Menace approches

Article scanné dans le magazine GamePro n°128 (Mai 1999)

Sujet de l'article : Star Wars: Episode I: Racer

The Menace

A STAR WARS TRIPLE THREAT IS HITTING THE PLAYSTATION, THE NINTENDO 64, AND A THEATER NEAR YOU IN MAY!

BY SCARY-WAN KENOBI

LucasArts has a surprise for gamers and *Star Wars* fans alike. Two new games, Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace for the PlayStation and Star Wars Episode I: Racer for the Nintendo 64, are slated for release on or around the May 19 opening of *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*. This means you'll be able to see the movie (if you can brave the long lines), then prolong the experience with gameplay. *GamePro* got an early look at the titles, and both PlayStation and N64 owners should be happy—the games look strong on both systems!

STAR WARS
EPISODE I
THE PHANTOM MENACE

PLAYSTATION OWNERS WILL GET THE MOVIE EXPERIENCE WITH THIS METAL GEAR–ISH ACTION GAME.

A long time ago on a PlayStation near you, LucasArts developers were hard at work on a game that not only uses the *Phantom Menace* story to advance the action, but also follows it faithfully for the entire game. Like the movie, Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace starts with a conversation between Obi-Wan Kenobi and Qui-Gon Jinn that soon turns into a melee that has you running for your life on a huge space station. From here, things become even more exciting.

"At Last, We Will Have Our Revenge"

GamePro's recent visit to LucasArts Entertainment in San Rafael, California, yielded a look at actual gameplay. The Phantom Menace for the PlayStation uses an isometric overhead-view reminiscent of Metal Gear Solid's. According to Joel Driskin, product marketing manager at LucasArts, the game also features non-linear play and no hard-time constraints, which means you're not on the clock to finish a mission, so you can pretty much explore anywhere you want. In fact, you get to do it all in this game: solve puzzles, combat opponents, and find clues. Segments of the game have a definite RPG feel, such as the part where Obi-Wan bargains for engine parts in Mos Espa while trying to keep the peace in a hostile cantina. There are also search missions that require you to bring a character safely to the end of the level, like when you rescue Queen Padme.

Screen shots shown are from the PC version. Actual PlayStation screens may differ.

Nintendo64EVER | Menace approches (Article scanné dans GamePro n°128 (Mai 1999)) - page 2

Approaches

"The Boy Has a Dark Side"

Although it was unclear how many characters from the movie will be playable, LucasArts did confirm at least four without indicating whom they are. Obi-Wan Kenobi is a definite —and the one playable character we saw in the demo—and we suspect that Qui-Gon, Anakin Skywalker, and possibly Darth Maul could be in the lineup. A variety of characters seems likely, given that you'll use the very un-Jedi–like blaster, along with lightsabers and Force Powers (that let you use the Force to pull weapons and items toward you).

The action and exploration will occur through roughly 12 levels with the game's ending matching the movie's. "Lucasfilm wanted to make sure we didn't take the story line in a different direction," says Driskin. "Although there will be lots of hidden things and multiple paths, we made sure that the spirit of *The Phantom Menace* movie experience is re-created faithfully in the game."

As well it should be. Never in video game history has a movie debuted simultaneously with two separate and distinct video games. You'd be hard-pressed to find even one movie/video game release so close (Sony tried and failed with Mary Shelley's Frankenstein on the Super NES and Genesis, and let's not count Street Fighter: The Movie—

Check out these two *GamePro*-exclusive screens.

we mean real games, not slapped-together Van Damme mishmashes). A lot is riding on The Phantom Menace. If the movie is terrific and millions rush to theaters to see it, the game had better draw at least an equal amount of admiration—especially amongst hardcore *Star Wars* fans, who are as picky as Siamese cats. As Tom Sarris, public relations manager at LucasArts, states, "You won't see us advertise the games at the movie premieres or at any theaters in general. We certainly don't want to cheapen the experience of *The Phantom Menace* as a moviegoing phenomenon. We prefer to enhance it for the crossover *Star Wars* fan and video gamer." It looks like the Force is with LucasArts once again. (For info on Star Wars Episode I: Racer for the N64, see the following pages.)

You still want that T-14?
I sell this you 5000 Credits for a T-14.
I will give you a Portable Fusion Coil from Naboo in exchange for the T-14.
Never mind!

The game will involve both action and exploration in a very RPG-ish interface.

Nintendo64EVER | Menace approches (Article scanné dans GamePro n°128 (Mai 1999)) - page 3

STAR WARS
EPISODE 1
RACER

NINTENDO 64 RACING FANS WILL DETERMINE IF LUCASARTS WINS THE WAR OF THE WIPEOUT CLONES. BY SCARY-WAN KENOBI

LucasArts had a pretty good racing game on its drawing board for a while, but no franchise juggernaut to help propel the game, like Dark Forces and Masters of Terās Kāsi did. Just as the project was nearing completion, it was determined that there would be a rac-

Driving You Crazy

As a Darth Vader–starved generation watches the preview for *Star Wars Episode 1: The Phantom Menace*, they see that things are not well in Skywalker country. Led by Obi-Wan Kenobi, young Jedi pupil Anakin Skywalker prepares for a long and dangerous journey, during which Skywalker's talents as a skilled pilot take shape. In one of the most exciting sequences in the long-awaited prequel, young Anakin pilots a pod-racer in a thrilling *Ben-Hur*–esque race against the galaxy's toughest pilots. This sequence, sure to thrill moviegoers this summer, has evolved into a full-fledged racing game, available this May on the Nintendo 64 and the PC.

Gamers will experience the thrill and excitement of the pod-racing

ing sequence in *The Phantom Menace*. The glare from the light bulbs popping over people's heads was blinding, and Star Wars Episode 1: Racer was born.

sequence in a Wipeout-style tournament and circuit racing game, complete with more than 21 pod-racers. The action takes place on over seven worlds for a total of 21 tracks; there will also be hidden and mirror tracks as well as a few hidden pod-racers for extra depth.
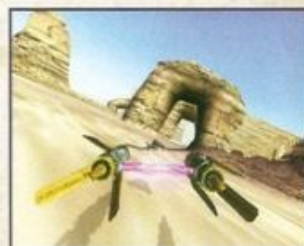
The Pod Couple

But first, the question must be asked: "What the hell is a pod-racer?" According to the game's lead programmer, pod-racers are comprised of two giant jet-engines attached by two bungee-type cords to a control pod where the pilot sits. This attachment between the engines is pretty fragile and could snap at any moment. A thin beam of energy crackles between the engines, preventing them from bouncing around independently of each other. As the jet engines are propelled forward,
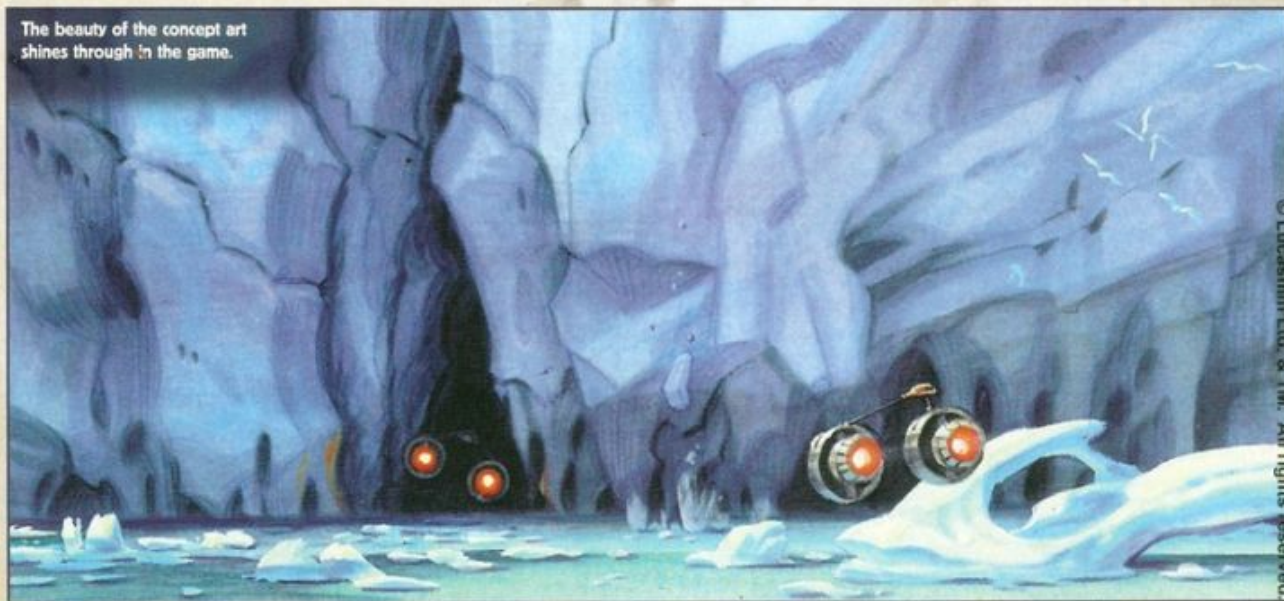
the pilot-pod lags far behind, much like a chariot.

At press time, the crew at Lucas-Arts had the racers traveling at over 600 miles per hour—about the speed of the craft in Wipeout XL. But the crew also stated that they were in the beta-test stage and hoped to increase that speed to over 700 mph.

Although racers are unarmed, there will be plenty of action. The stages include lava pits, water traps, and other *Star Wars*–specific hazards (like Tusken Raider attacks). You'll also be able to run people off the

The beauty of the concept art shines through in the game.

Nintendo64EVER | Menace approches (Article scanné dans GamePro n°128 (Mai 1999)) - page 4

These sneak peeks at the movie's racing sequence shows the pods in action.

track, thereby damaging their engine attachments or stabilizers.
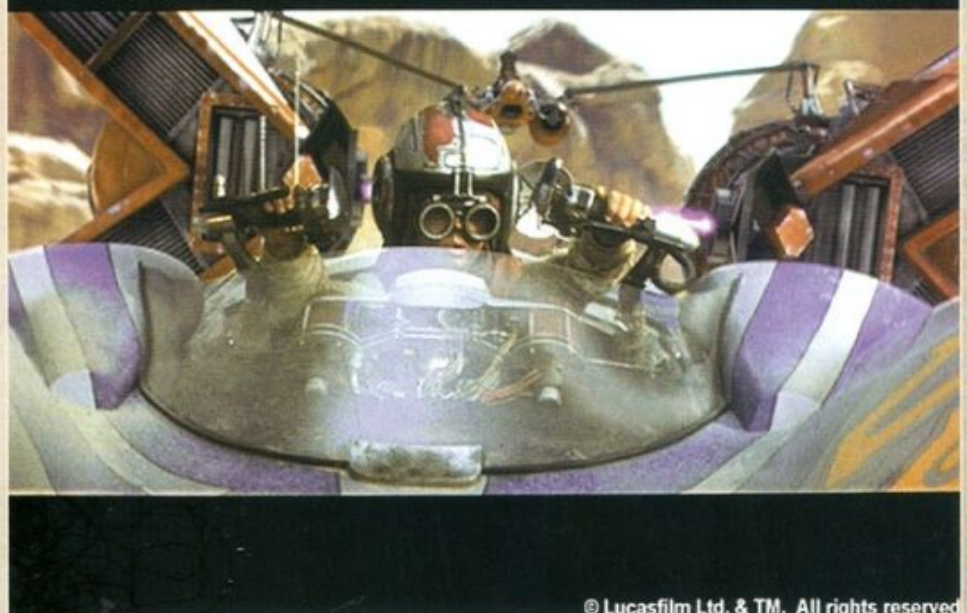
Racing Against Scum and Villainy

LucasArts disclosed that you'll play as Anakin Skywalker, who faces off against a band of galactic misfits who range from the semi-human to the down-right scummy. You'll even go up against Anakin's nemesis from the film's pod-race sequence, Sebulba, as you race for pink slips in an outer-space drag race.

Racer will have a slew of options as well, like trading the money you win to upgrade your craft for better maneuverability and power, racing against characters to unlock tracks or hidden pods, and even competing with a friend. In fact, the PC version will allow an eight-person multiplayer race, while the Nintendo 64 will allow two people to compete via a split-screen. In all, Star Wars Episode 1: Racer has the makings of a great game, even if it didn't have the world-famous license.

Go, Pod-Racer, Go!

Only fans of the genre will be able to decide if Racer has what it takes to dethrone the slew of N64 racing games like Wipeout, Rush 2, or Extreme-G 2. But if you're a fan of racing and *Star Wars*–style action, keep your eyes peeled and your pedal to the pod-floor in anticipation of this summer title. 🄶

▼ Two more exclusive screen shots—this time of Racer—just for *GamePro* readers.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Are you new to the universe of *Star Wars*? Need a little help in telling the difference between a Bantha and Boba Fett? There are some great resources available for newbies and hardcore Jedi-wannabes alike.

Star Wars: Behind the Magic is the ultimate CD-ROM compendium for everything *Star Wars*, from character bios to planetary configurations. It's exhaustive and sometimes confusing (especially if you've never seen any of the movies—but then you'd be a freak, so that wouldn't apply), but it's the definitive digital reference work. It even has data on *The Phantom Menace*, including stills, interviews, and artwork.

A Guide to the Star Wars Universe by Bill Slavicsek, now in its revised and expanded second edition, covers everything from *Star Wars: A New Hope*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, and *Return of the Jedi*, along with descriptions of people, places, and creatures from the novels, the TV specials, and the *Dark Empire* comic books. Its encyclopedic scope makes for serious reading.

An online search for "*The Phantom Menace*" yields hundreds of references—but one of the best online guides we've found is http://www.thephantommenace.tsx.org. Great stills, lots of info, and trailer mirror sites are available here. Another of the better sites is the official one, http://www.starwars.com, where you'll find great background menus on the prequel trilogy and the original three films, production notes, interviews, and other *Star Wars* items. Check out the excellent interactive walkthroughs of areas featured in *SW: TPM*, including the town of Mos Espa and Anakin's living quarters.

Nintendo64EVER | Menace approches (Article scanné dans GamePro n°128 (Mai 1999)) - page 5