, etc. You will also come across letters (with a "piece together the shredded note" puzzle early on) and other documentation that flesh out the plot of the game and bring you closer to having all the evidence you'll need for the later stages.

Of course, no amount of suspects or mystery is too much for super heroes Lennie Briscoe and Ed Green. They lack the fancy capes and cool names, but these guys are hardcore, make no mistake about it. To the game's credit, I got a pretty good feel for Briscoe's personality through his attitude, dialogue, and

vocal reaction to items being investigated more closely. Still, this story is all about solving a murder and taking the case to trial (where you will have to do all the work to get a guilty verdict) with room left for very little else on the side. It does indeed feel like just another episode in a television show with the only difference being that you play this one. I was reminded of the old Police Quest games, particularly Open Season, but the comparisons end when you start spending a fair portion of this game in a courtroom.

Don't get me wrong, the storyline in this game, for what it is (and what I believe it was intended to be), is pretty well done. It's not another Gabriel Knight, but I think Legacy Interactive can live with that. Not many games can compare to Jane Jensen's "holy trilogy" (to steal Kevin Smith's line about Star Wars). Legacy can be happy with what they've achieved here overall, though I have heard through the grapevine that this isn't even their best plot in a Law & Order game. Still, I enjoyed the twists and turns and I had an enjoyable time.

Gameplay: The gameplay is a mixed bag as far as I'm concerned. While the interview process works fine and the courtroom scenes, if a little unbelievable at times, mostly hit the mark, there is a key flaw. Basically I just never got the feeling that I was really exploring anything. All of the areas seem pretty small (a few nodes a piece most of the time) and at each one I twirled in a circle and picked things up or investigated hot spots. I love this style of gameplay in games like Myst IV: Revelation, but in that game the areas were enormous and I always felt like there was more to discover. Now, I'm not a

game designer by any means, I don't have the answers as to how to fix this problem for the next Law & Order game, but as a player I get to complain anyway. Obviously I know Lennie and Ed can't wander around a huge world poking at the flora and fauna while ambient chanting erupts around them. Still, all I can say is that I felt very restricted most of the time in the exploration portions of the game. As if everything came much too easily with no effort required.

The puzzles are a different story. Most of them are actually pretty well done, and quite logical. There are "figure out the combination" puzzles, slider puzzles (used in a clever way I might add), a music box puzzle where you must reproduce a tune, an "arrange the dolls" puzzle, tried and true inventory puzzles, etc. Even the puzzles that feel like they exist only to extend the game are pretty enjoyable. I was also fond of the interface and the way the inventory was handled, with separate sections to keep track of witnesses, items, documents, etc. Everything is laid out well, self explanatory, and easy to use. For the most part the game



Exploring the unfortunate victim's apartment

Developer:
Legacy Interactive
 Perspective:
1st person
 Interface:
Point and click
 Site:
legacyinteractive.com
 Difficulty:
Medium

Below: Hmmm... Briscoe had better try a different approach.





Meet the big tennis star and ladies man



How do people do this job? I've always been curious...

“If you love adventure games and mysteries or better yet, both at the same time, then this new Law & Order game could possibly provide some hours of quality enjoyment.”

Highs: An above average plot, reasonable and fun puzzles, and a decent length for a game based on a one hour show.

Lows: Some occasionally lame dialogue, very little characterization, and not nearly enough area to explore

The Verdict

Story:	71
Graphics:	62
Sound:	70
Gameplay:	74
Overall:	68

*Overall = (Story x 2 + Graphics + Music + Gameplay x 2) / 6

felt effective and worthwhile (puzzles, interviewing suspects, etc.), but I missed the sense of really powerful immersion that I get when exploring in a top notch adventure game. When the marriage of every element just...works. There was something artificial about Justice is Served that I can't quite put my finger on, and the exploration was too limited.

Graphics: The game is node based and viewed through a first person perspective with 360-degree viewing. When you click to advance to a new area the transition is instant, unlike some games (The Journeyman Project 3 for instance) where these moments are animated. During conversation sequences and other story segments the game occasionally shifts into a third person view where things feel even more like an episode of the show. The character models are pretty well done I must say, and one can tell there was a lot of extra attention to realism and detail in that aspect of the graphics.

The best description I can give overall for the visuals is this: It's like a somewhat less polished Post Mortem. That's far from being an insult because stylish, atmospheric environments were one of Post Mortem's very best features. Justice is Served may not ever reach that level, but it does a nice job. Though I was never as immersed in the world of Law & Order like I have been in several other recent adventure games, I still admired the effort on the whole.

Sound: The sound in this game is above average for sure, due in no small part to the effective voice acting of Jerry Orbach (after all, the guy can act, you don't get to play the father in Dirty Dancing or the head of the New Jersey mafia

in Toy Soldiers if you aren't taking home an Oscar now and again, right?!). In fact, the acting as a whole isn't too bad, and in many ways it succeeded in getting me more into the story. However, some of the dialogue toward the beginning of the game (it does get better) is terrible to the extent that not even Al Pacino could've wrapped his mouth around it convincingly.

The music is decent, though nothing to write home about. However, what is most impressive about this portion of the game is the use of ambient sound. Like a television on in the background, or sounds on a tennis court behind you, all providing a more convincing environment. Last month I reviewed the game that best used sounds of this nature to create an illusion of reality, The Last Express. Justice is Served is no Last Express by any measure, but at least the design team put forth the effort to create a more convincing world, and that's more than one can say about most adventures.

In a few words... In the end, I did have a pretty good time with this game. I believe people who really love the show will enjoy this game a bit more than those who don't, and that's a pretty large target audience for Legacy Interactive to have anyway. But here I am, speaking for everyone else. If you love adventure games and mysteries or better yet, both at the same time, then this new Law & Order game could possibly provide some hours of quality enjoyment. But is it really a great adventure game or a great mystery? I'm sorry to say it's not. Is it worth the money though? That's a toss up question, and I lean toward a "yes".

- Ben Keeney



The Moment of ... SILENCE

Oliver Gruener reviewed the German version of The Moment of Silence on our 18th issue. This is a review of the English version of The Moment of Silence written by Dimitris Manos.

The Moment of Silence is a 3rd person point and click espionage thriller from the German developer House of Tales that had previously given us The Mystery of the Druids. First of all, The Moment of Silence is far, far, faaar better than The Mystery of the Druids. Furthermore, when someone makes a mistake it is appropriate to admit it. And I made a mistake... a big one. When? Do you remember the last issue before the summer, where we featured the top 10 most awaited adventure games? Back then I had not included The Moment of Silence in that list. After having just finished the game, I realize what a big mistake that was, and now it comes back to bite me on ... my

bum.

Story: The Moment of Silence takes place in New York in the year 2044. You are Peter Wright, a communications manager working for a company that is developing the Freedom of Speech campaign for the government. Peter has just been through the hardest time a man can have. I won't say what exactly though, because the player does not get to know what Peter's been through until later in the game, but let's just say that it is something that can bring someone down to pieces.

Peter witnesses the NYPD SWAT team storming the apartment of his neighbour and arresting him in front of the eyes of his very own wife

and son without giving any explanation. His curiosity gets the better of him and he decides to visit them to find out what just happened there. Miss Oswald claims to have no clue regarding the arrest of her husband. Peter offers his help. Since he doesn't have much to do nowadays anyway (has taken some days off work to deal with his personal problems) he thinks it might be a good way to take his mind off his own problems.

The story of TMOS is one of its strongest points. The plot is very interesting and it gets more exciting as it unfolds. If you like stories that are dealing with corruption and world domination conspiracies,



Is he just another guy who lost it? Or do his mumbling actually have a deeper meaning?

Some streets in New York are not very safe. You'd better watch out who you are talking to



Developer:
House of Tales
Perspective:
3rd person
Interface:
Point and click
Site:
themomentofsilence.com
Difficulty:
Medium

TMOS is going to be your cup of tea. The plot is a real 'adventure' as you will be traveling to different places of the world, you will meet a lot of different people and you will try to get away from dangerous situations. I found some of the assumptions about the way of life in the future very interesting and the game does make you wonder how some things will be different 30 or 40 years from now. It was also fun to see gadgets that today are considered state of the art being treated as prehistoric junk.

The Moment of Silence addresses a lot of political issues and subjects that are quite current nowadays. Whether you agree or disagree with the views presented in the game, I think that the developers deserve congratulations for opting to go down that route, because whether we like it or not, computer games have turned into an art form, and every form of art has traditionally been concerned with politics one way or another.

The characters in the game are for the most part well developed. Actually a couple of them were slightly more developed than they should be. What I mean, is that even in times when one would think that Peter is running out of time and has to act fast, you see him asking secondary characters about personal issues that are somewhat irrelevant to the story overall. That only happened very few times though. In general the dialogues are fun to hear and they help to build the personalities of the people you meet in the futuristic world of TMOS. Some characters that I thought were really memorable were Brian and Bill from Greenberg corporation, the Professor, a leader of homeless people and Mr. Huttonington the antique store keeper, who expresses nostalgia through the wares in his store. The best character of all however, has to be Peter himself. I could really identify with the character and care for him, maybe because of what he had just

been through. I can't say the same about miss Oswald and her son, that came out a bit... flat.

The only drawback I found with the story of The Moment of Silence was the fact that some events were a bit far fetched.

Spoilers A couple of examples would include Peter, a communications manager, being able to fly a zeppelin, a sewer drain being open just the time when Peter was running away from the cops, and Peter looking outside his door through the door peephole just about the time when the SWAT team were storming Oswald's apartment. ***End of Spoilers*** But apart from a few events like this the rest of the game's story is very captivating and immersive.

Graphics: The good news is... the graphics of TMOS will remind you a lot those of the graphics in The Longest Journey. The bad news is...the graphics of TMOS will remind you a lot of the graphics in The Longest Journey. If TMOS was released a couple of years ago, then one would say back then that the graphics are amazing. But with the standards set nowadays by adventures like Syberia and The Westerner, TMOS is inferior in comparison. The models especially

could have been much better. Their detail level is quite low, while their animation is very stiff. Camera cuts are also few and the game could have made use of more of them. A good example of that is ***Spoilers*** a conversation between Peter and his boss at his office, where the conversation lasts for 10 to 15 minutes and the camera is set at one point all the time, while the models themselves hardly move. ***End of Spoilers***

To make things even worse the game screen is quite narrow (I suppose it was 16:9 dimensions) but the subtitles are displayed on the very top of your monitor, on quite some distance from the viewing area. So sometimes, due to the fact that the screen is static anyways, you end up looking only at a piece of text while listening to the actors. The outcome is that you don't feel that much immersed anymore in the gameworld.

The backgrounds are better, and the detail is quite high, but one can't expect anything less from pre-rendered backgrounds nowadays anyway. They could however also made use of more animation. Everything is just very static on your screen while playing TMOS, which was a bit of a letdown. Cutscenes on the other hand are a whole diffe-

rent matter. Impressive is the word that would describe them the best. When I was watching them I was disappointed by the fact that I did not have my PC connected to a big television so that I could enjoy the cutscenes even more.

Sound: The soundtrack of TMOS is just exceptional. Some of the tracks are very reminiscent of the music that Hans Zimmer (Rock, Crimson Tide) and John Powell (The Bourne Supremacy) composed for some of the best action-packed movies. The soundtrack also includes some ambient tunes and a rock tune heard at the hackers place. The voices are also well done for the most part, apart from a couple of characters like Lou at the hackers' place and the flight attendant at the space station that were quite exaggerated.

Gameplay: The tasks that one has to accomplish in The Moment of Silence are for the most part very logical and they feel fun to carry out. This is a great achievement for House of Tales. Most of them require from you to pick up objects and use them on certain hotspots, to interact with characters and to solve some machinery puzzles. I had to use a walkthrough only twice throughout the whole



The imagination of the developers really runs wild in The Moment of Silence and players get to see a lot of interesting gadgets that could possibly be invented in the distant future



Mr. Huntington's antique store

game and I will talk about one of these instances later. Another achievement of House of Tales is that there is almost no pixel hunting in the game. Apart from one or two cases where some careful observation will help you out, the rest of the game is totally pixel-hunting free, which felt very refreshing.

The interface of The Moment of Silence is simple to use...in theory. In theory, your character is supposed to move to the place where you click on the screen, but this hardly ever happens. Path-finding is one of the biggest problems in TMOS, as you will find yourselves fighting with the controls to get Peter at the right position. If you right click on an item Peter will give you a short description, which is always a nice touch in adventure games. Your inventory is displayed on the bottom of the screen, below the viewing area.

Another problem with TMOS is the pace of the gameplay. The pace of the game is very slow in the beginning and in the very end of the game. After having played for a while you will be able to visit 4 to 6 locations. Sometimes, although you will know what your main objective is, you won't know how to reach this objective, and you will have to visit all those locations. The problem is that you have

to walk through large surfaces, and some of this walking could have been cut down. For example when you have to visit the Greenberg Corporation for the third or fourth time, the game could have cut down on the 3 screens that you have to walk through until you get on the level where the offices are, since there is nothing else to do on these three screens apart from walking through them. On the second half of the game, the developers took care of that and you usually move directly to the point where you can actually do something apart from walking.

But then there was a puzzle near the end of the game that was a real pace-killer.

Spoilers Up to that point, the story had built up a lot of tension and suspense, and at the point where the story was about to climax, just the moment before completing the whole game, you have to solve a puzzle involving the coordinates of some satellite dishes. The game does tell you what you have to do, but it certainly does not tell you how to do it. The only feedback available to you is in a control room, where there is a panel telling you whether the satellite dishes are transmitting the right signal or not. The problem is that the control panel is 3 screens away from the entrance to the first satellite dish, and then each satellite dish has a distance of 4 screens between each other. Let me just tell you that in order to find out how to get to your goal, will require a lot of trial and error. After I had seen my character walking back and forth more than a hundred screens approximately the tension that the story had built thus far turned into boredom. Therefore I finally gave up, cause I thought it was not worth so much



Rita seems a bit ... loose on the outside but she might be of help

trouble just to see the ending cutscene and I resorted to a walkthrough. ***End of Spoilers***

The Moment of Silence will take you certainly more than 20 hours to finish, and maybe even more than 30 but the problem is that a large part of this time is spent in walking/running through screens.

General Info: The Moment of Silence comes on a DVD-ROM so you won't have to endure the pains of disc swapping with this adventure. Unfortunately though, you will have to endure the pains of 3rd party security and patches software. When I installed the game, I was asked to install Gameshadow as well, a piece of software that will download the latest patches for The Moment of Silence. I thought 'ok, let's install this as well in order to avoid any possible bugs there might be'. When I installed Gameshadow, which took some considerable time, I had to register, then I had to login and then I had to ... download a new version of Gameshadow and install it again because the version on the DVD was too old. And when this was finished was I able to play the game then? No, because the Starforce copy protection system wanted me to reboot my PC. So after I had done all that was the game bug-free? Unfortunately not.

Sometime after I was in the game the sound would just stop when I would enter a new screen. No music, no speech, no sound effect no nothing. This happened a lot of times, and I remembered that it had happened in another adventure as well. After thinking about it for a while I remembered that it was Black Mirror that I encountered this problem before. Ok so I thought what did The Black Mirror

and The Moment of Silence might have in common that might be causing such a problem. So here's a quiz for you. What does the Black Mirror and The Moment of Silence have in common that might cause sound to just stop playing during the game:

- a) They are both seen from a 3rd person perspective
- b) They both use a point and click interface
- c) They both have a male main character
- d) They both use the notorious Starforce copy protection system

Submit your answers at info@theinventory.org and you might win the next issue of The Inventory for free!!! There was also another bug, this time a gameplay related one. ***Spoilers*** While in prison, and after you take your tooth out, if you sit down instead of waiting for the time to pass, the story never gets to the point where it gets nighttime, therefore if you haven't saved shortly before, you are in trouble ***End of Spoilers***

In a few words... The Moment of Silence is a solid adventure experience with a gripping story, cinematic cutscenes and a spectacular soundtrack. A few details could have been better, such as the in-game graphics, path finding and the pace of the gameplay in a couple of places, but regardless, this is an adventure that must be in your collection. A serious contender for adventure game of the year, and a proof that House of Tales takes feedback from players seriously, since TMOS is better in many ways than their previous title The Mystery of the Druids.

- Dimitris Manos



The Moment of Silence features a few mechanical puzzles as well

“The Moment of Silence is a solid adventure experience with a gripping story, cinematic cutscenes and a spectacular soundtrack.”

Highs: Great & original story, main character that you care for, excellent soundtrack, most of the tasks in the game make sense, no pixel hunting

Lows: Path-finding is one of the game's toughest puzzles, in-game graphics a bit dated, pace-killing puzzle near the end, a lot of unnecessary walking

The Verdict

Story:	93
Graphics:	78
Sound:	89
Gameplay:	77
Overall:	85

*Overall = (Story x 2 + Graphics + Music + Gameplay x 2) / 6

A Quiet Weekend in Capri

Developer:

Got Game

Perspective:

1st person

Interface:

Point and click

Site:

gotgameentertainment.com

Difficulty:

Intermediate

One of the problems of playing and reviewing Adventure Games for a living (don't I only wish) is that, more and more, I have to come to terms with the fact that not all of them are very good at all. This, unfortunately, is one such game. Gey and Silvio Savarese, the games creators, clearly have a deep interest in the island as a source material, and they did what they could to keep it entertaining, but to be brutally frank, the game they've created out of a fairly decent concept does not really work.

Story: Your vacation starts off well. After a brief boat ride to the beautiful island of Capri, you hope to be able to check into your hotel, unpack your things, and just relax among your gorgeous surroundings. A quick cab ride to the plaza, and a short stroll to the hotel, but as you approach the door you notice something becomes amiss. Namely, your surroundings go all swirly, all the people disappear, and you've been turned into a young errand-boy named Rafele.

That alone seems a decent enough start to the game, and it's only too bad that it lasts through the middle and a bit of the ending. The bulk of the game is you,

Rafele, assuming the stereotypical adventure game role of delivery boy. "I'll give you Thing-1 if you get me Thing-2." "Well, I'll give you Thing-2 if you get Thing-3 from Random-Guy-7." And so forth. There's something about time machines, parallel universes, and some kind of war going on, but it was all a bit too weird to remember, and frankly I just couldn't be bothered.

Gameplay: As mentioned, the bulk of the game rests in the all too common Adventure Game puzzle of playing delivery boy, but in order to play this time-honored role, you must first find someone to send you on your little errands, and after the world goes all swirly in the beginning there is no real direction, and you are left to your own devices to explore the island and find your first assignment. I myself managed to get a screwdriver and hammer from people who then disappeared before getting my first newspaper delivery job. To be honest, I only even found them by wandering around aimlessly, and can't imagine that any puzzle or directions would have led me to them.

Oh and let us not forget, this game has tragically contracted



Tired of winter? Capri might be something for you right now.

the virulent and often fatal disease, pixel-hunt-initis. Symptoms include: sore fingers, scratchy throat, having to find particular walnuts at the base of a particular tree in the middle of a particularly grove. If left untreated, it can manifest purple splotches and unnecessary mazes.

This game does get one thing right, and that is giving the player the chance to explore the island of Capri. The game features a Tour mode with a guide's voice recording (in clear English no less, more on this below) and allows the player to casually explore the island and familiarize themselves with the locale. Unfortunately, the thoroughness with which this beautiful island is presented to the player only serves to underscore the poor quality of the gameplay in general.

Graphics: I have no earthly idea how to grade them on this. On the one hand the pictures look crisp and clean. On the other hand, they look crisp and clean because they're all photographs. I'm no photography expert or anything, so I wouldn't know how to grade the more than four thousand photographs on scene composition or lighting or anything, but it all looks reasonably decent I guess. There's no animation, but then there wasn't really meant to be, and it doesn't really hurt the game in any sense. It was intended to be a kind of static "Postcard" adventure (as Myst-clones were once disparagingly called) and as what it is, it works well enough.

Sound: Ah, good... Italians who don't speak English delivering English lines. Hurray. Really, you're better switching to the Italian dialogue with subtitles. It has the advantage of enhancing the native feel of the island, with the added bonus of, if you are literate, being



One of the locals

able to understand what the hell people are saying.

The game is full of serene ambient sound of the waves crashing against the shore, the birds overhead, the wind blowing through the trees, and all the other things you might expect to hear on vacation at a quaint island town. The music is pleasant to listen to and is used interestingly. Instead of presenting, as other games might, a different song for different rooms or places, they're used more as transitional elements, introducing a new scene, new place, new plot point, etc.

Few Words: Well, it's quaint, certainly, and not without its charm. The Island of Capri certainly is an interesting place to be able to explore, and the included Tour mode conveys this well enough, but it is my unfortunate duty to say that, though a novel idea, the game is quite poorly executed. Ordinarily I would tell such an independent developer not to be discouraged by such comments, but frankly, before they make another game, they need to seriously reconsider how and why they're in the game-making racket in the first place.

- Justin Peeples

"Before they make another game, they need to seriously reconsider how and why they're in the game-making racket in the first place."

Highs: A lovely place to visit, nice pictures and music, and the story's kinda good if you can get into it

Lows: Puzzles and general gameplay are poor, so it really doesn't work as a game

The Verdict

Story:	70
Graphics:	75
Sound:	85
Gameplay:	45
Overall:	65

*Overall = (Story x 2 + Graphics + Music + Gameplay x 2) / 6

BITS AND BYTES

THE HARDWARE CORNER



In the last issue Oliver talked about digital cameras. Now in this issue Oliver talks about hard drives and gives you some advices on what to look for if you are about to buy one. 'And they spin around...'

A hard disk is a data storage device unlike most others. Simply speaking, it can be described as a hermetical sealed case contains several, separate, magnetic discs. Some write-read heads move over the spinning discs and polarize the magnetic particles on the discs in the plus or minus direction in compliance with the binary values of 1 and 0 - the basis of all computer software.

Today's consumer hard disks spin with 4200 rounds per minute (rpm) to 10,000 rpm. Of course the faster they spin the faster they are but also the louder they become. When searching for a hard disk one should look for a compromise of speed and noise. Also faster discs are usually more expensive. Most common for consumer PCs are drives with 160 to 250 GB capacity and 7200 rpm. If it's just an office computer and larger files aren't handled then often a slower disc with 5400 rpm might be the right choice especially when the tower resides on top of the desk and not underneath - your ears will thank you. The slow 4200 rpm drives are usually only found in notebooks.

Some other values are of importance when distinguishing hard drives. The seek time of current disks is between 4 milliseconds (ms) and 13 ms. The most affordable discs offer 8 or 9 ms. The cache or buffer is a certain type of Random Access Memory (RAM). Since RAM has no mechanical parts it is a lot faster than a hard disk to offer often requested data faster, so the hard drives usually have 8 or 16 MB of RAM as a cache.

Other important factors are the transfer rates that can be separated in read and write speed. Notebook drives often have a minimum write speed of 12 Mega Bytes per second

(MB/s) while desktop hard disks usually gain between 30 and 90 MB/s. The maximum read speed is a bit faster. So in other words an ideal state-of-the-art hard disk theoretically would have a seek time of 4 ms, 16 MB cache and read/write above 90 MB of data per second.

Mass storage devices like hard disks or CD-ROM drives are connected via an interface through a so called BUS, a data line, with the actual computer. There are generally two types of controller interfaces in use, SCSI (Small Computer System Interface) and IDE (Integrated Drive Electronics, Integrated Device Equipment or Intelligent Drive Electronics - depending on whom you ask), IDE has become known as the ATA standard (Advanced Technology Attachment). While SCSI is more seen in a professional surrounding, SCSI disks are usually a generation ahead in speed, size and price, and explaining the different types of it would make this article burst so we'll have a closer look at IDE, only because this is the most common interface in desktop computers.

As the name calls it, the IDE controller is integrated into the drive allowing a better coordination than an external controller possibly could manage. To avoid a mismatch of information when two drives are connected with one flat cable one is assigned as master and the other as slave. The controller of the master drive also controls the other drive. Simply speaking the slave is only allowed to send information when the master permits it. In earlier times the data was sent in the so called PIO mode (Programmed Input / Output). There are several types of PIO modes allowing different speeds: PIO 0 = 3,3 MB/s, PIO 1 = 5,2 MB/s, PIO 2 = 8,3 MB/s, PIO 3 = 11,1 MB/s, and PIO 4 = 16,6 MB/s. They had the big disadvantage that they

needed CPU (Central Processing Unit) resources also. As you can see, they are too slow for today's generation of hard drives. The follow up is the UDMA mode (Ultra Direct Media Access) with UDMA33 (UDMA 2) = 33,3 MB/s, UDMA66 (UDMA 4) = 66,6 MB/s, UDMA100 (UDMA 5) = 100 MB/s and UDMA133 = 133 MB/s as the most common ones, the last one, known as ATA 133 is not an official standard, yet. While even UDMA 133 reaches its limits with two modern hard disks connected to it, in 2000 a new standard was released called Serial-ATA bringing the era of the 16 bit busses to an end. S-ATA is a serial interface sending bit by bit and offering a transfer rate of 150 MB/s in its current, lowest version 1.0. Another advantage of S-ATA is hot-plugging that allows attaching and detaching of devices during operation just like the USB (Universal Serial Bus) but this feature is not supported by any mainboard, yet. Also S-ATA doesn't need the old flat ribbon cables anymore saving space inside the tower and allows for a better cooling air stream. Besides it is easier to handle.

Some other terminology one might stumble over when talking about computer drives is ATAPI. This is simply an ATA extension called Packet Interface with whom SCSI commands are wrapped into ATA commands. All hard disks of today come with a security observation system called S.M.A.R.T. (Self Monitoring And Reporting Technology). S.M.A.R.T doesn't report hard disk errors by itself but it helps to detect when a hard disk drives (hdd) life comes closer to its death. There is several free software available that show the S.M.A.R.T parameters like the smartmontools (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/smartmontools/>) and HDD Health (<http://www.panterasoft.com/download/hhealth.exe>) who help analyzing

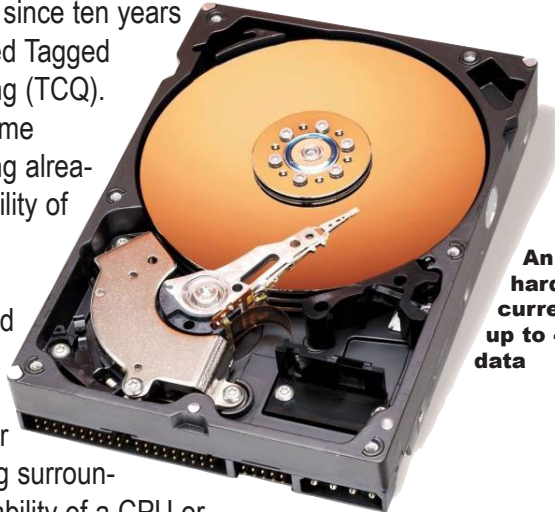
for trouble. A list with all S.M.A.R.T attributes can be found at <http://smart-linux.sourceforge.net/smart/attributes.php>.

Native Command Queuing (NCQ) actually isn't a really new thing. SCSI drives can do this since ten years ago, and it is called Tagged Command Queuing (TCQ).

As the name Command Queuing already says it's the ability of the hard drive to accept more commands at once and manage them in a queue. The result is a higher transfer rate in multitasking surroundings, that is the ability of a CPU or operating system to run more than one task at once, when a lot of threads for example from a database want access to the drive. A premise to use discs with NCQ is a host adapter with driver software and the Advanced Host Controller Interface (AHCI). AHCI must be activated at the computers BIOS and afterwards the driver must be installed with a floppy disk during the Windows 2000 or XP setup.

A lot of movement is currently going on in the hard disk market. Fujitsu, Maxtor and Seagate released the first Serial-ATA disks with Native Command Queuing (NCQ) and mobile disks with 2.5 inch offer up to 100 Giga Byte (GB) capacities while 1.8 inch drives broke the 60 GB barrier. The ordinary 3.5 hard disks are available with 400 GB for an affordable price. Such huge amount of space makes it easy to save all music and movies on the hard drive and to build your own media library - or play a few dozen adventures at the same time.

- Oliver Gruener



An ordinary hard disk drive currently saves up to 400 GB of data

Invento-Mail

This is the part of the magazine where you can make yourselves heard. Send your emails to theinventory@yahoo.com or to info@theinventory.org and we will reply to you in this section in one of our future issues. Now let's move on to the mails that we received lately

Hi

I read your review on Just Adventure, and I noticed that you wrote that the English release has no bugs. If this is true, how come Adventure Company released a 1.1 patch less than two weeks after the game's release? Anyway, I wanted to ask you something: when you watched the intro, did you see any credits? I didn't see any until I installed the patch! Also, when I installed the game, I didn't choose to install it to the default directory, so when the installation program tried to load the readme file after the installation was finished, it said it can't find the file!

Amitai

The Inventory: Hello Amitai. I don't know if there are versions that are buggy and versions that are not buggy. Apparently since they released a patch, there must be something wrong with some versions. All I know is that the copy we were sent did not have any technical problems whatsoever. And I could see the credits as well. Maybe it is a matter of graphics cards? I have no idea. But as a reviewer I can't say that a game is buggy the moment that I find no bugs at my own copy from beginning to end.

Hello The Inventory Team,,,

This is an amazing mag that gives to an adventure player whatever he or she want. I'm from Turkiye(it isn't Turkey:)) and you can be sure that here is a lot of The Inventory readers. I just want to say to you that your performance is very good and one more another things. Turkiye perhaps isn't good in this sector but our new games will be available in the near future. If I'm not mistaken you are a European based mag and you must be closely interested with the new incoming unknown games. I can give one more example from our new games. It's Istanbul (I know it's a metropolis, but the name of the game is Istanbul at the same time). It's an adventure game and it's about Istanbul as you can imagine. Why am I saying this to you? Perhaps you can make a job of work which contains new European Games. I think it can be interesting.

Also I have got another wish. I have just read the review of the Gooka: Mystery of Janatris. I couldn't find the e-mail adress of the writer, and I want to contact with him. You can help me, I think.

Thnx,

Erdem Maþlak (Merlinin Kazaný)

The Inventory: Hello Erdem. Regarding European adventures: We are going to open up a new website soon called Adventure Europe, that will focus exclusively on the european market of adventure games. The team contributing for Adventure Europe will be different to the team that contributes to The Inventory and we will have articles translated in several languages. Stay tuned and check our website www.theinventory.org for more news on that. As for Gooka, I think you mixed the sites. We are not going to cover Gooka, cause it is an action/adventure and we cover only adventure games. I think you mixed us up with Just Adventure (www.justadventure.com)

Epilogue

Phewww... we are in dire need of a vaction. It is a great feeling to write The Inventory but it is also very hard work. It has been a terrific year for The Inventory. We had the honour to reveal A Vampyre Story, Keepsake and Tony Tough 2 for our readers and we were lucky enough to find Element.gr who has helped us a lot with a wide variety of issues.

For example they created our new website www.theinventory.org and our new radio station (which you can find on the front page of the site). With each and every issue our readership grows and we hope that you think that our quality improves as well.

So what's going to happen next year? We have A LOT of surprises for you, but I'd rather not promise anything yet. But I can tell you a bit about our next issue. We will feature a new comic based on an upcoming adventure, while we might also reveal the first screenshots of this adventure as well during the same month. We will also try to review Return to Mysterious Island from The Adventure Company, CSI: Miami and one more adventure.

Make sure to visit our forum, where we will be posting the latest news regarding the magazine and everything else adventure-related we prepare for you for the coming year. I hope you all enjoy your holidays. Talk to you again next year!

Dimitris Manos



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