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The Inventory

A magazine for adventure games only

- Interview With
Frogwares

- Clever & Smart
review

THE LEGEND OF CRYSTAL VALLEY

We reveal this new point and click fantasy adventure
and we feature a 2-page comic based on the game

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Prologue

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First of all I would like to talk about the co-operation between The Inventory and the leading gaming site of Portugal, PTgamers. The Inventory and PTGamers agreed in January to work together so that adventure games receive better promotion in Portugal. We will achieve that by sharing contents with PTGamers. Sometimes they will publish articles from The Inventory in Portuguese on their site and sometimes we will publish adventure-related articles from their site in The Inventory, translated in English of course.

Now let's move on to the contents of this issue. We are revealing yet another new adventure game for the first time through the pages of The Inventory. The name of the game is The Legend of The Crystal Valley and you can learn all about it in our exclusive preview. We also feature a fantastic 2-page comic based on the game, provided to us by Razbor Studios. We are proud to also feature one more comic based on an adventure game. Tony Tough makes us smile in one more of this stories, created by Pippo from www.adventure-corner.de

Frogwares, the developers of Sherlock Holmes: Case of the Silver Earring are talking about their upcoming titles in our Lounge. Head over there if you want to learn about their 3D bet (and also prepare to be surprised by the graphics quality of the first screenshots from Around the World in 80 Days).

Oliver Gruener is giving us his take on the German version of Clever and Smart in the reviews section. Did this funny duo make Oliver happy? Find out on page 17. Ben Keeney tells us why is Dark Side of the Moon one of the most underrated adventures ever. Oliver again writes everything you need to know about RAM in his Bits and Bytes article.

Well that is all until next month, when we have even more surprises for you our dear adventure fans. Now let's see who Eve is and what is she doing in Crystal Valley.

Dimitris Manos

THE LEGEND OF CRYSTAL VALLEY

If at first you don't succeed then a) skydiving is not your sport (credit for the joke goes to Al Lowe) and b) all you have to do is learn from your faults and try again. Legacy: Dark Shadows was admittedly not the best adventure released last year. The game had some serious graphics and audio problems. But on the other hand its creators, Razbor Studios managed to nail some things down that other developers haven't achieved in years now like the game's very smooth interface and problem solutions that actually made sense.

Now the Croatian-based Razbor Studios are hard at work on their second title, The Legend of Crystal Valley. This time they will try to improve on the aspects that they failed with Legacy and they will try to keep the good parts intact. The Legend of Crystal Valley will be a 3rd person point and click adventure with 3D characters on 2D backgrounds. The story is very reminiscent of popular fantasy tales like The Wizard of Oz and Alice in Wonderland. The game's main character is Eve.

Eve seems radically different to Legacy's Ren Silver. Razbor changed their recipe for a successful female lead character, this time



Eve walking through a spooky swamp

they added more 'sugar' and they took away the 'spices'. Eve is not as sexy as Ren but she is more of a sweet girl. She is a 21 years old student. She has short blonde hair and she likes to smile a lot. She carries a backpack wherever she goes, which acts as the game's inventory. So what is Eve's story then?

Eve's father invites her to his farm in France for the weekend. But when Eve arrives no one is in the farm, except from her father's animals that seem a bit uneasy. Eve looks around the farm for her father.

She finds a well and she thinks that her father might have gone down the well. So she gathers some necessary equipment and she starts descending into the well, but suddenly the rope breaks and she falls on the ground. She is in an underground cave that is poorly lit.

There she meets for the first time Splanch, who will later on become her loyal companion. Splanches are animals who have wings and can fly but they can't stand daylight. Eve's Splanch however is a special one and he has no problems with light. Splanch is

being hunted by some other evil splanches and Eve helps him get away. Now, together with Splanch she will explore the mysterious world outside of the cave. Eve will realize that this new world has many differences to our own. There are strange creatures around, animals can talk and some people can use magic while there are even mechanical creatures! Eve has no clue what is going on but her search for her father must go on.

The features of Legacy that most players were not satisfied with were mainly the poor animation and the amateurish voice-overs. Although it is not absolutely confirmed yet, our sources said that this time there will be professional actors hired for the game's purposes. As far as the graphics are concerned, Razbor is incorporating some new features such as bones blend animation, vertex blend animation, particle system based on point sprite, use of HLSL Shaders, Bump/Specular mapping, dynamic lighting, Emotion/Lipsync engine and Stencil shadows. The developers will also take great care so that the backgrounds don't look static by incorporating weather effects with real shading (rain, snow, smoke, dynamic sky etc). Animals will be very animated as well (birds/butterflies will fly around and fish will swim on the background while you go on playing).

Gameplay was something that Razbor Studios got right with their first shot! Nevertheless, they will try to make it even better in TLOCV. The game will feature over 80 challenges and if some of them are hard, no need to worry, cause in TLOCV you will have access to a full hint system. As far as the interface is concerned, the developers promise that it will be a simple and intuitive point and click interface, just like Legacy's (which won our Best Interface award for the year 2004).

Well, if Razbor manages to improve on their games' animation and voice-overs, we are in for a treat. If you enjoy stories like The Wizard of Oz or Alice in Wonderland or games like The Longest Journey this is a game to keep your eye on. Make sure to read the excellent 2-page comic strip based on the game that was provided to us by Razbor Studios, in order to get a feeling of the game's story. We will have more news on The Legend of Crystal Valley as the development proceeds. Finally, we would like to thank Razbor Studios for choosing The Inventory to reveal their upcoming title to the public.

- Dimitris Manos



Her father's farm seems deserted



Razbor promises much better animation in TLOCV than in Legacy: Dark Shadows



Parents always advise their children not to play with knives, but children never listen

Jerry Orbach passed away

Jerry Orbach, the famous actor who has starred in all the Law and Order adventures released so far, passed away on the 28th of December 2004 at the age of 69. The cause of his death was prostate cancer.

Jerry Orbach will stay in our memories as one of the most noteworthy actors to have lent his voice to an adventure game character. Although some well known actors often look down on adventure games and give mediocre performances cause they just don't care that much, Jerry Orbach gave his best at every line he worked on.

He was born on the 20th of October 1935 in New York. His film debut was Cop Hater, acting the role of Joe Sanchez, a street gang leader. Later on he worked for several TV series and movies, with his performances as Detective Lennie Briscoe in the Law & Order TV series being the most popular ones. Jerry Orbach will be dearly missed by adventure and TV fans alike. May he rest in peace.



Source: www.imdb.com

Star Heritage Trailer

The Step Creative Group, released a trailer for their upcoming 1st person adventure Star Heritage. To learn more about Star Heritage read the preview in our 20th issue. It has to be noted that although the trailer runs in 320x200 resolution (for size issues) the final game will run in resolutions as high as 1024x768. The trailer is 30 MB big and it is available at www.stepgames.ru/Trailer/Trailer_SH.mpg

Still Life online games

Microids and MC2 have developed a number of web based mystery games for the fans of their upcoming murder mystery adventure game: Still Life. Starting sometime in February, on the game's official website, you can slip into the role of FBI agent Victoria McPherson -the game's heroine- and solve numerous web based mysteries before the game is published. Still Life will be in stores on April 14th.

Source: www.krawall.de

Lucasarts stopped talking, now it is up to Purcell

Wolfgang Kierdorf, CEO of Bad Brain Entertainment, announced recently that the negotiations with Lucasarts for the Sam and Max 2 rights hit rock bottom. This is what Wolfgang had to say about the negotiations:

It was so degrading! We tried everything to bring you the game you all wanted. But it seems all hope has gone. They broke of negotiations. But you truly have to believe that it wasn't our fault and it sure wasn't the money. We just don't know and they don't tell. But we don't give up that easy. There is still a glimpse of hope and Steve Purcell is the one who is in charge now. We are talking ... and we are hoping ... again. Here is what you can do: tell Steve P. to give us Sam & Max and we, at bad brain promise you the best and boldest Sam & Max 3D Point&Click-Adventure ever. Support us and we will give you what you want! Enough said. I have to go and have a drink now. Kids: don't do this at home!

Wolfgang Kierdorf opened a thread at the Bad Brain forum where you can tell Steve Purcell how much you'd like to see a sequel to Sam and Max 2. Unfortunately a foreign adventure site spread rumours over the Internet that Wolfgang Kierdorf told them on the phone that he had acquired the rights of Sam and Max 2, something that Wolfgang Kierdorf denied later on. The misconduct of the foreign site, forced Bad Brain Entertainment to change their PR strategies and from now on all official news about Sam and Max 2 will be released through Bad Brain's pressroom. Visit the thread for Steve Purcell [here](#).

Apprentice Deluxe

Herculean Effort, the developers behind the Apprentice (winner of our Best Indie Runner-Up Award), announced that they will be releasing a Deluxe version of The Apprentice 1, with improved music, tweaked graphics and full voice(!).

The Deluxe Version will be available within a month. Find out more at the official website: <http://herculeaneffort.adventuredevelopers.com>

Legacy demo

Razbor Studios, released a demo for their 3rd person point and click adventure Legacy: Dark Shadows. You can download the 120 MB demo at the following link: <http://razbor.gamer.hr/LegacyDemo.zip> and you can read the game's review in the 18th issue of The Inventory.

The Inventory goes to Portugal!



Well, not exactly... but as mentioned in the prologue, since this January, we are cooperating with the biggest Portuguese website for games, PTGamers, that you can visit at www.ptgamers.com. PTGamers and The Inventory will proceed in joint interviews (such as the interview with Frogwares this month) and articles exchange. Big thanks to Bruno Fonseca for his help, and to the staff and readers of PTGamers for their warm welcome. We were surprised that many of their forum visitors already knew of The Inventory!

The Italian Inventory

The Italian version of The Inventory returns from a different host this time. The website www.adventuresplanet.it will bring our Italian fans adventure news in



their native language. So if you speak Italian head over there and check out the news in your own language. Big thank you goes to the editor of the site Carlo de Caesaris and the Italian translation team. The Awards booklet is already available.

The Inventory in Hellas

The Inventory made several breakthroughs in Hellas (and no the name is not Greece) this month. The biggest PC gaming magazine, called PC-master, featured a



4-page interview with the editor of The Inventory. We would like to thank Andreas Tsourinakis for the nice gesture and the kind comments in his article. We also agreed with the Hellenic www.adventure-advocate.gr website that we will proceed in some co-operative features once the site relaunches in February.

Announcements and Opportunities:

Looking for publishers?

The Inventory has helped lots of developers already to get in touch with publishers so that their titles will reach as many adventurers as possible. In the long list of publishers that co-operate with us, we now add even one more. The name of the publisher is Helltech and they publish games in Greece and Germany. If you are interested, send us a mail at: info@theinventory.org and we will bring you in touch with them.

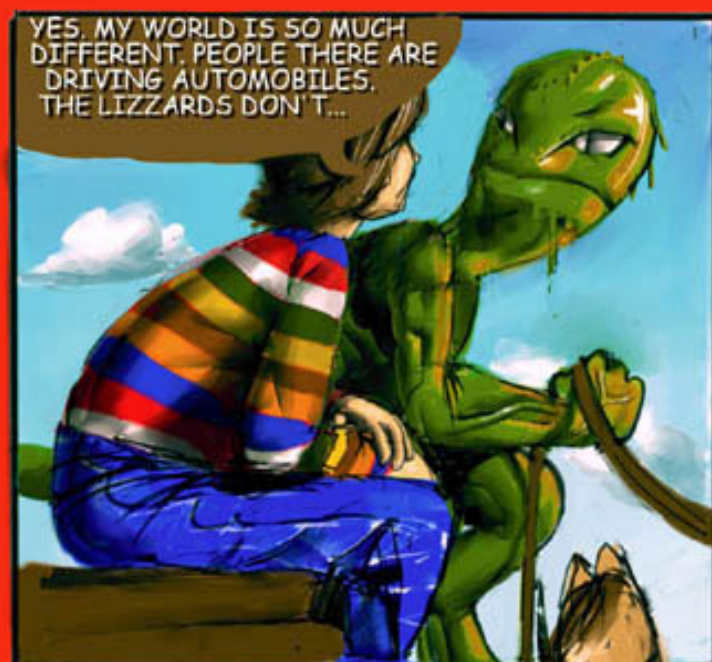
Cooperation with The Inventory?

As you see, we are interested in all sorts of cooperation endeavours. There are a lot of magazines and newspapers out there whose focus is computer games, story-telling mediums (movies, books etc) or technology (computers, graphics etc). It would be possible to co-operate with any magazine, newspaper or website that covers any of the above subjects, wherever it might be published around the world. Cooperation methods could include hosting the PDF magazine, printing it out and including it in a bundle offer with a magazine or a newspaper, maybe even some articles exchange or whatever else possible. One thing is for sure, only the sky is the limit! Contact us at: info@theinventory.org

We need PR Staff

We want to open a PR department for the magazine and we are looking for people that will create advertisement deals for us and that will build new relationships with developers & publishers inside the adventure industry and with members of the press (both adventure and non-adventure related). Good skills in English is a must. PR experience is an advantage but not a requirement. Salary to be given in form of commission. More than one position available. Apply by sending an email to: info@theinventory.org

THE LEGEND OF CRYSTAL VALLEY



HAND OVER ALL
YOUR
VALUABLE ITEMS!!



...OR ELSE!!!



*VIEW FROM A MAN IN RED SUIT

GOOD THING I BOUGHT
A BOTTLE OF WATER BACK
IN MY..WOOOORLD!!!



AAAAAH

AAAA!
MY BODY!!
IT'S WET!!



DO YOU HAVE TO
BUY WATER IN
YOUR WORLD?



Exclusive for
THE INVENTORY

TONY TOUGH STORIES

by Pippa



feat. THE MAN
WITH THE SKI MASK



Interview with Frogwares

Frogwares has evolved in the last 3 years from a small newcomer to one of the most respected developers of adventure games. Their last adventure, Sherlock Holmes: Case of the Silver Earring was far better than their previous products and won good review grades from the majority of the press. Now prepare to embark on a new Frogwares journey, this time around the world!

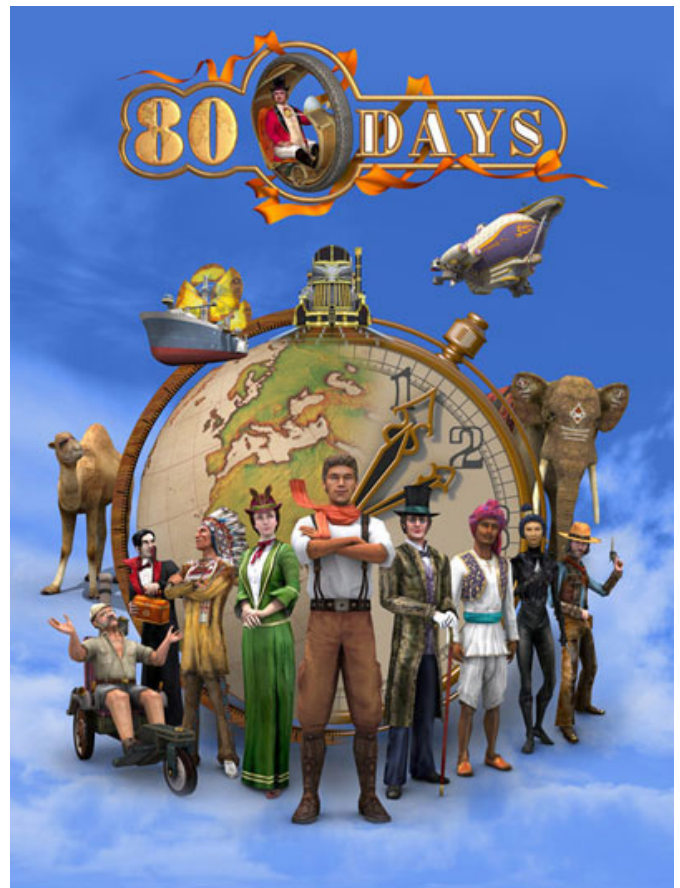
Around the World in 80 Days

- How similar will the game's story be to Jules Verne's novel?

We wanted to have a game exploring Jules Verne universe while doing a fantastic adventure. Some key elements are to be found in it: the travel, the power of science, the imperfect human nature. Ingredients to many Jules Verne successful novels. The book "Around the world in 80 days" is a very well known adventure, human creations (boat, train, and more generally human social organization) are used to fulfil one of the oldest human dreams: to travel around (with all the possible meaning this word can have) the world. Jules Verne uses realistic 1872 transportation means to perform this particular trip.

It was very important for us, as we did with "Journey to the centre of the Earth", to show a world not far from ours, slightly parallel, where Jules Verne's philosophy could take place, where human technique creations goes together with slow dehumanization (Paris at the 20th century). Human will for progress had and has different steps, the period we now call "industrial revolution", was the one in which Jules Verne wrote, and at that time, the machines were incarnating human strength of creation, the biggest machines were built (as the titanic), the biggest monuments (Eiffel tower), and everybody was convinced of human supremacy until the depths of philosophy (Nietzsche).

The fall was to happen, so much vanity put into steel and progress could only bring destruction (two nice wars ravaging the world, the first in the name of the old empires, the second in the name of superior human beings). The link with Verne doesn't seem



obvious at a first glance but he clearly presaged those techniques evolution were going together with less respect for the human kind as well as suspicion for art and culture.

It was interesting, when we started to conceive the game how we could render this story as a game, an adventure one, keeping the challenging dynamism of the original story, having a fresh breathe of Jules Verne story, and few references to his deep philosophy. We took the decision not to incarnate Fogg himself: Fogg is a robot, an instrument of precision, he fired Passpartout predecessor because he made a mistake in the tempe-

“ We took the decision to work with a human character, knowing that technique is a tool and not an end. ”



ature of his master saving water. He believes only in technique, as his bet is based on the ideal schedule of worldwide transports. He has no passion. Only love with Aouda saved him from his complete transformation into a machine. Jules Verne describe him as a satellite doing a rotation around the globe, watching nothing, interested in nothing, visiting nothing, not even speaking. He succeeded his turn around the globe not because of the boat and train schedule prevision but because of deep human nature, extraordinary strong and weak at the same time.

But today we all know this, when at that time Verne needed to demonstrate it to break human self confidence in steam and iron. So we took the decision to work with a human character, knowing that technique is a tool and not an end, and anyway he'll have to adapt to the world variety, to finish his trip on time. The same ingredients are gathered, slightly in a different way.

Oliver is our hero; he follows Fogg's tracks without knowing it. Oliver is sent on a bet by his old

uncle Matthew, who asks him to win a bet: coming back to London in 80 days or less after visiting 4 cities: Cairo, Bombay, Yokohama, and San Francisco and bring back four patents of his inventor uncle. As we follow the tracks of Fogg, but 27 years later (Fogg started in 1872, Oliver starts in 1899) we will meet some of the people Fogg's team met previously. Fogg is always here, as Passpartout, every city bears their remembrance. During his entire trip Oliver has a flag for his position and one for Fogg position at that time.

Many of the adventures which arrived to the Fogg team are used for reference in the game, but a lot of new more are added, "Around the world in 80 days" is a huge game, bigger than an the three previous we did all together. Going in the jungle in India, Help a circus director, burn everything which could burn on a boat to finish the race and so on... We also meet many characters present in the book.

- Could you describe to us Oliver,

the main character, as well as some of the most interesting secondary characters we will get to meet in the game?

Oliver is an English young man, grew in the States and has this wild, fearless behaviour. He is a kind of adventurer and his family want to marry him to an unknown girl (they used to arrange wedding before, strange people indeed!). At this very moment, his uncle Mathew propose him to go around world and win a bet for him, so the old man could keep his title of Pulsative engineer at the London's Reform Club. Oliver chooses to escape London and win the bet.

Mathew is an important character, we see him at the beginning and at some moments in the game, he stays in contact with his nephew and we hear his voice often. Steward fix is the son of the inspector fix, he is working as an international detective and has a very peculiar disease called "Foggophobia", he will hate Oliver from the very beginning and will do everything on earth to stop our

hero. We will meet the GPK, the Guild for the Promotion of the Kilt, an international organization of Scottish guys, tartan lovers, spreading their square pattern on the globe surface; they'll be everywhere sometimes bugging, sometimes helping Oliver. Kiouni the elephant (remember the book?) will help Oliver to go through the Indian jungle, we will meet a knives thrower, ex-passpartout girlfriend. Batulcar the circus director, John Bunsby, the despaired play boy son of the Bunsby that fogg met. Colonel Proctor, the impetuous secession war veteran. the count Dracula, Cowboys, Sikhs, grave diggers, samurais,...

- Approximately how long will the game be? How many characters will we meet in total and how many locations will we get to visit?

Are you in a hurry to finish it? There are 7 levels, four cities and 3 giant means of transportation. The cities are real cities (not one street and two balconies), you'll have to take some transportation to move faster into them (camel, tricycle car, cable train, etc...).

Every city has around 10

main places to visit and few secondary (restaurant, hotel, tailor,...). Every city is like a square of 800 meters for each side. We went in every of the cities present in the game to take a lot of photos and get inspired by the local assets.

We will soon make a report of the comparison between game and reality, and the way we change it. The game will have some main missions and some secondary ones. Depending on the level of difficulty chosen by the player, some missions will be necessary and some others not. There are 100 characters in total, very colourful and very funny, spite inspired by reality. There are 3 hours of dialogs and we are working on them hard enough so the translation in English will be as funny as the French one.

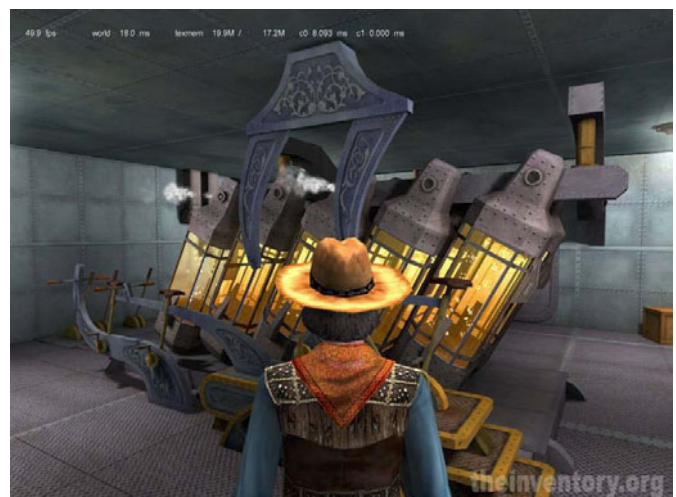
- The most groundbreaking difference to your previous titles will be the real time 3D environment. What led you to this decision? What are the advantages of 3D compared to 2D?

The story itself, Hardware evolution, and few other games like Doom 3 (yes, Doom 3). The story of "Around the world in 80 days" is a race around the globe, and a race in point

and click, it's not the funniest thing you could do. Real time 3D is providing the exact immersion and dynamism necessary for our game. As an Addition to time, money and tiredness management was just a logical following to add the feeling of a real time story.

Hardware evolution played a great part, between 97 and 2002 the difference in performances of standard computer changed terribly, as the players in the adventure genre are usually not keen on computer investment (70% of women and active for most of them, they have other things to do that buying computer spare parts), we had to make games, with 3 years old standard, which were pretty low.

But since 2001 the differences in hardware decrease, especially concerning the video cards. 3D becomes possible for our target, so we thought we could do it. I played Doom 2 ten years ago, I went to LA at E3 in 2002 and saw the Doom 3 presentation, played some demo in 2003, the game was released in 2004, but I was disappointed. The gameplay of 1995 which was perfect, wasn't good enough for today standards, even Far Cry was more interesting (sigh), even Half Life 2 with this deaf dumb blind hero (everybody congratulates Gordon like





god from the beginning to the end, and he doesn't say a word of the whole game), was more interesting. Gameplay didn't change while players changed. What adventure gamers know, gamers of every genre knows it: changing and adapting is necessary. The hack'n'slash genre is not popular as it was before, the rally games neither, the street racing genre is stuck with 2 big titles, the simulation games don't do the same numbers as in 96.

Instead of starting a game with a plan of the puzzles, we started to check what were our resources, what were the possibilities and then what could be fun for the players. Then we deduce that 3D was good, full cities was good, main missions and secondary missions was good, vehicles driving was good, day/night cycle was good,...

3D is very interesting for our genre; HL2 has very nice enigmas that many adventure developers dream about. 3D really opens the gameplay compared to the usual still scripted action in 2D (take the screwdriver, break the lock, go to the still frame, open the chest,...).

- Would you like to discuss some of the new difficulties you will face in development due to this jump to 3D?

The difference in production is huge, at all levels, conception, realization, testing and polishing, it's simply another world. But I believe that the strong titles (I mean successful ones, not self esteem of the adventure community), will take this way. Problem being that you have to increase the cost of the production greatly and time of development too, without necessarily a big addition to the sales numbers, it means less companies will be able to afford it.

You have to pay a lot of attention to the details, rationalize your production process, and work more the technical aspects of the technology. It's also very interesting because it's leaving the genre to something more in accordance to today's standard and expectations from the gamers.

I know the look from publishers really change with the 3D technology. The game reach immediate-

ly another potential, to begin with you are able to please a wider range of gamers, this is a first step but it make us feel we are right to follow this way.

In the creation process, it's more interesting and exciting because the gameplay is more flexible, for example we have more suggestions from the team doing the models because they feel they can intervene in the gameplay, and before with point and click we had almost no proposal from them.

- One of the most important features in 3D adventures is the camera use. Will the camera change angles automatically or will the players get to control the camera themselves? Will the camera follow the main character from behind his back or will there be different camera angles within each scene?

3rd person and 1st person are available; the camera is in the place of the character so you can look everywhere (think Splinter Cell or Mafia is a good example).

- What kind of music are you going to use for the purposes of the game?

We have a mix a disco style from the '70 and '80, plus few references to some great classical music. The people from 25 to 50 years old will recognize the references easily. We will have some animation sequence with dancing and singing, for example we have a boat and love stories, what kind of musical reference we could take from a famous TV show of the seventies? I let you guess.



“ In the game, you have to pay for accommodation, food, trip, transportation, and...bribes. The actions you are doing and time you are spending makes you tired, so you'll have to rest and find a bed from time to time. Eating will help to recover energy as well. ”

- Will Around the World in 80 Days feature a point and click interface? Would you like to describe to us how is the interface going to work?

The interface is not point and click, you drive the character with the mouse and keyboard, actions are done automatically, inventory is on the main screen and you select an item with arrows. All keys are customizable. It is simple, efficient and intuitive.

- During our birthday party, when you talked about the game you talked about several gameplay features, i.e. the player will have to manage time in an efficient way, he will have to eat, sleep, make money etc. Would you like to elaborate on that? These features bring to mind two previous adventures, namely Quest for Glory and The Westerner. Will the gameplay of Around the World in 80 days be similar to those?

First, I'd like to say that the time

management depends on difficulty level, we know that a part of our customer have less time than others for challenges and just want to play the funny part of the game, for those people, time constraint won't really exist. For the others, time is a full component of the game, you have 80 days or less to realize the game (means around 40 hours of playing), some missions to accomplish, some others you possibly can accomplish, depending on your challenge will, financial situation and tiredness of Oliver in the game.

In the game, you have to pay for accommodation, food, trip, transportation, and...bribes. The actions you are doing and time you are spending makes you tired, so you'll have to rest and find a bed from time to time. Eating will help to recover energy as well. I don't know about the game you named, Quest for glory is too old and The Westerner is not released here. I don't know if there is a comparison to do with another adventure game, a RPG like Daggerfall maybe.

- Will the game feature inventory-

based tasks, mechanical/logical puzzles or a mixture of both?

There are traditional adventure missions (puzzles, inventory, dialogs, interacting with the environment) and also some taken to the 3D world, specifically in the secondary missions.

- Could you give us an example of the game's tasks/puzzles?

Open the sails of the Colossus, the giant WTO boat (WTO being World Transport Organization); crack door codes; organize a SM contest; win a camel race; drive a solar sloop; recover the seven chalices of the seven cursed kings; trap bandits for the reward; repair the train engine; win an American Indian cook contest; help the Big Billy Bob Burger Boss to find her fake fur coat. Etc, etc,...

- What is the release date of ATWI8D and when should we expect the first demo?

Different ones for different countries, demo depends on publishers. I guess somewhere between June and September depending on our beloved publishers.

Sherlock Holmes III

- Could you tell us what the story of your third Sherlock Holmes game will be about? What is the name of the case going to be this time?

It will be a story about supernatural events, taking place in different countries and continents. Sherlock will travel that time, on different continents. The story tends more to the extraordinary, while the Silver Earring is more a classical London investigation, Sherlock 3 is go to the unexplained.

- Will we get to control Watson in this game like we did in Case of The Silver Earring?

Yes and more than that, our doctor will do some things he would never think about, like betraying his friend Sherlock Holmes, for his own good obviously. Watson will take also a bigger place in the deduction part, we really liked the idea of the quiz in the Silver Earring, but we would like to go further this time, and let the player choose.

- You said in our birthday party, when you first announced the game, that you will be using full 3D graphics for this title as well. Will you use the same engine and the same graphics style as in Around the World in 80 Days?

I don't have enough money to develop an engine for every game I do, but the graphic styles are different, 80 days is slightly cartoon, Sherlock is darker.

- Do you plan to use the same voice actors as you did in the previous Sherlock Holmes game?

It's too early to say. English voices were very good, we were lucky not to work with a localization studio but directly with independent actors. It really helps to find the good people and to increase the quality.

- You said during our birthday party that the gameplay will have to be adapted to the fact that the game will be in 3D. Would you like to elaborate a little on that?

I would repeat what I wrote upper, 3D is opening perspectives, instead of being in a room, and have two camera angles, you can look everywhere, atmosphere can be considerably heavier than in a point and click game (the asylum in Thief 3 for example, I was really in a hurry to finish this bloody level as it was one of the most scariest game experience I had).

- Most players enjoyed thoroughly Case of The Silver Earring, but one of the most common complaints was the dog sequence. Will you avoid such sequences in the new Sherlock game?

Toby, his name is Toby, suffered a great injustice and it is a big lesson we learned at Frogwares with Toby. A tiny piece of code changed some-

how the appreciation of this game for many players.

Toby and his master Marty were able to see Sherlock, except that we forgot to say in the script that the first one who sees Sherlock should say something, and Toby is the first to bark even if his master his seeing Sherlock first. So some players conclude, the dog has supernatural powers, what a shame and adventure game with a stealth sequence, it doesn't work, let's all go back to play "beaver quest 12" in 320*240 and 8 colors, gnagnagna gnagnagna.

It's pretty hard because you spend one year and a half to work on a game, give the best of yourself, create the longest ending animation of the video game history, use the best Sherlock story ever in a game, don't sleep for four months, and every time somebody speak about Toby, I think about this line of code among the 20000 others. But I can't help it, you are right, attention to details, even for a product selling 10000 copies and bringing less money than a hair cut shop in a Kansas village. We made a mistake forgetting the logical sequence in this particular sequence, and it cost us a lot.

Our German players are buying the game massively (Toby and Marty are barking normally there, we corrected this mistake for the German version). And we have no complaints from the German customers. I fear more commonly that the question is misplaced, it's not about the place of a stealth sequence in an adventure game, it's about its realization in this special game. If Toby sequence was good, nobody would have rise up the flag of virtue of adventure games from the '90, it's just that the mistake in the code spoiled the effect.

I believe adventure games don't need an identity as you are trying to give them, games remain games, the emotions you can get from them are different following the genre (intellectual challenge in the puzzles game, power feeling in strategy, adrenaline in FPS,...) but they are not exclusive and don't need to. Movie industry went beyond the genre border a long time ago already.

- What kind of interface will you use for the new Sherlock Holmes game?

When you have eliminated the impossible, whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth.

- In terms of difficulty will the new Sherlock Holmes game be easier or more difficult than Case of the Silver Earring?

I think it will be equivalent, after "journey to the centre of the earth" we were surprised by the difficulty of some riddles, and we had to reconsider that for the next game. For the "silver earring" The game designer choose some riddles for 10 years old school pupils, like the Jester with the cards and the one about Noah's ark. Still it caused many problems to some players, but I guess we can't go in the too easy category, that wouldn't be Sherlock anymore.

- What is the release date of the new Sherlock Holmes game and when should we expect to see the first demo?

I think early 2006.

General

- How many copies has Case of the Silver Earring sold worldwide so far?

I don't know, I'll know by the end of January, but it should be around 50 000 copies worldwide. For the genre, I think we are in a good position, better than many games released in 2004.

- Are you satisfied with that number?

No.

- It has been some years now since you first started making adventures. After all those years do you see any differences in the adventure scene? Do you think that the state of adventure games is now better than what it was 4 or 5 years ago?

I think that Egypt 1&2 sold 200 000 in France only, Egypt 3 sold around 10000. I know that I was very impressed by the graphics of Lands of Lore in '95 or '96 in still frames, today they make me laugh. I believe that adventure games are not dead or dying or whatever, but the titles in development are lacking or new elements and new gameplay to continue to seduce widely the players. Where did the players of Egypt 1 and 2 go? To play far cry? I don't think so.

Video games are not mass market at all, in the best of the case you can sell 5 millions of the halo crap in the us (it is a bad game, boring, stupid, not fun, and I like

FPS). A TV show as CSI has 25 millions of watchers every week. A good PC game in the US is selling 100 000 copies, which 5 adventures games reach every year, among the list of 50 titles of the NPD (company which gather sells numbers). Game players are more specialist than the game marketing people themselves in the PC area, and they want to have good products according to today's standards.

Adventure games are not good enough to continue to perform as well as before, technology improvement widens gameplay to many dimensions, as Charles Cecil told me not a long time ago, "the player need to feel in the game that the world is not waiting for them, the world has its own schedule" and if you think to what it does implicates for a game today, you can see that no adventure games offer that level of immersion.

- We have witnessed some political uproar in Ukraine (where you company is based). During our birthday party it was not even certain if you would attend but fortunately you finally made it. Have these political events had any influence on your company somehow?

Yes, we had some problems, in the building where we are working, a Yanukovitch delegation was working for the election on our floor and we were all for Yushenko, as you can see Oliver's scarf colour. These guys blocked our floor with the police, because they thought our team (wearing orange colours, Ukrainian flags) were here to be provocative (we were but nicely). But out of the usual stupid stubborn parliament delegate who reminded us Joseph



Goebbels in his clever language about culture and foreigners (being French, I'm a foreigner in Ukraine), everything went well. All these guys left fast after the "third turn" decision.

We were sharing our time between the independence square and work. It was very interesting to see the whole city acting like one single person, sure of its rights and will, in a country where usually individualism is among the most well known social values.

- Do you plan to continue developing 2 adventures simultaneously? Do you have even more adventures in the works apart from these two?

Yes, we are working on some nice titles and our work in the adventure genre has led to some interesting

proposals from various adventure games actors. Too early to say more now, but we hope to speak about them soon.

- Where do you see adventure games 4 or 5 years from now?

It just depends on the developers, if developers continue to make games with 10 people, saying that just the story counts; games will be out of range of any possible success, if developers succeed to go through the technical/gameplay gap, we can recover a part of the past audience.

-Thank you very much for this interview. We wish you the best of luck with your future titles.

“ We are working on some nice titles and our work in the adventure genre led us to some interesting proposals from various adventure games actors. Too early to say more now, but we hope to speak about them soon. ”

Clever & Smart:

A movie adventure

Oliver Gruener reviews the German version of Clever And Smart: A Movie Adventure. The game has no English publisher as of yet. When Clever and Smart is released in English we will also feature a review of the English version. Let's see now what Oliver thought of this comic adventure.

A word beforehand: Since this review is based on the German version of the game I'm using the German terms used for names, for certain fantasy expressions and items because they vary in every language version (Spanish, English ...). Fans of the comic book series should have no problems to understand who or what is meant because the differences aren't that big.

The two-haired wannabe secret agent Jeff Smart and his bald assistant the chameleon like Fred Clever finally arrived on the PC in their game "Clever & Smart - A Movie Adventure". Already in 1972 Francisco Ibáñez created the two chaotic T.I.A. spies as a persiflage of yet another persiflage, the popular James Bond franchise. There is Mr. L the hypochondriac boss, Dr. Bakterius who invents all the usual (not working) gadgets a secret agent might need - or not - and Ophelia the blond, flirtatious secretary the wet dream ...errr the feared nightmare of all T.I.A. employees. Especially in Spain the series is very successful and has created over one hundred comic albums, two cartoon series, about

a dozen of (home) computer games since the mid eighties and a new, pretty well doing movie with real actors.

The game Clever & Smart - A Movie Adventure is sold in an ordinary DVD-case containing two CD-ROMs with the game and a little manual booklet. Usually I ignore the manual but since the game was delivered while I had supper I had a look at it and almost choked. The whole manual is a dialogue between Fred Clever and his boss Mister L who, in a very funny way, explain the hardware requirements, how to install the game and so on. After this first positive impression I was eager to try the game. When I was a teenager I had read many of the Clever & Smart comic books and had laughed my a*s off when in the best Warner Bros. Cartoon tradition the "dynamic" duo stepped from one catastrophe into another. The installation went flawless, but what was that? When clicking on the game icon I just got an error message. I reinstalled the game but with the same result. A quick check on the net and I discovered a multimedia patch [A cartoon illustration of two characters, Fred Clever and Mister L, riding a blue motorcycle. Fred Clever is in the driver's seat, wearing a white shirt and a red tie, looking forward. Mister L is in the passenger seat, wearing a white shirt and a red tie, looking back over his shoulder. They are holding a yellow banner that reads "CLEVER & SMART A Movie Adventure" in red and black text. The banner is attached to the motorcycle with yellow ribbons.](http://www.cleve-</p>
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Developer:
Alcachofa Soft
 Perspective:
3rd person
 Interface:
Point and click
 Site:
cleverundsmart-game.de
 Difficulty:
Easy



From top to bottom:
1.The little one of course
2.SPOILER: Suck for the key
3.This scientist looks familiar. Isn't it Ibáñez himself?
4.Sheriff John Wayne has put the bad boy in jail

rundsmart-game.de/play.zip . When looking at some discussion boards I found out that the game had some troubles with installed audio codecs like the Lame MP3 codec. After applying the patch the game did indeed start on my computer, however the cut-scenes were completely without sound. For the games benefit I must add that the in-game sound was quite alright, only some rare, wrong loops gave the impression that the programmers had lots of troubles implementing sound and music. A big plus of the game is that it didn't crash once after the patch was installed. It was just sad that I really couldn't enjoy watching the frequent cartoons without the sound so the atmosphere lost a bit. Also when taking a look at online forums, there seems to be quite a lot of people who have had similar problems with the game. By the way, a PC with Windows from version 9x up, a 200 MHz processor, 64 MB RAM, any CD-ROM drive, a simple 3D card with 16 MB and a soundcard will do.

Story: The weakening economic situation has thrown its dark shadow over a certain secret service organisation called T.I.A.. Money needs to be saved and the government officials decided it is a good idea to cut the funds of the chaotic Dr. Bakterius. A "crisis meeting" is held at the T.I.A. headquarters, to avoid the loss of money and it is plotted that the doctor has to make a real sensational invention that will not only prevent the reduction of the funds but also bring in loads of cash. Not really surprising, Bakterius

has something in store, the "Teledingens" a machine that can teleport persons and items from movies into the real world and vice versa. After Fred and Jeff recover the energy source for the "Teledingens" the machine can be tested and - who had guessed - everything goes wrong and the result: The lost ark of the old pharaohs a 3000 years old mummy, "Impoteh", appears ready to conquer the real world and seek revenge. Since Brandon Frasier is too expensive our two heroes Fred and Jeff have no choice but to beam themselves into the movie and search for the "Book of the Dead" to ban Impoteh. But as always Dr. Bakterius's invention has another will and our two heroes find themselves on a tour de force through several famous movie themes.

The game is pretty story heavy with tons of the typical slapstick, sledgehammer humour and Fred and Jeff stumbling from one catastrophe into another. Luckily the two are cartoon characters and can't die... Fred and Jeff meet so many colourful characters, often classic actors like John Wayne or Humphrey Bogart or famous figures from movie history. Especially the horror world is full of them. There is Jason who only works on Friday the 13th (hint), Freddy who works as barkeeper, Dracula who has more or less retired and Norman Bates who rents out rooms with showers.

Graphics: So... Clever and Smart is based on a comic book, naturally the 2D graphics displays exactly that with bold outlines filled sometimes with



Billy is such a bad boy

The pretty woman won't let us through without the right password. Hint: It is not "Open Sesame"



simple gradients in some background scenes and sometimes just plain colours similar to most cartoons. Only a few times, especially inside the pyramid, some walls feature nice garnishments as adornment textures. The advantage is that this style is almost identical to its roots; the disadvantage is that it looks very simple even ugly at times but there are some highlights, too. Obviously the developers took more care for some rooms than for others. Since the resolution of the game is 1024 x 768, at least it doesn't look blocky even on 19 inch screens however sometimes the camera moves into the scene and the pixels become very visible, this also happens to Fred and Jeff when they come close towards the lower border. Actually the character models are painted exactly like in the original artworks and are pretty much as simplistic as it can get. Despite that it is after all a comic

adventure and so this graphics style fits its needs perfectly. Unnecessary on the other hand is the lack of animations. Yes a cartoon series is sometimes shot in only about 10 frames a second but real cartoon movies often provide 50 or 60 frames and this is a full feature movie - pardon game - only that it looks and feels like a TV-series. In other words very little items, like a fan or something similar, are poorly animated and even some of the non player characters just stand still on the spot and don't move at all until Fred or Jeff talk to them. The two spies themselves also stand motionless until commanded to move and even their walk looks a bit jerky. While speaking, the characters move their lips but it really can't be called lip-sync. This makes the whole game look very static and lifeless. Another issue are the subtitles, when they are turned on they often hide almost the whole screen. The developers

put them roughly into the centre instead positioning them at the bottom.

Sound: Many pieces of the in game music are homages to well known movie soundtracks, simplified to match their cartoon style and played by a real big band and are true ear candy even though they could have been recorded at a higher bit rate or with lower compression because with good headphones or speakers there is some noticeably background noise. Easily recognisable is the Mission Impossible theme at the T.I.A. HQ. Each movie world has its own fitting theme. While some tunes are repeated at times, the soundtrack overall can be enjoyed throughout the whole game without becoming boring. Crimson Cow / Flashpoint, the German publishers, didn't try to save money when it comes to voice acting and hired some real pro's known from movies in Germany. At first it was a bit un-



Is there really no adventure game without sewers?

International Titles of Clever and Smart

Spain: Mortadelo y Filemón

Norway, Czech Republic and Germany: Clever & Smart

Sweden: Flink och Fummel

Serbia and Croatia: Zriki Svargla & Sule Globus

Finland: Nopsa & Näpsä and Älli & Tälli

Netherlands: Paling en Ko

Portugal: Salamao e Mortadela

Denmark: Flip & Flop

Greece: Antirix & Simphonix

Turkey: Dörtgöz & Dazlak

French Switzerland: Futt et Fil

France: Mortadel et Filémon

Brazil: Mortadelo e Salaminho

Italy: Fortune & Fortuni and Mortadella & Filémone

England: Mort & Phil

sual because I had imagined the voices of Fred and Jeff somehow different but they do fit and the actors deliver the lines very well.

Gameplay: Let's come to the core of what makes a game either good or bad, the game play. Clever and Smart - A Movie Adventure is using a traditional point and click interface. The two secret agent wannabes react immediately when clicking on a hot spot. Also a double click on an exit directly changes into the new screen. Items are clearly visible and easy to pick up, there was no pixel hunting during the whole game unless once but more about that portion later. The inventory covers the whole screen and is reached by moving the mouse cursor into the upper left corner. It took me quite a while to figure out how to leave it; the cursor must be moved into the lower right corner. Taken as a whole, item handling worked perfectly after I had gotten used to that inventory even though it isn't as stylish as a classic drop down one. On their quest to get the Book of the Dead Clever and Smart travel around three major movie worlds and several, sometimes real small ones. The first movie they are teleported to consist of just one screen featuring Charlie Chaplin, who not only is black and white but "talks" via cut scenes only. The whole look and feel of the game is that of a real comic book or even cartoon and sometimes I almost forgot that I was playing a game because the sceneries fit so well. Another strong issue of the game are the two main characters. And not only that, but the game features

also a network mode where one can play Fred and a friend Jeff - the network mode has some flaws, though. The game can't be saved, if both players aren't at the same location one player misses the dialogue and according to some internet forums there seem to be some bugs like dead ends, something I can't confirm since I didn't try the network mode myself. The game is quite genuine when it comes to some puzzles that can either be solved by Fred or Jeff but not by both. Same counts for interacting with NPC's, both Fred and Jeff sometimes get different answers so it is essential to talk with all people at least twice. I won't talk much about the puzzles to not spoil the fun but they are classic inventory based ones. They are mostly pretty easy and there aren't that much items to get at one world. Often the puzzles consist of getting item A, B and C and take it to Person X to get item D or some help. Habitually it is rather trial and error to figure out some things because there often are no hints at the "belonging" dialogues of what to do. At the "Jurassic Park" however, one of the small movie worlds, there were only two puzzles and both were horrible. **Minor Spoilers:** After teleporting into this world the whole screen is black. Alas after moving the cursor around aimlessly there are some items to be discovered and collected, this is quite annoying. Even worse, when minutes later Fred and Jeff are in the light every action (mouse click) gets them back into the black and the whole procedure has to be repeated. The only way to get out of the



Top: Thanks to his ability to change into so many different outfits Fred is the one who is diving.

Left: Imprisoned inside a black and white movie with Charlie Chaplin who speaks in cut-scenes.

"Jurassic Park" is to simply leave the PC alone for some minutes and get a cup of coffee - **Spoiler End**. The whole sequence could have easily been left out.

The last world in old Egypt is split into two parts, the second taking place in a huge pyramid that consists of a colossal maze. Since all rooms look very identical it is advisable to draw a map but be cautious some parts of the maze when walking only into one direction end up in a circle.

The first big world that takes about a third of the game, I guess, and took me the longest is the Wild, Wild West followed by the Horror world and the ancient Egypt with references to Indiana Jones and The Mummy. The scenes with private eye Sam Spade, Charlie Chaplin and the dinosaur only take up between 2 to 20 minutes to play. But before Fred and Jeff return to their real world there is a lot to discover and the 15 to 20 playing hours are very amusing and not wasted.

In a few words: The uncomplicated cartoon graphics is fitting but a

tad too lifeless and simple. That takes away a bit from the atmosphere. The soundtrack fits the mood perfectly. The voice acting is superb and the jokes in "Tom and Jerry" fashion are plain but make for many good laughs. Puzzles on the other hand are diverse, some are well balanced and well designed and they are never unfair, yet often a bit easy, others just look like the designers were out of ideas but had to stretch the game a bit to not make it look too short. After all I got only stuck a few times but could solve it after a little break to rethink and only the maze got on my nerves after a while. In general I would recommend the game for fans of the comic books, adventure game beginners, teenagers and people young at heart. And I hope there will be another patch available who fixes the last sound bugs. As usual when it comes to a final as objective as possible rating, huge fans of the franchise can add ten points to the story.

- Oliver Gruener

"In general I would recommend the game for fans of the comic books, adventure game beginners, teenagers and people young at heart."

Highs: Funny jokes, fitting graphic style, soundtrack, loyal to the Clever & Smart comics

Lows: Some puzzles are there just for the sake of prolonging gameplay, maze, graphics are lifeless and static, bugs

The Verdict

Story:	75
Graphics:	45
Sound:	78
Gameplay:	72
Overall:	70

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

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

Developer:

Southpeak Interactive

Perspective:

1st person

Interface:

Point and click

Site:

N/A

Difficulty:

Medium

I saw an interview with Lee Sheldon over at Just Adventure where he said, "I'm very proud of Dark Side of the Moon and the talented team I worked with on that game." Given all the bad reviews one would have to wonder why a guy with his talent, witnessed in the wonderful Ripley's Believe It or Not: The Riddle of Master Lu, would be proud of Dark Side of the Moon. But you know what? Mr. Sheldon has every right to be proud of his creation, and I'll take it a step further: Mr. Sheldon damn well better be proud of this game. Dark Side of the Moon is, hands down, the most underrated adventure game that I can think of off the top of my head. Looking back at all of the negative criticism, one will discover two primary complaints: (1) The CD swapping is astronomically annoying, with one critic even claiming to have swapped discs about ten times in the span of half an hour, and (2) the viewing window is too small. The real flaws are simply that Dark Side of the Moon wasn't released on DVD, where it belongs, in the first place, and that so many game critics apparently lacked a decent

sized monitor in 1998.

Still, only rarely has a game been so flooded with negative rants as this one has. One thing is for certain though; none of these explosions of hatred targeted the story of the game, despite its existence almost exclusively in full motion video (a favorite target of critics). And for good reason because the plot is more than worthwhile.

Story: It all begins mysteriously with the suicide of Jacob Wright, a man with a mining claim on Luna Crysta (the "moon" of the title). As security videos show, he was not alone when he chose to take his own life with a bomb, but rather he was talking with what appeared to be a Cepheid (a member of the native population of the moon). Enter Jake Wright, the player controlled character and nephew of Jacob, who is on-board a shuttle bound for Luna Crysta. Jacob has left him all of his earthly possessions, including his mining claim, and Jake intends explore it, as well as all of the Brave Hope Mining Corporation located on Luna Crysta, in an effort to find out why his uncle killed himself. Along the

way he'll meet many characters (allies and enemies, humans and Cepheids, etc.) as he deciphers the clues his uncle has left for him.

Jake will have to decide whether or not he can trust Kit Ferris, the Blackjack dealer at the Brave Hope Casino who he met on the shuttle, or whether or not he should conduct business with Hunter, the bartender. He'll have to suffer through the abusive phone calls of his jealous sister Corrine, while avoiding the slimy Oliver Whistler, who has been sent to buy the claim from Jake. Additionally, he'll get some info from an old friend of Jacob's, the eccentric Gilly Ansidine, who doesn't trust Howard Janous, the president of Brave Hope, or the chief of security, Einar Grice. Perhaps most importantly, Jake will form an alliance with a young Cepheid boy named Londie, and his mother, the Cepheid queen, Aurlaessa. It's quite a journey where not everything is as it seems; not even what I've just explained will remain true to the end. Exciting stuff, to be sure.

Gameplay: I was fortunate, perhaps, to get my hands on the Deluxe Edition of this game which comes with the single DVD version, the six CD-ROM version, and the Prima Strategy Guide. Being able to explore the riches of this game as an uninterrupted, non-linear living world is a whole new experience folks, and one that gamers

who played the CD version did not get to enjoy. Sheldon really succeeded in designing this game to give the player a sense of freedom. When you first arrive on Luna Crysta you are free to go just about anywhere that's open to you, and in any order. This is a terrific feeling in the DVD version that would be absolute hell on CD. Imagine having to worry about where you go and when, simply because you don't want to enter a door or elevator and be prompted to pop in a new CD only to have to switch back if you missed something from just moments before. Seeing it like this, one begins to understand the negative critical reception of the CD game. As for the small viewing screen, I personally was never bothered in the slightest. My monitor is large enough that the viewing window never seemed too small and frankly, I loved how everything you needed was all on a single screen. The game world itself in the middle, the dialogue trees below it, the inventory on the right side, the VDA (for watching video clips you've seen, viewing mail, storing notes, and referring to maps) at the upper left, your body (to equip with items) at the middle left, and the Options menu (saving, restoring, quitting, etc.) at the bottom left. Now that's some intriguing design.

As for Southpeak Interactive's Video Reality



From top to bottom:

1. Looks like he really doesn't want Jacob pushing that button.
2. Do I smell love in the air?
3. O'Kale. You know the type of guy he is. I needn't say more.

Engine, it certainly didn't last long. It was first used in Temujin, which was a true bomb, and then put to much better use in Dark Side of the Moon. I personally enjoy the engine. It has its flaws, but for the most part it's effective in the right hands (in other words, the hands of Lee Sheldon). I would have preferred the viewing freedom of The Journeyman Project 3: Legacy of Time, which is also in 360-degrees with full motion video movement from place to place, but looking around is faster and you can see up and down at any time. Granted, Dark Side of the Moon adds the ability to stop whenever you wish or glance left or right while actually traversing from point A to point B, but honestly these features aren't very important. The way the Video Reality Engine works is a simple matter of putting your mouse on the green bars at the left or right of the screen (occasionally the top or bottom as well), which moves your view in that direction as long as you keep the bar highlighted.

Then it's a matter of interacting with your environment, with a single cursor, in the way you see fit. It works just like any other adventure game. You can open doors, activate vid-phones, talk to people, collect items, use items, combine items, etc. It's all very well handled. The engine may not be the best I've seen, certainly not, but it gets the job done effectively.

One thing I really enjoy about this game, aside from the story it tells and the very open exploration, are the puzzles themselves. Many of them are challenging, to be sure, but the most difficult ones always have ample background you can uncover and they fit right into the world of the game without feeling tacked on. Plus, several of the puzzles have multiple solutions, and certain items can be found in more than one place. There is a store in the game called General Outfitters where you can not only purchase items of interest (certain items you need must be

bought here), but also stock up on a wealth of knowledge about the uses of items you'll find along the way. I found this to be a very believable approach. Additionally, to afford items you're able to gamble in the casino or sell pieces of ore and crystal you find in your travels. As for equipping your character, it's a simple matter of putting certain gloves on if you're going to touch something hot, or wearing certain boots if you're going to be walking through dangerous substances. The real surprise is that there are some alien creature encounters and a run in with a security droid once you begin exploring the depths of the mines. Don't worry, each of these enemies can be defeated logically (one of them in a very memorable puzzle that involves mixing up the formula it is weak against) and fast reflexes are never required.

Graphics: Another complaint I've heard about this game is that the exploration scenes in the Video Reality Engine are blurry. I can't

Gilly is having a little argument with Howard Janous



really defend that one if it bothers you, but in all honesty I believe it's been blown out of proportion. If you look back at all the adventure games that allow 360-degree viewing, none of them (with the exception of the recently released *Myst IV: Revelation*) are as clear and sharp as the stationary computer generated backdrops seen in *Riven*, for example. Not *Zork Nemesis*, not *Myst III: Exile*, not *Black Dahlia*, not *Legacy of Time*, etc. It's only natural, I suppose, to wish this game had crystal clarity and I certainly wouldn't mind if it did, but I don't feel that the blurriness harms the game's ability to immerse the player or present logical puzzles. Objects you can collect stand out from the backgrounds just fine, and it's still very easy to lose yourself, in that good way, while exploring the game world.

I very much enjoyed the art direction in *Dark Side of the Moon*, including the design and layout of *Luna Crysta*. It felt very convincing. Shockingly, the movie scenes are well done, particularly when you consider they were shot over computer animated backgrounds. Never once do they veer into the completely cheesy territory of other games done this way, like *Phantasmagoria*. The acting is always, in every character example I can think of, above average for a videogame. This is most likely aided by the well written script. There's not a great deal of characterization, but the actors were still given enough to work with.

Sound: This is a tough part of the game to discuss because it's not necessarily a strong point, but it's not a weakness either. Basically, Southpeak plays it safe here. The music is pretty generic, to be



Checking out the inventory.

honest, but it gets the job done. One can hear a score like this by turning on any *Star Trek* episode. There's nothing particularly memorable aside from the elevator music that plays in the offices of Howard Janous; unforgettable only because it's so excruciatingly bad. There's nothing particularly impressive about the sound effects either, but at least they don't stand out as a negative. None of the sounds in this game draw attention to themselves in either a good or bad way, and I suppose that leans more towards being a positive overall.

In a few words... In my final analysis, I must say that despite a flaw or two in the Video Reality Engine and the very interesting plot being held back a bit by a lack of real character (the characters are fun, but not particularly complex), I had a wonderful time playing the DVD version of this game. Negative reviews be damned, *Dark Side of the Moon* is an immersive, addictive experience that I'll never forget.

- Ben Keeney

“Despite a flaw or two in the VR Engine and the very interesting plot being held back a bit by a lack of real character I had a wonderful time playing the DVD version of this game.”

Highs: Good story, an underrated engine, an immersive world to explore, plenty of people to meet, and some really great puzzles.

Lows: Somewhat blurry visuals that don't really harm the game but may annoy some players. Small viewing window for anyone still holding onto a prehistoric monitor. And a lack of rich characterization.

The Verdict

Story:	82
Graphics:	80
Sound:	75
Gameplay:	84
Overall:	81

*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...'

RIM, REM, RUM???
 Nooo... RAM! No, this issue of Bits & Bytes isn't about tuning your car wheels with polished aluminium rims nor about the REM sleep (rapid eye movement) and especially not about alcohol from the Caribbean - it simply tells about the volatile memory that is one of the three essential parts of a computer. The other two are Mainboard and CPU. RAM (Random Access Memory) comes in many sizes and formats and yet almost looks the same, so it is very difficult to distinguish between the different memory sticks. Not only now with SD, DDR, and DDR2 it was difficult also in the past. Buying RAM used to be a dangerous game.

About seven years ago a friend of mine wanted to upgrade his

PC and bought a new RAM stick. When he tried to put it into the slot on the mainboard it was a tad too long. What did he do? He got a saw and cut off the end of the stick to make it fit! Well the expensive piece (or better pieces) of hardware were trash and I still wonder how he got the shop assistant to exchange it. So, what will this real(!) story tell? If it doesn't fit it is the wrong RAM stick! Usually it's no big deal after accidentally buying the wrong kind of RAM to exchange it at the store, yet it is still an annoyance and consuming time and money.

Another fascinating thing is the dropping price. When I bought an 8MB memory extension in 1993 I had to pay around 500 bucks! For the same amount of money I can get roundabout 4 GB of memory, nowa-

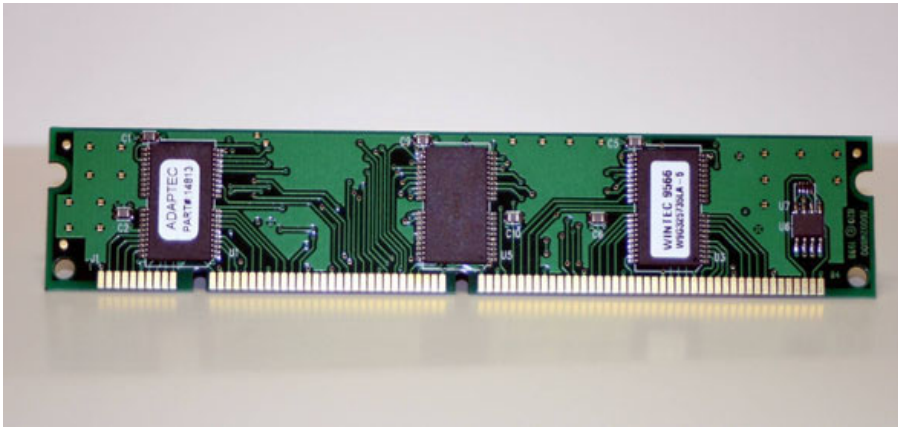
days.

Before running to the next computer store to buy one or two RAM sticks you should make certain what type of mainboard you have and what type of CPU, CPU socket and how fast the front side bus (FSB) is (mainboard manual). The table 1 shows the most common central processing units with their sockets, in case the CPU supports different kinds of sockets, and the type of RAM the board can bear dependent on the FSB.

If you stumble upon cryptic RAM descriptions at your local computer store or on the net just take a look at the table: PC 2100 RAM for example sometimes is sold as DDR266, PC2700 as DDR333 and so on and to complicate things they are even available with different

Table 1

CPU (Socket)	FSB	FSB frequency (MHz)	Fitting Memory type
Celeron (Socket 370)	66	66	1x PC66, PC 100
Pentium 3	100	100	1x PC100
Pentium 3	133	133,33	1x PC133
Athlon, Duron	200	100 (DDR)	1x PC 1600
Athlon, Athlon XP	266	133,33 (DDR)	1x PC 2100
Athlon XP, Sempron	333	166,67(DDR)	1x PC 2700
Athlon XP	400	200 (DDR)	1x PC 3200
Pentium 4, Celeron (Socket 478)	400	100 (QDR)	2x PC 2100
Pentium 4, Celeron (Socket 478)	533	133,33 (QDR)	2x PC 2100
Pentium 4 (Socket 478)	800	200 (QDR)	2x PC 3200
Pentium 4, Celeron (LGA 775)	533	133,33 (QDR)	2x PC2-3200
Pentium 4 (LGA 775)	800	133,33 (QDR)	2x PC2-3200
Athlon 64 (Socket 754)	Hyper Transport	800 MHz HT	1x PC 3200
Athlon 64 (Socket 939)	Hyper Transport	1000 MHz HT	2x PC 3200
Athlon 64 FX / Opteron (Socket 940)	Hyper Transport	800 MHz HT	2x PC 3200 Registered DIMM



Memory sticks come in all kinds of sizes

clock speeds (see table)!

A usual size for an affordable RAM stick would be 512 MB and the more expensive 1GB sticks are only recommendable if you want to upgrade to two or more GB since most motherboards only offer 2 or 3 slots. Since we are talking about X86 computers here that originally were limited to 640 kilobytes, may it be to some Microsoft company policy or incapable programmers, Windows 9x is limited to 2 Gigabyte of RAM and can only address the first 512 in an acceptable manner and Windows XP (except XP Server) is limited to 4 GByte, buying more RAM in other words is completely useless. Also it is recommendable to not buy no-name RAM but

brands like Kingston, Infineon or Samsung because they have been tested and should work okay. After the purchase is done, if you have no clue about electronics it is advisable to ask a friend or relative who knows what he is doing, to transplant them into your PC. Next step would be to start the computer and enter the PC's BIOS, usually be pressing the DEL key. The CAS (Column Address Strobe) should be set to "by SPD". Some motherboards allow to tweak these settings to make the RAM faster which is not advisable. I myself ruined two RAM sticks so far when trying to over clock them. Instead it would be better to purchase faster RAM. In table 2 there are some examples of

memory types and their timings - resulting in various CAS Latencies.

Since I don't want to get too technical in this article it helps to understand some facts. SDRAM or Single Data RAM sticks have 168 pins, while Double Data Rate RAM features 184 pins, naturally as the name suggests, the DDR RAM is "feeling", thanks to some improvements, about double as fast. In fact the memory bandwidth is increasing from 100 MHz SD RAM with 800 MByte per second to 400 MHz DDR RAM with 3.2 GB/s and that is making it 400 percent faster! Also DDR RAM uses only 2.5 Volts while SDRAM needs 3.3 Volts, this reduced voltage results in lower power consumption and an improved heat dissipation. Consumer PC's are usually equipped with unbuffered DDR modules that place all data load on the system memory bus while the more expensive registered DIMM's are useful in professional surroundings like in high end servers. Some RAM modules also feature ECC (error correction code) those are slower and more expensive, so you don't need to bother about those.

Altogether RAM is a pretty confusing subject with all of its types and variations. This article didn't even mention Rambus or EDO-RAM nor did I give a whole overview about the history. We only had a look of what kind of RAM is usually used nowadays to make it easier for you to decide what you need to get for your PC. The future already has DDR3 waiting to be released, which, for example, will only need 1.5 Volts.

- Oliver Gruener

Table 2

Type	Timing	CAS Latency
DDR200	2-2-2	20 ns
DDR266B	2,5-3-3	18,75 ns
DDR266A	2-3-3	15 ns
DDR333B	2,5-3-3	15 ns
DDR333A	2-3-3	12 ns
DDR400C	3-4-4	15 ns
DDR400B	3-3-3	15 ns
DDR400A	2,5-3-3	12,5 ns
DDR2-400	4-4-4	20 ns
DDR2-400	3-3-3	15 ns
DDR2-533	3-3-3	11,25 ns
DDR2-667	4-4-4	12 ns

Invento-Mail

This is the part of the magazine where you can make yourselves heard. Send your emails 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

Hello, and congratulations for the good work. Can you tell me please where can i find a patch for Runaway 1. The game crashes in the museum after talking with profesor Silva and i can not progress further. I am a very big fan of 2D adventure games and i really like to be able to finish it.

Thank you in advance.

Dragoi Christian

The Inventory: Hello Dragoi and thank you for your kind words. I am affraid I would have no idea where to find a patch for Runaway 1. The best you could do is to either search for 'Runaway patch' on a search engine like google, or find the website of the publisher that released Runaway in your region and send them an email asking them for a patch. I hope this might have helped.

Hi there Dimitri,

HAPPY NEW YEAR, ALL THE BEST. You do not know me of course I have been reading your article and it intrests me. I would like to ask a question. I am searching for a good adventure but I am all confused.

My experience on adventure games is limited. My taste is for a game to have clever clues (SCHIZM), good humor. (Grim Fandago) Also nice story (SYBERIA, SYBERIA II). Can you suggest me a few (very few) adventure games like those above???

Best Regards

Tasos Drassas

The Inventory: Hello Taso. Thank you for your wishes and happy new year to you too. Well the best thing you could do would be to download our Awards 2004 booklet from www.theinventory.org and check out what were the best adventures for the year that just passed. But here's a quick advice. For games that are similar to Schizm I would suggest Myst 4: Revelation. It is not real time 3D as Schizm 2 but the gameplay is very similar. The most humorous game I have played the last 5 years has to be The Westerner, also known as Wanted in the US. And if you want adventures that are similar to Syberia 1 and Syberia 2 I would suggest The Moment of Silence and Sherlock Holmes: Case of the Silver Earring, both have a similar graphic representation and their stories are really nice. Hope this helps.

Epilogue

We realize that this issue has been kind of short but we also released The Inventory Awards 2004 this month, so it's been busy at The Inventory headquarters. Next month we will come back to our normal amount of contents.

We hope nevertheless that you enjoyed the contents of the 21st issue. We are very proud of our comics section and we will try to provide you with even more comics based on adventure games in the near future. If you would like to support our efforts with The Inventory there are many ways to do it. One is to visit our sponsors in our front page www.theinventory.org. There are some Google ads right now, and whenever you click on one of them we receive some money. So if you find some link in these Google ads that you find interesting feel free to visit them by clicking on the link. Soon we will also feature more sponsors and visiting them and supporting them will be the same as supporting us.

Another way to support us is to join our forum and help us create a vast community of adventurers. When you join our forum you also receive all our newsletters, that are sent to all our registered members. You could also find some of the banners we have posted in our forum (in this specific topic) and use them to bring more people to The Inventory.

In the next issue of The Inventory you will be able to read a review of Agon, that unfortunately had to be postponed for yet one more issue. We will also try to make our next issue a special for one of the most anticipated adventures of 2005, but this also depends on the publishers.

Until next month then.

Dimitris Manos

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