

Let the good times rock!!

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Un listing des premiers jeux N64.

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By now you should be the proud owner of an Nintendo 64 (and if not, why not!?) But what games should you be looking forward to over the coming year? Why, simply consult this handy guide and all will be revealed...

Without a doubt, 1997 is destined to be the best year ever for UK Nintendooids. The N64 is finally here, its arrival heralded by Super Mario 64, probably the greatest videogame of all time. Pilotwings 64 and Shadows Of The Empire provide an excellent support for Mario's antics, but judging by the letters we receive every day from you insatiable readers, you'll soon be gagging for more 64-bit thrills. Well fear not, N64 devotees, 'cos there's a host of amazing titles on the way to keep you gaming well into '98 - and beyond! In the following pages we present our pick of the games to look out for in the coming months!

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROCK!!!



WAVERACE 64

PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: April 1997 (out now in US & Japan)

Background: WaveRace 64 was the first two-player game released in Japan for the N64, and having played it for several months we can tell you right now that it's an absolute corker! Four of the world's finest jetski racers have come together for the ride of their lives, an event spread over eight varied courses which takes them from sun-kissed tropical islands to chilly arctic waters, and from mist-covered lakes to treacherous industrial harbours. The wave effects are superb, the sea swelling and churning in a truly convincing way, placing you totally at the mercy of the waves rather than a dull, flat race track. The AI of the CPU players is also stunning, the computer cheating and making the odd mistake just like a human opponent. However, Waverace 64 is essential for its split-screen two-player option, where even the most hardened waveracer can misjudge a wave and lose to their less experienced rival. Doh!

Prospects: The import version of WR64 is one of the best racers we've ever played. It's a nice change to ride jetskis rather than cars, and the game feels more solid and realistic than anything on a 32-bit console. Such a shame it isn't here for March 1st... Anyway, we should have a review of the PAL game next issue.



KILLER INSTINCT GOLD

PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Rare
RELEASE: July (out now in US)

Background: There were those who believed that Rare would struggle to better their awesome fighting frenzy, Killer Instinct. However, that was until Killer Instinct Gold arrived and soon banished all such thoughts. Seven fighters with an even greater range of devastating moves have returned to fight another day, and three new contestants have also thrown their hats into the ring. There are seven gameplay modes from which to choose, including Practice modes which allow you to work on your combos, breakers and finishing moves. Although the game is 2D, the fully 3D backgrounds offer gamers a new experience compared to the likes of Mortal Kombat or Street Fighter. Add to this a whole host of difficulty settings, speed adjustments and fight modifications, and it all adds up to an excellent blood-thirsty package.

Prospects: To date, this is the ultimate fighting experience on the N64. The graphics, although not totally polygon-based as many had hoped, are nonetheless stunning, and the play controls are complex but extremely rewarding when mastered. If you want fast, furious, mindless violence, look no further than this.

RIGHT KI Gold features a vast range of Practice modes to help you get to grips with the finer points of combo construction.



Explosive combos and stunning 3D are the order of the day in KI Gold.



MORTAL KOMBAT TRILOGY

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
DEVELOPER: Midway Home Entertainment
RELEASE: TBA (out now in US)

Background: MK Trilogy takes all the previous Mortal Kombat games and combines them into one fireball-shootin', blade-choppin', heart-rippin', spine-snappin' package that fans of the epic series won't want to miss! After Goro's defeat, the Outworld Gods were prevented from conquering the Earth. However, this game sees the evil emperor Shao Kahn resurrecting his dead wife Sindel, opening a portal between the Outworld and Earth and invading our planet to destroy humanity! Every gore-hungry Kombatant from MKs 1, 2 and 3 is back and ready for action, allowing players to set up duels between their favourite characters; for example, now you can pit the original Rayden against johnny-come-lately Noob Saibot in a brutal fight to the death! Every background ever featured in an MK game is also included, from the monks' courtyard to the desert, and from Shao Kahn's throne room to the pit. And with more Fatalities, Babalities, Friendships and Brutalities than ever before, this promises to be the definitive Mortal Kombat experience.

Prospects: Surely this game can't fail – with such a great history and millions of fans, many will see this as a 'must buy'. However, we've seen the US version and have reservations about the sound and graphics, although they may be improved for the UK.



Kano and Baraka relive some old times in Midway's MK Trilogy.



FIFA '97

PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: Spring 1997

Background: EA has always had a reputation for developing top quality sports simulations, and their debut football title looks likely to produce another hit. Developed by EA's Canadian team, FIFA '97 has replaced the traditional sprite graphics with motion-captured polygon figures using the creative footballing talents of Newcastle United's French ace, David Ginola. It's hoped the game will feature all the teams from the Premiership and various others from Europe, including International squads. The game will incorporate various camera angles, including an intelligent camera system which automatically selects the perfect viewpoint. It also features a unique picture-in-picture option which allows players to view a separate part of the field.

Prospects: Despite the latest Playstation version being panned by most of the press, it's worth pointing out that the N64 edition of FIFA '97 will be an exclusive, totally-overhauled version. We've been fortunate to play an early build of the game and it was pretty impressive. If the timing of the release coincides with Konami's footballing treat, it's going to be quite a battle for supremacy.



BLAST CORPS

PUBLISHER: Nintendo
 DEVELOPER: Rare
 RELEASE: September 1997

Background: A truly unique experience is guaranteed when you take the controls for Rare's ground-breaking Blast Corps. A nuclear missile carrier is out of control, and global mass destruction is a certainty unless a safe path is cleared for it. You must take the hot-seat in one of 16 vehicles and bulldoze buildings, bridges and literally anything that could possibly get in the carrier's way and cause the missile to destruct. However, don't expect to simply drive one vehicle through to the finish; there'll be times when you'll need to get out and take control of a second piece of machinery.

Prospects: Arguably the most impressive-looking N64 game to date with awesome explosions and a wide selection of vehicles. However, whether the gameplay can match these high standards remains to be seen.



Fans of big, messy, noisy explosions will simply *lurve* Blast Corps!

ROBOTECH: CRYSTAL DREAMS

PUBLISHER: Gametek
 DEVELOPER: In-house
 RELEASE: June 1997

Background: Although unknown in the UK, Robotech is massive in Japan and the US, so big things are expected of Gametek's blastfest. Your objective is to pilot a Veritech fighter, which can transform into various ships, and seek out the Zentraedi and Ebolean villains. Robotech's plot has been designed to adapt to your performance, so how well you play has a bearing on what happens next. There's even an interactive musical score!

Prospects: Only video footage has been available to the press so far, but what's we've seen has looked really impressive.



HEXEN 64

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
 DEVELOPER: Software Creations
 RELEASE: TBA

Background: Hexen 64 is another Doom-style game. However, the similarities stop there. Hexen is RPG-based, players choosing to be either a wizard, warrior or thief. Also, the game itself is based in one huge, sprawling map, and you'll find yourself returning to earlier levels to finish key puzzles. The N64 version will also feature a four-player Deathmatch mode, which should keep blood-thirsty gamers happy for a few weeks!

Prospects: Already a hit on the PC, Hexen has a good reputation to build on. Let's hope it does the business on the 64.

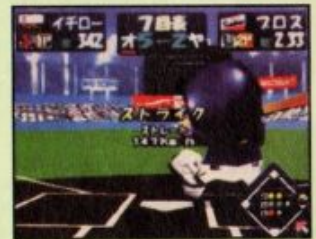


PRO STADIUM KING

PUBLISHER: Imagineer
 DEVELOPER: In-house
 RELEASE: TBA (out now in Japan)

Background: The latest sports simulation to receive the full N64 treatment is Pro Stadium King. All the teams from the Japanese League are available for selection, and the game features some familiar cartoon-y faces (although unless you follow Japanese baseball you won't know who they are). Once again, the game is full-to-the-brim with gameplay options including Single Match, League, Tournament and a rather cool four-player game.

Prospects: Sadly, baseball games have proved to be the least successful of the imported sports sims, and Pro Stadium King looks like it's got a long slog ahead if it's going to prove successful in the UK, should it receive an official release.



MARIO KART 64

PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: October 1997 (out now in Japan)

Background: Ever since Mario Kart 64 arrived in Emap Towers during late December '96, not a day has passed without the game being played at least 100 times! All the playability of the Super NES original remains intact, the game being taken to new heights by the stunning graphics and all-new power-ups. In all there are four championships and 16 tracks to choose from, each offering a unique challenge and devious shortcuts. And if that isn't enough, the cunning coders have also included four fiendish Battle Mode circuits, where you can forget about racing and simply batter the hell out of each other with multi-coloured shells. Pure genius...

Prospects: The Japanese version of Mario Kart 64 managed to exceed our expectations, although it has to be said that some of computer character AI was a bit cheesy. While the original Mario Kart's basic concept remains unchanged, the game is brought crashing into the next generation with stunning graphics and sound. Let's hope the PAL conversion is good, eh?



STARFOX 64

PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: October 1997

Background: At the recent Shoshinkai exhibition in Japan, Starfox 64 stole the show. The game reunites the old gang from the Super NES classic, with Fox McCloud, Peppy, Slippy and Falco stepping into their Arwings once more to save planet Lylat from the evil forces of Emperor Andross. To do battle, players must pilot Fox's Arwing through the depths of space, then skim the surface of the planet itself, challenging zillions of nasties and some awesome bosses. You also get the chance to ride Fox's tank, tackling ground-based nasties in an arid desert. However, the best news is that the game features a split-screen four-player option where players can take control of their favourite character and have aerial dogfights in specially created 3D battle arenas. Judging by the shots we've seen so far, this game will be a classic.

Prospects: Excellent. Fox McCloud's Super NES original won him many fans, and it's likely that many fallen Nintendoids will invest in an N64 just to relive their Starfox memories. Aside from this, Starfox 64 looks like a game which will keep every shoot-'em-up fan happy.



WARGODS

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
DEVELOPER: Midway Home Entertainment
RELEASE: TBA

Background: If you've never played the coin-op War Gods in the arcades (from which these shots are taken, by the way), the easiest way to describe it is Mortal Kombat in three dimensions. The game follows the adventures of irritable Gods from across the universe who are squabbling over a supply of mystic ore which maintains their powers. Each of these fighters is equipped with a range of special moves, along with gory fatalities which bear more than a passing resemblance to the MK games. Finish him!

Prospects: It could be a long time before a 3D Mortal Kombat game reaches the N64, so this'll do nicely in the meantime!



MAGIC CENTURY ELTALE

PUBLISHER: Imagineer
DEVELOPER: Genki
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Although Legend Of Zelda 64 is the most eagerly anticipated RPG for many years, Imagineer's Magic Century Eltale looks like it could easily fill the gap for now. The game plays exactly like a traditional Nintendo RPG, yet features stunning 3D graphics and a huge map to explore. We've also seen some of the

friends and monsters that adventurers will meet on their travels, all of which are superbly drawn and animated. A simply beautiful game.

Prospects: With such a great variety of games on offer, all the N64 needs is a good RPG. And from what we've seen so far, this could very well be it!

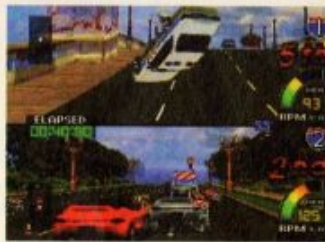


CRUISE 'N USA

PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Midway Home Entertainment
RELEASE: September 1997 (out now in US)

Background: Buckle up and take to the streets of America! Cruis'n USA offers would-be racing aces 14 courses, seven vehicles and two game-play options to tackle. Players can also select either a one-off single course race or instead opt to Cruise the USA, where you endeavour to drive through all 14 stages. Only by finishing first can you progress onto the next stage. Cruis'n has also incorporated a two-player split-screen option which allows gamers to go head-to-head, again on either a single stage or across the entire country.

Prospects: Not good, I'm afraid. Cruis'n USA was hardly a huge hit in the arcades and, as the N64 conversion is virtually identical, it's no surprise to learn that it's also less than stunning. We've played the US version and, frankly, it's pants. However, a miracle may occur during its passage onto the British PAL TV system.

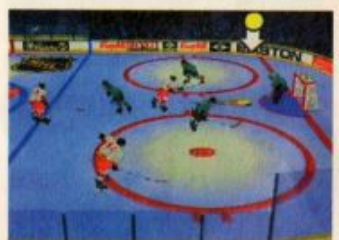
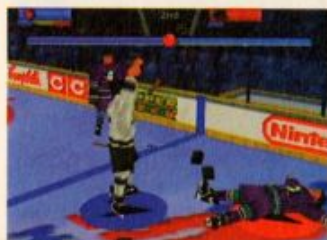


WAYNE GRETZKY'S 3D HOCKEY

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
DEVELOPER: Midway Home Entertainment
RELEASE: TBA (out now in US)

Background: When you're looking for a star to endorse your latest ice-hockey game they don't come much bigger than Wayne Gretzky. The golden boy from the NHL is back for his second Nintendo release, although, thankfully, this has nothing whatsoever to do with his Super NES attempt. The game is fast-paced and very easy to understand. The developers have combined both skill and humour elements to come up with an NBA Jam-type game on ice. All the NHL teams are included, as are most of the players, and the game allows for up to four players to take to the rink with both single match or season options available.

Prospects: Although this may only appeal to a small few, it's one game that is well worth a look for anyone remotely interested in the sport. The game is incredibly smooth, and with so many moves and tricks to learn, Wayne Gretzky is going to take some beating.

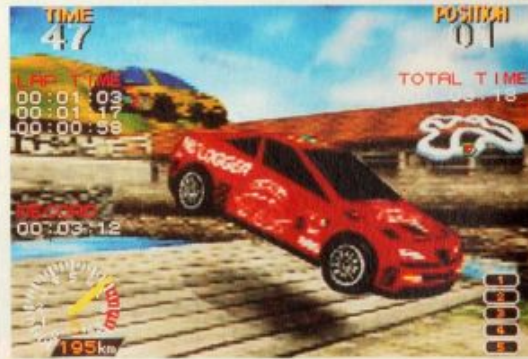
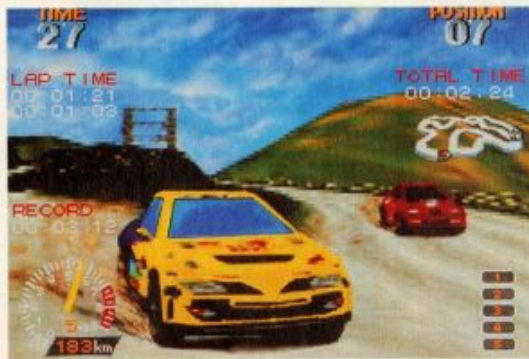
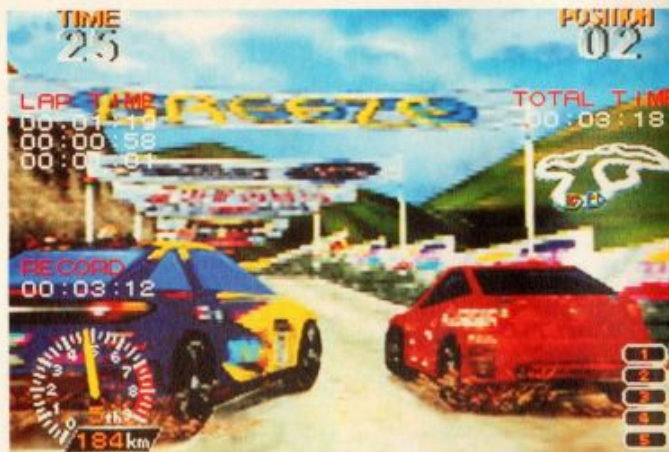


MULTI-RACING CHAMPIONSHIP

PUBLISHER: Imagineer
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: TBA

Background: The first traditional N64 racer should appear in the form of Multi-Racing Championship. The game features a variety of vehicles ranging from the saloons, to sports cars, to 4x4s, all of which can be modified to suit your personal requirements. However, MRC will differ from the majority of its rivals by allowing budding boy-racers the chance to test their mettle in a variety of hazardous weather conditions, including rain, snow and ice. It will also be possible to save your car modifications and best times onto a Memory Pak.

Prospects: It's hoped that Multi-Racing Championship will wipe the floor with the likes of Sega Rally and Ridge Racer. We've seen an early demo cart, showing off the game's speed and smoothness, and it was very impressive. Certainly one to watch.



QUAKE

PUBLISHER: GT Interactive
DEVELOPER: Midway Home Entertainment
RELEASE: Late 1997

Background: Hailed as one of the best games of all time and a worthy successor to the phenomenal Doom, Quake could be one of the most important N64 titles. The game follows the first-person Doom style but rather than flat, scaled sprites, it features hideous polygon monsters who'll chase you relentlessly through the stone mazes. The game is also more puzzle based than the unashamed bloodbath that was Doom, with players having to find dozens of switches and secret passages in every level. Rumours abound that Quake will be developed for the inferior 32-bit consoles, but there's no doubt that the N64 is the only machine which could take the monsters from the PC version and change them into something very special. Look out for exclusive N64 Quake shots in a future issue.

Prospects: At last, the awesome Quake will be within the reach of most gamers. Rather than having to buy a top-of-the-range, all-singing, all-dancing PC, Quakers will be able to buy a relatively cheap N64 and play the best version of all. Life is good...



Why do people like Quake? Because you run around like a loon and shoot big monsters with big guns, that's why. Simple.



YOSHI'S ISLAND 64

PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Yoshi's Island 64 features beautiful renders of our lizard chum and all his bizarre enemies. Although only glimpsed on video so far, the game will no doubt maintain all the addictiveness and charm of the original. Excited? I know we are!

Prospects: Yoshi's Island 64 will hopefully prove that there's still a place for 2D adventures, even in these totally 3D days.

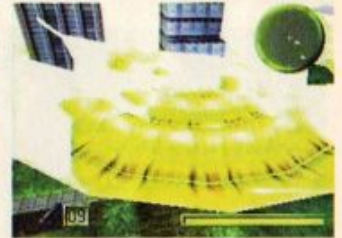
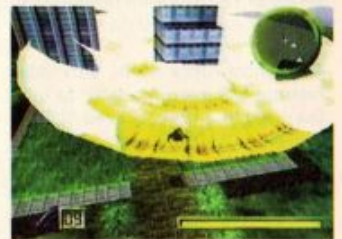
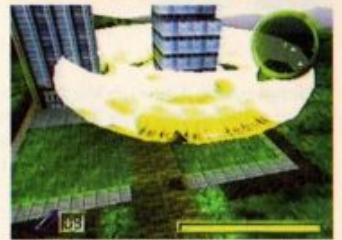


BLADE & BARREL

PUBLISHER: Seta
DEVELOPER: Kotobuki Systems
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Blade and Barrel is a 3D helicopter shoot-'em-up which will delight all fans of EA's Strike series. The plot revolves around a terrorist organisation trying to take over the world, and it's up to you to take to the skies and nip their dastardly plans in the bud. Players are also given the chance to drive tanks, using powerful missiles to topple towering skyscrapers. And with a four-player battle mode, B&B is certainly one to watch.

Prospects: Only video footage to go on so far, so it's hard to say whether B&B will cut the mustard.



WILD CHOPPERS

PUBLISHER: Seta
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Take to the skies in a military chopper and try to disarm a group of terrorists. You are supplied with limited ammo, so it's essential you make good use of them. To make matters worse, anything left to fight another day at the end of a mission automatically reappears in your next assault. Oh, and did I mention that each level is against the clock?

Prospects: For those of you who wanted a little more action and excitement than Pilotwings 64 could offer, this should be the game for you.



GANBARE GOEMON 5

PUBLISHER: Konami
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Although this game has been in development for quite some time now, the Konami developers are keeping details well under their hats. Although most shots released so far have been renders of the characters already familiar from Goemon's Super NES adventures, it's clear that the N64 game will be in the Super Mario 64 mould, a pretty 3D platformer with hundreds of brain-teasers to solve. Shows promise.

Prospects: Hard to say. Looks lovely, but there's been no actual game footage seen yet.



TOP GEAR RALLY

PUBLISHER: Kemco
DEVELOPER: Boss Game Studios
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Although the final game details have yet to be confirmed, it's hoped that Top Gear Rally will feature eight tracks and no less than 16 vehicles. The game is also set to include a special track option which will allow you to design your own circuits. There will be a variety of tracks including Desert and Forest, as well as changeable weather conditions. There are two gameplay modes from which to choose: Arcade (which should be a single race option) and Tournament (compete on a series of courses earning points depending on your finishing position). The game also boasts a two-player split-screen option.

Prospects: Once again, only video footage has been available to us in the form of a pre-rendered Silicon Graphics demo. However, the developers are promising the game will look virtually identical, if not better, than the demo – and if this is the case it should be bloomin' excellent.



These shots are SGI-rendered, but Boss say the real thing will be better!

CLAY FIGHTERS EXTREME

PUBLISHER: Interplay
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Clay Fighters was first seen on the Super NES, and now the wacky dough-like figures are coming to the N64 to poke fun at the more traditional 2D beat-'em-ups. Ten characters from both 16-bit carts appear, excluding hidden warriors, and the humour element is back in abundance. The majority of the moves will all be familiar to fighting fanatics. However, you'll now be able to perform a 3000-hit combo, or a new MK-type finishing move. It's hoped that the game will be compatible with the Jolt Pak.

Prospects: The Super NES edition made a change from the average po-faced fighters. And if these exclusive screenshots are anything to go by, the N64 version is shaping up very nicely.



REV LIMIT

PUBLISHER: Seta
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Although we were disappointed by Cruis'n USA, a Japanese video of Seta's Rev Limit convinced us that we'd soon have a top Nintendo racing title to fill the void. Few details have been released on how the game plays, but the video features excellent, finely-detailed cars and racetracks, along with some of the smoothest scrolling we've ever seen! As always, we'll be first to bring you news as it breaks... stay tuned!

Prospects: Very good. Although Mario Kart 64 is nigh-on flawless, it'll be nice to have a realistic driving game for the 64.



MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

PUBLISHER: Ocean
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Ocean promises that Mission: Impossible will be more than just another Doom-clone. A major factor will be the increased artificial intelligence which, apparently, makes the game as hard as nails. The characters also 'react' to you, so if you pull a gun some people will draw their weapons and try to stop you, while others will panic and 'leg it' to the exit. And when you're wearing a disguise, you'll need to behave appropriately else the guards will realise you're an impostor.

Prospects: There's no doubting the quality of the graphics. However, we still don't know what the gameplay will be like – we're hoping to bring you an update soon.



DUAL HEROES

PUBLISHER: HudsonSoft
DEVELOPER: In-house
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Take control of four mystical warriors, who look not unlike the Power Rangers, and take part in a range of spectacular 3D battles. The game uses the 3D Stick to give players a totally new fighting experience – sounds interesting, eh?

Prospects: Could be an exciting new twist on 3D beat-'em-ups.

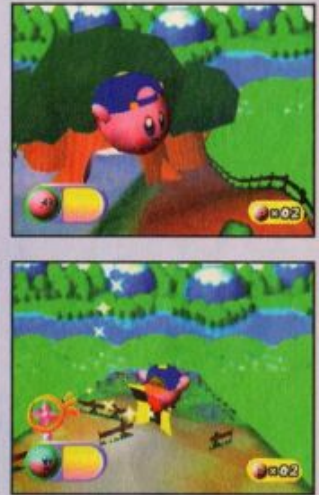


KIRBY'S AIR RIDE

PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Hal Laboratory
RELEASE: TBA

Background: After various modifications, Kirby's Air Ride finally seems to be nearing completion. The game is now a one-player racer which sees our inflatable pink blob surf through a variety of courses on board his trusty star. However, you can bet your life he won't have a safe ride, and various pitfalls stand in the way of him making it safely to the bottom of each course.

Prospects: Despite being extremely twee and a touch 'girly', you can bet your life that the gameplay will be top notch. It's slightly disappointing that the simultaneous four-player option seems to have been removed, but it still looks like Kirby's Air Ride will be oodles of fun. More news soon.



GO! GO! TROUBLEMAKERS!

PUBLISHER: Enix
DEVELOPER: Treasure
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Like Yoshi's Island 64, Go! Go! Troublemaker! is a lush 2D platformer with graphics as good as a cartoon.

Prospects: Looks great, but could be overshadowed by that darn lizard!



COMMAND & CONQUER

PUBLISHER: Virgin Interactive
DEVELOPER: Westwood Studios
RELEASE: TBA

Background: Already a hit on every other system, C&C is an all-action strategy game featuring tiny troops fighting one big war!

Prospects: Bound to be a massive success. (Playstation shots shown.)



And the fun doesn't end here! This is just a small selection of the hot games coming your way, and there are more exciting new titles announced practically every day! To be sure of keeping up with this fast-moving scene, make sure you buy Nintendo Magazine every month!