

Rare's triple threat

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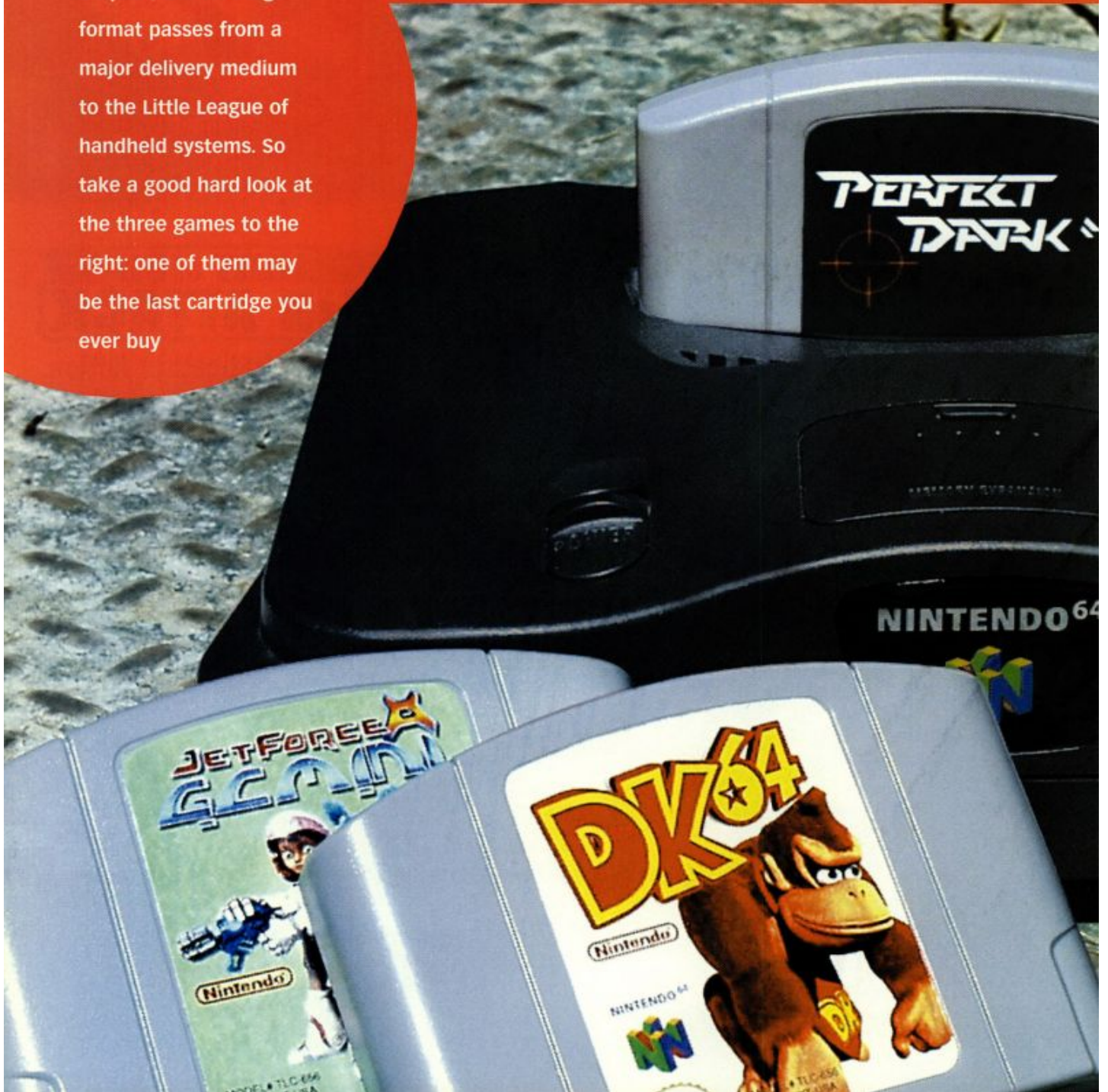
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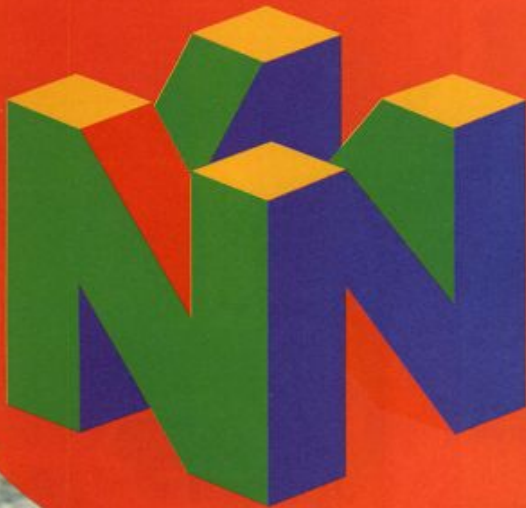
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RARE'S

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The glorious age of the cartridge is ending, but not before Rare delivers *Perfect Dark*, *Jet Force Gemini*, and *Donkey Kong 64* into the hands of N64 owners later this year

Now faced with its last major holiday season for Nintendo 64, Rare is once again stepping up to the plate with three of the most important titles for Nintendo — *Perfect Dark*, *Jet Force Gemini*, and *Donkey Kong 64*, all backed by multi-million-dollar marketing and sales campaigns. Nintendo will be fighting for every sale as Sega rolls out Dreamcast and its impressive launch lineup and PlayStation plays host to big hitters like *Dino Crisis*, *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*, and *Gran Turismo 2*. If 1999 is going to be Nintendo's biggest year without any help from a Miyamoto-developed title — and it might be — the company is going to earn every cent with these three games.

PERFECT DARK

Release Date: December 1999 Origin: U.K.

GoldenEye was exceeded in sales only by *Mario 64*, and there hasn't been an announced *Mario* sequel yet. And since the same team responsible for *GoldenEye 007* is responsible for *Perfect Dark*, the game is sure to be the **Next Generation** reader's most anticipated N64 purchase this year. Like *GoldenEye*, *Perfect Dark* puts players in the first-person role of an agent, but this time around, that agent isn't James Bond, it's Joanna Dark, and the year is 2023.

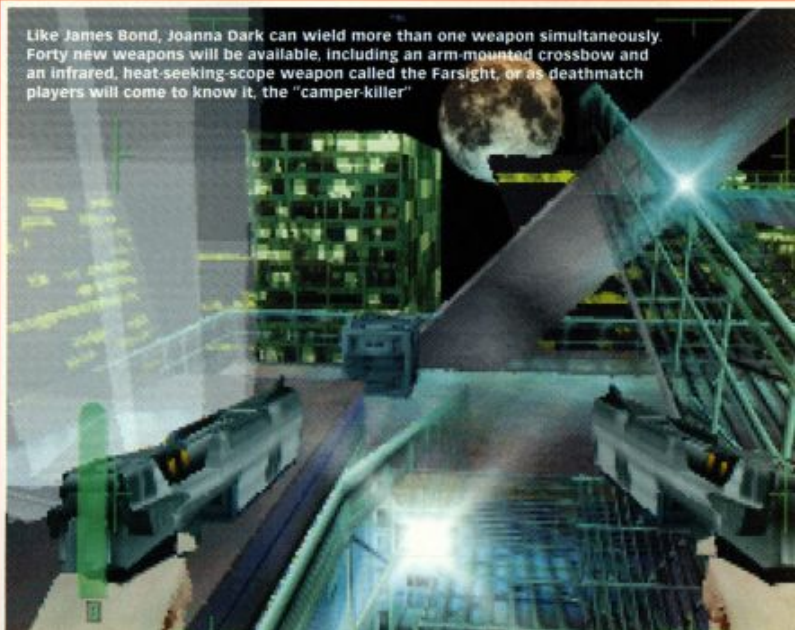
Despite the changes in character and setting, the gameplay remains akin to *GoldenEye* with the addition of an *X-Files* twist. What begins as a simple recon mission becomes Joanna Dark's quest to uncover alien races, corrupt corporations, and global conspiracies. Bringing back the best aspects of *007*'s single and

multiplayer gameplay, *Perfect Dark*'s early levels already deliver unrelenting action. In order to store all 17 levels and extensive cut scenes, the cartridge will be five times the size of *GoldenEye*. But don't judge the game just by the size of the cartridge — much of the game engine has been completely reworked.

"Rare threw away everything they didn't like about the *GoldenEye* engine," says Nintendo's Ken Lobb. "Which was a lot." While the team is working on improving the framerate and animation, what really stood out in the E3 version of the game was the AI: enemies now have the ability to assess potential threats, find cover, and execute long-range teamwork.

Single-player AI isn't all that's

Like James Bond, Joanna Dark can wield more than one weapon simultaneously. Forty new weapons will be available, including an arm-mounted crossbow and an infrared, heat-seeking-scope weapon called the Farsight, or as deathmatch players will come to know it, the "camper-killer"



been improved, as the enhanced multiplayer modes implement the use of bots, which until now were only found in PC first-person shooters. Single players can deathmatch with up to seven bots, and four human players can add another four bots for eight-player deathmatches. And while it hasn't been determined yet, Rare indicates the number of bots could go as high as 14.

Perfect Dark's exact use of the Expansion Pak has yet to be determined, though it's likely to enhance lighting and larger game environments. But the game's real expansion comes in the form of Nintendo's Transfer Pak. Utilizing this Transfer Pak (shipping with *Pokémon Stadium* this October) and the Game Boy Camera, players can apply a Game Boy Camera picture to a *Perfect Dark* deathmatch model, enabling you to put your own face in the game — as well as brighten, color, and stretch the image to fit. With a small amount of practice, the whole process takes less than a minute. Once created, you can save your character in the



The future, according to Rare, will include flying cars and rain. Maybe they've been watching too much *Blade Runner*...

car or on a Controller Pak. (What Congress will make of the ability to play with your friends' pictures in deathmatch is undetermined.)

Considering the fantastic combination of stealthy single-player and multiplayer gameplay *Bond* delivered back in August of '97, we can't wait to lock, load, and sneak around with Joanna Dark later this year.



JET FORCE GEMINI

Release Date: August/September 1999 Origin: U.K.

Maybe you've heard this one before — defend the Earth from the threat of an evil warlord and his army of alien insects. Sure, it's a story as old as *Space Invaders* itself, and *Jet Force Gemini* does indeed hearken players back to the days when players shot first and asked questions later. One look at the graphics in this sleeper from Rare, though, and you'll know it's a '90s title.

Created by the same team responsible for *Blast Corps* and *Diddy Kong Racing*, *Jet Force* is part action, part adventure, and part puzzle-solving. Played out in epic form, the game chronicles the journey of its three main characters — Juno, Vela, and Lupus — through intricately designed stages packed with enemies at every turn.

Jet Force Gemini follows Rare's formula for engrossing gameplay: delivering more than 120 stages with an average of 15 stages per level. But it's more than just picking a character and plugging away — to get the full experience of *Jet Force Gemini*, players need to alternate between all three characters in order to meet the various objectives.

Of course you can't defeat an army of insects without weapons, and players will have access to more than 20, including homing weapons, rapid-fire guns, and various explosives. The arsenal will come in handy, as the player will frequently be faced with more than 20 enemies at once, a first for both 32- and 64-bit systems. This, tied to the fact that many areas are structured with patterned attacks, really gives the game a strong feeling of 16-bit action games like *Gunstar Heroes* and *Ninja Warriors*.

Of course, like any good action/platformer, the game will feature plenty of secret zones and a two-player cooperative mode where players can team up and blast through levels. Beyond that, *Jet Force* will include multiplayer deathmatch, a top-down multiplayer race mode, and a police-style trainer with pop-up targets.

The version shown to **Next Generation** already exhibits brilliant textures and wondrous landscapes that will make even PC gamers envious. What is also impressive is that the game wasn't running with the 4MB Expansion Pak. Whether or not the Pak even helps will be revealed when the game ships late this summer.



Don't let these massive, beautifully textured indoor and outdoor areas fool you — *Jet Force* is an action game, incorporating numerous weapons and various modes of gameplay

Each character has special abilities, and players have to effectively utilize all three to progress through the game. Vela (below) is the only character who can swim; Juno can walk on fire; and the dog, Lupus, has jet engines on his paws that enable him to jump high and float for considerable distances.





In order to make players more familiar with Joanna Dark and her intriguing storyline, Rare has added intro and exit cut sequences with extensive voiceovers. The intro (left) is a long cinematic with Joanna dropping from a helicopter onto the roof of a highrise building. Expect a whopping 90 minutes of cut scenes interspersed throughout the game



DONKEY KONG 64

Release Date: November 1999 Origin: U.K.



Elements of *Donkey Kong Country* such as shooting characters through barrels and driving a mine cart on broken tracks have all made it into the N64 version of the game, although on a much larger 3D scale

Since Nintendo 64's release, every key Nintendo franchise — with the notable exception of *Metroid* — has jumped to 64-bit — *Zelda*, *F-Zero*, and, of course, *Mario*. Now, after much delay, *Donkey Kong* makes its way to Nintendo 64. Secretly in development for close to four years, *Donkey Kong 64* is one of the biggest games ever created for the system. Fully incorporating the 4MB Expansion Pak, which will be required to play the game, *Donkey Kong 64* boasts massive environments, phenomenal graphics, and unprecedented gameplay.

While previous *Donkey Kong* games were very linear, *Donkey Kong 64* enables players to take many paths to complete the game. *Donkey Kong 64* only has eight levels, but each presents five goals for each of the five characters,

resulting in 200 total objectives. Just as in previous *Donkey Kong* games, players will be able to use Donkey Kong and Diddy Kong as well as a cast of new characters including Tiny, Chunky, and Lanky Kong. Each Kong will have its own unique set of abilities that need to be mastered in order to progress, and only certain characters have been enabled with the skillset to complete special tasks, that in turn, will open new areas.

Yet even with the extra 4MB, the N64 is showing its limitations. But *Donkey Kong 64* will likely prove innovation doesn't always require new technology, just an imaginative designer. *Donkey Kong* never looked or played better than it already does here, as you can probably imagine yourself.



Donkey Kong's Last Stand

Back in 1994, when SNES was on its last legs, Rare released *Donkey Kong Country*. Showcasing a proprietary real-time 3D technology called Advanced Computer Modelling (ACM), *Donkey Kong Country* treated players to unparalleled graphics and gameplay. At the time, it quickly became one of the fastest selling videogames in history, according to NPD's TRSTS Video Games Tracking Service, *Donkey Kong Country* has sold through 2.75 million–3.25 million units since October of 1994. Will DK 64 produce similar numbers for N64? Time will tell.

