

# Nintendo 64 selling like hot cakes

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Un aperçu des premières semaines de vente de la Nintendo 64 au Royaume-Uni, au Japon et

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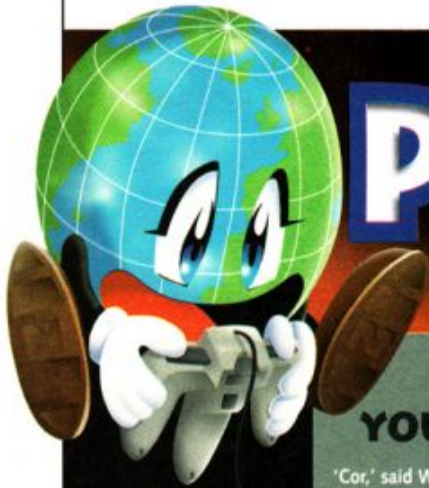
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# PLANET 64

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# N64

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### A WORD IN YOUR SHELL-LIKE

'Cor,' said Wil. 'Blimey,' said James. 'Crumbs,' said Zy. 'Er,' I said. And Tim said something we couldn't print even if we wanted to.

And that's about all we could manage when we caught our first glimpse of *Super Mario 64* running on the Nintendo 64. We'd played great games before, but *Mario 64* was simply in a different league – technically eye-popping, and played in a completely different way to anything else. In that moment, the magic surrounding the Saturn and PlayStation vanished and suddenly we all desperately wanted a chunky, dark-grey Nintendo 64. And, being magazine types, we decided that we also wanted nothing more than to get together and write the best Nintendo 64 magazine imaginable. Luckily our sinister besuited paymasters approved, their icy corporate hearts melting when they saw *Mario 64*. And work was begun on **N64 MAGAZINE**.

That was last year. Since then we've played the astonishing *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter*, the awe-inspiring *Pilotwings 64*, the sublime *Mario Kart 64* (which I'm by far the best at), the brilliant *J-League Perfect Striker* (which, embarrassingly, I'm useless at), and, basically, every other Nintendo 64 game that's been released across the world. (Even *Mah Jong Master*, which weirdo Wil perversely loves.) And we've rapidly come to the conclusion that the Nintendo 64 is the best thing that's happened to video games for years.

And we've also, we hope, assembled a magazine that matches up to the machine. We're all Nintendo 64 devotees, and every month we plan to fill **N64 MAGAZINE** with everything we find out, from the biggest new game scoop to the tiniest playing tip. We'll disassemble every new game completely, exposing its every last secret and evaluating it ruthlessly. In fact, before awarding a *Star Game* badge we'll actually complete the game, right through from start to finish, to ensure it really is great. (N64 games are incredibly expensive, after all, so you wouldn't want to be lumbered with a crap one.)

If you've already managed to track down a Nintendo 64, then well done – they're incredibly scarce at the moment thanks to Nintendo's cruel marketing strategy. (Sorry, 'limited production capacity'.) And if you haven't, I urge you to try. Even at a bank-account-evacuating £250, the N64 is worth every penny.

**JONATHAN DAVIES**  
EDITOR



# Ninte



## Britain's first N64 owners

The Bath branch of Electronics Boutique opened especially early (7.30 in the morning!) on Saturday, March 1st to sell their allotment of 25 Nintendo 64s, all of which had been reserved in advance. N64 was waiting there, bleary-eyed, to meet some of the first Nintendo 64 owners in Britain.



Hello. Who are you? Fergus Reid. How old are you? 13. So, when did you reserve your N64? Oooh, in about the middle of January. I paid for it all then as well. Why are you so keen to own one? Because there are some brilliant games coming out for it. Have you bought any of them? Yes – *Mario 64*. What'll you be getting next? *Turok*, *Mario Kart* and maybe *Doom*. I don't know. If you could have any machine in



## THE ALTERNATIVE

The first non-Nintendo controllers and things have arrived, sort of. Spectravideo's Super Pad costs £29.99 (the same price as the Nintendo controller will be when it goes on sale separately), their enormous Arcade Shark Stick is £59.99, and their Multicase is £29.99. They're also doing a 1 Mb Memory Card (that's four times the size of the standard N64 Controller Pak) for £19.99. We haven't actually seen any of this stuff yet but as soon as we do, we'll assess it all fully.



## NONSENSE OF THE MONTH

### No. 1 The 64 Cassette Case

Currently selling for ¥270 (£1.37) each in Japan and available in four different colours, are these stylish N64 cart holders. They're see-through, affording an excellent view of your carts (almost, in fact, as if they weren't in cases at all, and at the press of a

button a small spring in the bottom causes your cart to pop up very slightly. They'll even stack up horizontally. Except then, of course, you can't see what games are inside. Nonsense.



# ndo 64 'selling like hot cakes'

## But thousands of Nintendo fans still go hungry.

**I**t was hardly a surprise, but within hours of the UK's measly allotment of 20,000 Nintendo 64s going on sale on Saturday, March 1st, all had been snapped up by a Nintendo-obsessed British public. Hurrah, then. Nintendo got their 'Sold out' headlines, and shops were deluged with customers. The only people to go away

disappointed, in fact, were the thousands of Nintendo devotees who hadn't been able either to reserve an N64 or to get up early enough to grab an unspoken-for one.

Many shops, such as Electronics Boutique and HMV, ran reservation schemes, and were taking deposits right at the beginning of the year. Others, like Dixons and Comet, didn't

bother, and had people camped on their doorsteps as dawn broke. No shop, though, had more than about 25 machines to sell, with most limited to about five, and some with as few as two. Two! Tch.

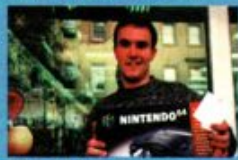
And it was the same story across the rest of Europe, and in Australasia too, with each country being rationed in a similar fashion. The only place

not to have received N64s yet is France. No-one seems quite sure why but the poor French should get their machines fairly soon.

If you haven't managed to get your hands on an N64 yet, the picture shouldn't be quite so bleak now. THE, Nintendo's UK distributor, were airfreighting more machines into the country the following week, and



the world, that could do anything you wanted, what would it be? A Nintendo 64.



**Who are you, then?** Ian Love. **How old are you?** 19. **When did you reserve your N64, then?** Erm, about three-and-a-half months ago. **Crumbs. Why do you want one so badly?** 'Cos it's the best thing around. **Have you bought any games for it?** Yep, I've got Mario and Shadows, and

I'm going to get *Turok* on Tuesday when it comes out. **And then what next?** Um, *Mario Kart 64*, *JSS 64*, if that looks any good, and *Killer Instinct Gold*. **If you could have any machine in the world, what would you have?** This, obviously. Or maybe one of those Pentium Pros.



**Hello there. Who are you?** I'm Pete. And I'm Jo. And you're...? 21. And, er... 20. **How long has your**

**N64 been reserved?** For about a month. **And why do you want one?** Well, we've got an NES, a SNES, a Game Boy, a Pocket Game Boy, a PlayStation, a Mega Drive and a PC, so we wanted to complete the set. **Blimey. Have you bought any N64 games?** Just Mario at the moment. **And then what?** Well, *Pilotwings* looks quite good. And that *Turok*... well, I don't know. **If you could have any machine in the world, what would it be?** We'll be happy with this for a while. Oh, although maybe a big telly to play it on would be good.

**Hello! Who are you?** Brian Woodcock. **And how old are**



**you?** 25. **Hmm. When did you reserve your N64?** On... let's see... the 25th of January. **Why do you want one?** Well, it's the best thing to come along, isn't it? **Yep. Which games have you got there?** Mario and *Pilotwings*. **Are you going to get any more?** Probably *Mario Kart* and *Wave Race*. **If you could have any machine in the world, what would it be?** Well... the best PC they do, I suppose.



**Good morning. Who are you?** I'm Adrian Thompson. **And you're...?** 19. **When did you reserve your N64?** Back at the beginning of January. I lost the vouchers they gave me, though, so I've had to pay the deposit twice. **And what are those games you've got there?** There's *Shadows*, Mario and *Pilotwings*. **Will you be getting any others?** Maybe *Turok*, but I'll probably wait for *Wave Race*.



### TAKE THE LEAD

Ever quick to see a market opportunity Fire Inc (01302) 751428 have cashed in with some N64 accessories.



### SFX Adaptor

Not the 'universal' adaptor it leads you to believe but an easy way to get around the problem of Japanese and American carts being slightly different shapes. Use this instead of taking a hack saw to your N64.

### S-Video

For the best picture from your N64 choose this.

### AV

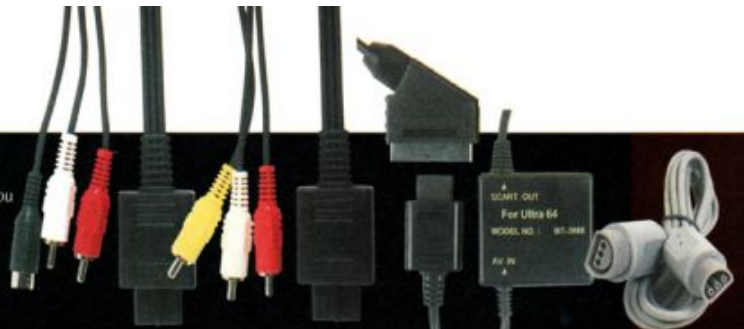
Second best but still better than an RF adaptor.

### Scart

Great for import N64 owners without S-Video.

### X-Tender

If you really must sit that far away from the TV.



▶ these should have filtered through to shops now. The plan is for 90,000 N64s to have gone on sale by the beginning of June. By this point Nintendo will have ramped-up their production of the machine to the point where there should be enough N64s for everyone.

Games-wise, just about everyone who's bought an N64 so far has also bought a copy of *Super Mario 64* to go with it. Very wise.

*Pilotwings 64*, *Shadows of the Empire* and *Turok* have also been doing well. And, er, that's about it for UK N64 releases at the moment. There'll be plenty more along soon, though, with the likes of *Wave Race*, *International Superstar Soccer 64* on the near horizon.

Oh, and someone probably said at some point: "It's selling like hot cakes." They sell very well as well. So we're told.



## Japan 'a bit quiet'

by Jonathan Davies in Tokyo (for a week)



▶ Gosh it's crowded here. Anyway, within 10 weeks of the system's launch in Japan on 23rd June last year, a whopping one million Nintendo 64's had been sold, largely on the strength of *Super Mario 64*. But since then things have sadly gone a bit quiet. The shelves in Akihabara, Tokyo's 'Electric Town' district where whole streets are lined by video game shops, are piled high with N64s that no-one seems to want. By contrast, during the week ending 31st January it was almost impossible to buy a PlayStation anywhere in Tokyo.

The reason? RPGs. Or, more specifically, *Final Fantasy VII*. January 31st was *Final Fantasy* Friday, and demonstrated how much of a boost Square's decision to develop for the PlayStation rather than the N64 has been for Sony. The N64, meanwhile, doesn't

have a single role-player to its name, which is quite a shortcoming in RPG-crazy Japan. And since *Mario Kart 64* was released over there in mid-December there hasn't really been a big-name game of any description to help sell N64s.

*Starfox 64* looks excellent, and will undoubtedly help the N64's cause in April. And *Turok* is being heavily advertised in Japan too, which is unusual as the Japanese aren't normally interested in American games. No-one there doubts the N64's power, and most of the main developers are busy working on titles. At Konami Computer Entertainment Osaka, for example, 80% of their efforts are being devoted to N64 games.

But what Nintendo really need to do is release *Zelda* – with or without the 64DD – and prove that N64 carts can carry off RPGs as well as Saturn and PlayStation CDs. The other two most popular gaming camps in Japan – the beat-'em-up and the racing game – could also do with some solid representation.

A Nintendo 64 was recently selling in Japan for around ¥24,000 (£120). But as N64 went to press, Nintendo announced a price cut to ¥16,800 (£85). *Mario Kart* with an extra controller costs about ¥9,000 (£45), with *Super Mario 64* at ¥8,000 (£40) and some older, less successful games as low as ¥3,500 (£17.50). We'll let you know next month what effect the new, lower price has had.

# Even bigger

## The 64DD will increase the N64's extraordinary powers still further

▶ N64 cartridges provide ample space for most purposes, as huge games like *Mario 64* and *Turok* prove. But there will come a time when developers, grown fat on the enormous capacity of CDs, will want to cram more into their games than one cart can possibly contain. And that's where Nintendo's N64 disc drive, codenamed the '64DD', will enter the equation.

The 64DD falls somewhere between a PC-style disk drive and a CD-ROM drive, and plugs into the expansion slot in the bottom of the machine, with the N64 perched on top of it. It uses magnetic 3.75-inch discs that store 64Mb of data, up to half of which – and here's where the 64DD wins out over CD – can be written to by the N64. Speed is up over CD, too: the data transfer rate should be around 0.71 Megabytes per second, three times the speed of CD-based machines. The 64DD will also come with some extra RAM – 2 or 4 Megabytes, it hasn't been decided yet – to be plugged into that hole in the top of the N64, so data can be loaded into that

before you start and the 64DD won't keep having to be accessed.

The 64DD's hardware is pretty much complete now, and installed in the R&D labs of the world's games developers. However, no public release date has been confirmed. As usual, Nintendo are holding back until there's software available that shows off the hardware at its best. *Zelda 64* was originally intended to be the 64DD's first game, but the delays with the hardware and the need to get an RPG out to satisfy Japanese N64 fans mean that *Zelda* could now possibly be released earlier on cart. If that was the case, the first 64DD game would be *Mother 3*, another RPG. Whatever the case with the games, quite when the 64DD will actually appear is uncertain. Here at N64 Magazine we'd be surprised (though delighted) to see it before early next year.

There'll be more to the 64DD than just bigger games, though. Its writability raises a whole string of other exciting possibilities:

- Update discs could be released for games. More courses for *Mario Kart*, for example, or a stats update disc for



## America 'frenzied'

by Doug Perry in San Francisco

▶ Simply put, the 1996 launch by Nintendo of America (NOA) of the Nintendo 64 stunned the video-gaming world. It's not a surprise that the N64 was going to sell well in North America, but no-one could have predicted the savage, frenzied, clambering idiocy that followed its unusual launch. First, North Americans were told the unit would appear on September 29th, a

Sunday, so kids wouldn't skip school to buy it. But smart (read: greedy) retailers put the unit on stores shelves three days early (a Thursday), throwing US gamers into a tizzy and Nintendo into a blissful stupor.

NOA originally announced they'd be delivering 750,000 units to North America by the winter holiday, but that number was well under the mark needed to satisfy demand. Toys 'R' Us



## MAD GRANNY

Those crazy Americans. Their *National Enquirer* magazine (a sort of Sun with staples) reports that, when a new delivery of Nintendo 64s arrived on the day before Christmas Eve, shoppers were already queuing outside the Best Buy store at Aurora, Illinois. As the doors of the store were opened, however, a 58-year-old grandmother tried to pass the queue and push her way to the front.

A stampede ensued, with angry shoppers incensed at this flagrant disregard

for queuing etiquette. In the melee that followed, granny failed to grab an N64 and started to accuse another, more fortunate shopper of "stealing" her machine. The luckier shopper denied this and a slanging match ensued.

At the height of the argument, Granny launched herself at the other shopper, and punched her in the head. Fearing a full-scale riot, the store staff called the police and the offending Granny was arrested.

# er games!

*FIFA*. However games would have to have been originally programmed with expansion in mind.

- Games could be customised. You could build some huge Sim Cities, and if editors were released, create your own *Doom* and *Turok* levels.

- Games and demos could be downloaded over a modem, possibly using the Internet. It's rumoured that Nintendo are considering building a modem into the 64DD itself, which would be great.



reckoned they alone could sell 1 million by the end of the year. NPD Research, which does the TRSTS sales analysis, reported that at launch, N64 sold four times the number of PlayStations and 10 times as many as Sega Saturn had done the year before. In October, Nintendo managed to increase the number of deliveries to 1.2 million by Christmas.

N64 has now sold-through over 1.75 million units in North America, and although shortages – which pundits believe are created by Nintendo to cause a shark-like frenzy

for the 64-bit console – are still a problem, the public hasn't gotten enough, and the unit still sells at an astounding pace. Games are also difficult to get unless they're bought on the day of their release. (Because of extreme shortages of LucasArts *Shadows of the Empire*, the game is now selling for as much as \$100 in some stores, with some people already buying it as a 'collector's item'). Selling at a competitive \$199 (about £120), the same price as Sega Saturn and Sony PlayStation, the N64 is on its way to penetrating as many as 5-7 American million homes by the end of this year.

It's...

# THE N64 VIDEO

## A feast of exciting new N64 games. And it's free!



Here's something you don't see every day. As if *N64 Magazine* wasn't great enough already, to celebrate its launch we've compiled a half-hour tape stuffed with footage of the best Nintendo 64 games – both the ones you can buy now and the ones that are coming later this year. And we've glued it to the front! Here's the menu:

### PART 1

#### The Shoshinkai Video

This was handed-out to visitors to Nintendo's Shoshinkai show in Tokyo late last year. The commentary's all in Japanese, but you'll get the gist of it, and the games look fantastic. There's:

**Mario Kart 64** Nintendo  
UK release June/July.

**Starfox 64** Nintendo  
Late summer.

**Blast Corps** Nintendo/Rare  
March in Japan, August here.

**J-League Perfect Striker** Konami  
June (as *International Superstar Soccer 64* in the UK).

**Wonder Project J2** Enix  
Out now in Japan; UK release unlikely.

**The Glory of St Andrews** Seta  
Ditto.

**Pro King Baseball** Imagineer  
Out now in Japan; no UK release planned as yet.

**Mah Jong Master** Konami  
Out now in Japan; no UK release planned as yet.

**Shadows of the Empire** Nintendo/LucasArts  
Out now.

**Goldeneye** Nintendo/Rare  
No release date yet.

**Yoshi's Island 64** Nintendo  
Out towards the end of summer.

**Kirby's Air Ride** Nintendo  
Recently taken back to the drawing board for a complete re-design.

**Go Go! Troublemakers** Enix/Treasure  
No release date yet.

**Dual Heroes** Hudson  
No release date news yet.

**Rev Limit** Seta  
Late summer release in Japan. Maybe end of the year for UK.

**64 Oozumoo** Bottom Up  
No news yet.

**Turok: Dinosaur Hunter** Acclaim  
Out now!

**Ganbare Goemon 5** Konami  
No release date yet.

**Blade & Barrel** Kemco  
Scheduled for March in Japan.

**Zelda 64** Nintendo  
Late this year.

### PART 2

#### Those games in full

Here's a lingering, mouthwatering look at three of Nintendo's key N64 games.

**Super Mario 64** Nintendo  
The only way to appreciate why *Mario 64* really is the best video game in the world is to see it in action.

**Pilotwings 64** Nintendo/Paradigm  
Take to the skies in a number of different ways. The graphics are face-slappingly good.

**Wave Race 64** Nintendo  
Take some incredibly realistic water and add some high-speed jet-ski racing. Guaranteed success.

### PART 3

#### Plus!

Some more games we managed to get footage of.

**Killer Instinct Gold** Nintendo/Rare  
Out now in the US, and in May in the UK. See our review on page 76.

**FIFA 64** Electronic Arts  
Out early in April – review next month. It's not good news, *FIFA* fans.

**Doom 64** GT  
Out in early April in the US, but no UK date yet.

**Wayne Gretzky's 3D Hockey** GT  
Out now in the US, no UK date yet.

### PART 4

**Mission Impossible & Turok Dinosaur Hunter**  
A couple of 'trailers'.

**Mission Impossible** Ocean  
Ocean aren't showing the actual game yet, so they've given us the film trailer instead as a sort of taster. Look out for an exclusive preview in our next issue.

**Turok: Dinosaur Hunter** Acclaim  
Out now  
Acclaim's in-shop promotional video, filled with dinosaurs. Tim gets 'scared behind the eyes' by this.