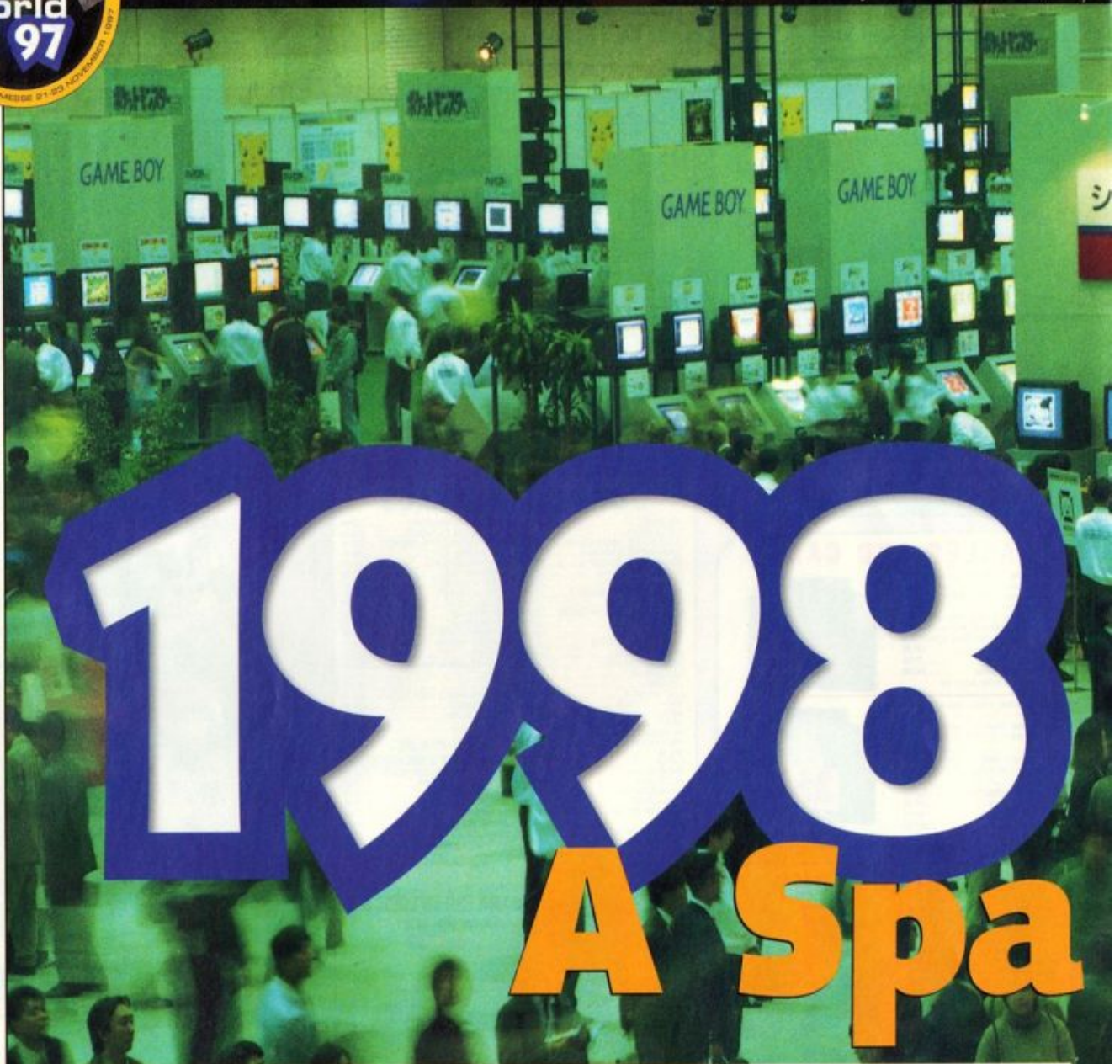


Space World 1997

Article scanné dans le magazine N64 n°11 (Février 1998)

Sujet de l'article : Video Games Show (*)

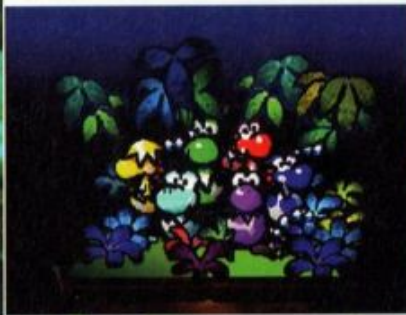
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1998

A Spa

GAMES



64DD



MIYAMOTO





N64 MAGAZINE AT NINTENDO SPACE WORLD '97



For three days last month, Nintendo let its Tokyo public take a peek at the future. This is what we saw...

ce Odyssey

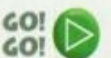
DIARY



Almost a quarter of a million people went to Nintendo Space World 1997. On show were the games that we'll all be playing in 1998, the extra bits of hardware we might be buying and the philosophy that will drive Nintendo onward towards the year 2000. There was good news, surprising news and disappointment in varying proportions, as well as firm proof that however much you know about Nintendo, they're still able to pull the odd grand surprise out of the bag every now and then.

N64 Magazine was lucky enough to spend the week of the week in Tokyo, travelling religiously with the hordes of people to Japan's biggest exhibition centre, Makuhari Messe, to jostle with the crowds for a first look at loads of new games. We were also privileged to meet and chat with Mario's dad himself, Shigeru Miyamoto, as well as many of the other senior cheeses at Nintendo HQ. And we went shopping in the evenings.

Most important of all though were the games we saw and played. You'll have seen a few of them up at the front of the magazine, but there were loads more besides. These are our impressions of them...



January 1998

N64 55



NINTENDO 64



space
world



△ An enormous person-sized Pikachu wandered around the hall.

Nearly a quarter of million people visited the show. Not all at once, though.



△ Part of Saturday's show was broadcast live on kids TV.



A view to a queue

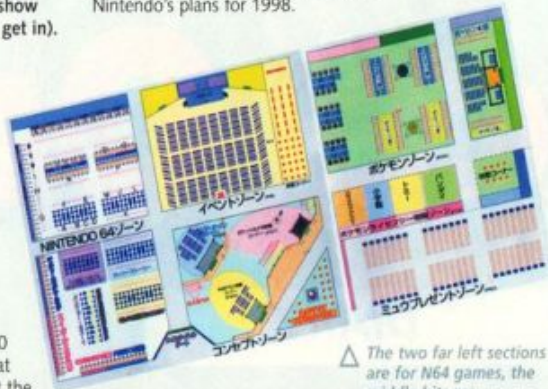
A quarter of a million people visited Nintendo Space World, making a certain amount of queuing inevitable. As most of these visited on the two public days on Saturday and Sunday, organisers introduced a limited entry system where everyone entering the show was given a badge, proudly displaying the time they had to leave the show (about three hours after they'd finally managed to get in).

The Japanese being an obedient ordered bunch, there was no need for burly security types to patrol the show, ready to throw out reluctant leavers – in fact the whole system ran with a communitarian efficiency rarely seen outside Japan, allowing the equivalent of the entire population of Norwich to happily see Nintendo's plans for 1998.

You are here!

As you can see from the map, the enormous Makuu Messe show hall was divided roughly into three. The left-hand end was for new N64 releases, the central bit for a large presentation arena and demonstrations of the 64DD and Game Boy Camera, and the far right third for Game Boy or, more accurately, *Pocket Monsters*.

We were surprised by the amount of space devoted to Game Boy *Pocket Monsters* until we found out that Nintendo had received over 100,000 applications for the special 51st Pocket Monster that was to be downloaded onto Game Boy PM carts at the show. So over-subscribed was this offer, that Nintendo were forced to run a lottery offering as many lucky winners the opportunity to download as they had slots in their special booths to do it!



△ The two far left sections are for N64 games, the middle bits are exhibition areas, and the right is for Pocket Monsters and Game Boy.

The N64 Eager Waitometer

For each of the N64 games at the show, we've rated how much we're looking forward to the title on a scale of one to five. This mark is based on how good the game was looking and playing at the show, as well as how much more we're expecting from it by the time it's finished.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Nintendo release: Out now Japan status: 100% complete price: ¥6800

YOSHI'S STORY

If Nintendo's eager punters had turned up at Space World to find that *Yoshi's Story* had been delayed, the big N might have easily found a riot on their hands. As it was, the information boards above the *Yoshi* monitors displayed the comforting news that *YS* would indeed be out a couple of days before Christmas.

Phew! But was the game any good? Fortunately the answer was a resounding yes, with even the 2D platformer-phobic James stretching his lips to previously unseen feats of smiling, over the little green dino's latest adventure. In fact, unless you were officially the World's grumpiest gamer, it would be difficult not to giggle at the game that will surely prove you don't have to be 3D to be great.

The game starts with you choosing your Yoshi from the selection screen. Your choice is important because each of the different colour Yoshis have different culinary tastes (more of this later). The selection system is a giant hand which can be moved from dino to dino. When you have the one you

want, a quick press of A has your big-nosed lizard frog-marched reluctantly off the side of the screen.

Once in game, your mission becomes clear. Using the A button to extend your Yoshi's extraordinarily long tongue, you must pick up the pieces of fruit that litter the various game worlds. Once safely swallowed, the fruit in question fills one of 30 slots around the game screen. When all these slots are full, you can then move on to the next world. Different Yoshis prefer different fruit and collecting more of your preferred variety will yield you more of a points haul.

Of course, if this was all there was to *Yoshi's Story*, it wouldn't be a game, it'd be more of an electric harvest festival. The first thing to impede your progress, then, are fruits protected in a tongue-proof bubble. Second up are an enormous variety of unhelpful creatures bent on disturbing your Yoshi's day. Most



of these difficulties are dealt with in one of three ways. Jumping under an egg box releases up to six throwing eggs which will obediently trail after your Yoshi wherever he chooses to go. Holding Z and then using the cursor that appears to aim, enables you to lob your eggs at anything that's causing you aggro. Fruit can be freed, enemies zapped and obstructions removed. Although Yoshi's available path is distinctly left to right in the game, eggs can be thrown slightly into and out of the screen, making it a sort of 2.5D affair.

Other vital game techniques include offensive licking – slurping up your enemies from long range – and head diving – leaping up into the air and falling straight back down to earth. This second technique is particularly useful for clearing stubborn guards that block Yoshi's path to later parts of a level.

The story book theme is maintained with pop-up book style level selects and end of level changeovers designed to look like pages turning. Quite whether the game will provide experienced players with sufficient challenge remains to be seen (our Yoshi's life meter ran out only once for the entire time we were playing), but it's going to be the hardest of hearts that isn't charmed by the N64's first retro game. Expect a full review next issue.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



△ In this bit, Yoshi's only collected three bits of fruit. He needs 27 more to fill up all the dots.



△ It is a level select screen and, yes, it is in the style of a pop-up book. Some inspired guessing there from us a few issues back.

△ Unfortunately, we didn't get to play the patchwork level. It looks great, though.

developer: Konami release: 29.1.98 status: 100% complete price: £7800

NBA IN THE ZONE

Rather overshadowed by Nintendo's basketball game, Konami were pleased to announce that their *NBA in the Zone* was due for a Japanese January release. While competent, the game has little to differentiate it from the thousands (?) of PlayStation basketball titles available and, in comparison with Nintendo's game, lacks enough control subtleties to make it a true great.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Hudson Soft release: 4.1.98 status: 100% complete price: £6980

BRAVE SPIRITS

Grappling fans will be pleased to see the N64's first wrestling game arrive from Hudson this month. How pleased they remain after playing it remains to be seen, with our N64 testers getting quickly confused by the control system and left underwhelmed by their short exposure to the game. We'll review it fully next month.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Asmik release: Out now status: 100% complete price: £6800

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

More wrestling action but (we think) *World Championship Wrestling* is actually WCW vs NWO in Japanese disguise. We'll have a review next month whatever it turns out to be.



The N64 Eager Waitometer



GO! GO!

developer: Nintendo release: TBA status: Unknown price: TBA

PIKACHU GENKI DECHU

(I'm OK! says Pikachu)

Based on Pikachu, by far the most popular of the Pocket Monsters, *Pikachu Genki Dechu* is the embodiment of the speech given by Nintendo Japan president, Mr. Yamauchi, at Space World. Heralding a future where feats of technical polygon-intensive 3D wizardry give way to simpler, more intimate gaming experiences, Mr. Yamauchi envisaged a whole slew of 'interactive', 'communicative', 'nurturing' software. It's difficult even to call them 'games', because the emphasis is definitely on the nurturing side, establishing a relationship, for want of a better description, with the on-screen characters. *Pikachu Genki Dechu* is the first N64 title to realise Mr. Yamauchi's vision, the main objective of the game being to coax the eponymous character into trusting you.

The first N64 game to exploit the new hardware add-on, imaginatively dubbed the "Voice recognition unit", *Pikachu Genki Dechu* encourages the gamer to establish a relationship with the little monster by getting him (it?) to recognise your voice. At the outset, Pikachu is nervous and generally mistrustful of everyone. Which of course is the sensible option, nowadays, what with joyriding and housebreaking and... sorry, basically he's a bit nervous. Your job, as chief Pocket Monster befriender, is to use the headset to reassure the poor little thing. He reacts to the tone of your voice, and if you sound frightened, he will be too. If your little brother should happen to pass by and try to talk to your Pikachu, he'll get nervous and back off.

So you have to show him that your intentions are good and learn to relate to him correctly. The whole concept is one of (excuse the hippie overtones) growing up together. And if that sounds a bit weird to you, let us assure you that, with pets generally forbidden to the majority of Japanese youngsters, this is almost certain to follow in the footsteps of the outstanding successes of *Pocket Monsters* and *Tamagotchi*. And hey, let's face it, it's pretty cute.



△ Success! Pikachu seems to be forming a romantic attachment to you. That's, er, great.

The N64 Eager Waitrometer



△ As if giant real-life Pikachu's weren't scary enough at the show...

△ ...We also had to contend with the computer one talking to us. Weird.

Tired and emotional

Being a '90s kind of monster, Pikachu has a whole array of emotions and sensibilities with which to entertain you. And, straight from the promotional literature (so you don't think we're joking), here they are:



developer: Imagineer release: March status: 60% complete price: ¥6980

HOLY MAGIC CENTURY ELTALE

How much longer? Considering the fact that we first played *Holy Magic Century* back in June, the news that it's still only 60% finished and, strangely, still due out in March came as a bit of a surprise. Either that development figure is a gross underestimate or we can expect some fairly heavy release date slippage.

Unfortunately, Imagineer didn't seem to have arranged a special show version of their 3D RPG, and so an accurate assessment of how far things had progressed was a little tricky, given the ten-minute play slots we were allocated. However, we can say that the first level was looking lush with loads more characters to talk to and interact with.

Konami have picked up the European distribution rights and so we'll definitely be seeing what must easily be Imagineer's most impressive game to date. It's going to be great when it's out, it's just a question of when 'when' is.



Interior locations are handled well, but the game's still as far off as ever.

Attacked by malevolent turtles with mushrooms on their shells. Which is nice.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Seta release: May status: 60% complete price: ¥6980

REV LIMIT

Oh dear. You can see why Seta haven't been rushing to promote *Rev Limit* – it's in a right old state.

Apart from the huge variety of vehicles to drive (we counted over 13) practically everything else about the game was either absent, dodgy or broken.

With only two playable courses (and only one more to come) and a screen resolution that would embarrass a Saturn, *Rev Limit* could really only fail in the car handling department to make a disappointment full house. Unfortunately, the cars do indeed handle as badly as they look, with the game giving no feeling of speed and prompting the worry that the programmers at Seta might never actually have driven in real life.

The game has three camera views and the option to turn your headlights on and off. The only good news surrounding *Rev Limit*, though, is that Nintendo might be taking it in house to give it a jolly good sorting out. We can but hope.



It's hard to understand how *Rev Limit* looks this good in stills, but so awful in real life.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: ASCII release: December status: 100% complete price: ¥7800

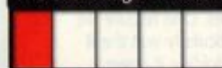
AERO GAUGE

Dreadful beyond words' was the unfortunate assessment of ASCII's *Wipeout* clone. While your ships whip along at something approaching acceptable speed, the game's difficulty is derived mainly from the fact that the track only appears a hundred yards in front of your hover car. "Which way now?" Hang on, the CPU will have drawn the route in a minute.

The fact that *Aero Gauge* boasts five vehicles and four courses is irrelevant in the face of some horrendous programming and some unforgivable thefts from *Pysgnosis*'s finest. It's out in December. Excited we're not.



The N64 Eager Waitometer



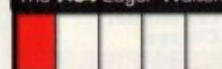
developer: Hudson Soft release: Out now status: 100% complete price: ¥5980

DENRYU IRA IRA BOU

The electric frustrating stick game was drawing big crowds at the show, presumably because a new series of its licensing TV show has just started on Japanese TV. The idea – as we explained – in issue 9 – is to move a ball around an electrified course without touching the sides. It's rather like those games at Sunday Fetes. **YOU REMEMBER!**

Out on the 19th of December, *Denryu Ira Ira Bou* is bound to excite the Japanese gaming fraternity to new heights, before never getting anywhere near a release anywhere else. Ho hum, can't say we're that disappointed.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Nintendo release: June status: 50% complete price: ¥6800

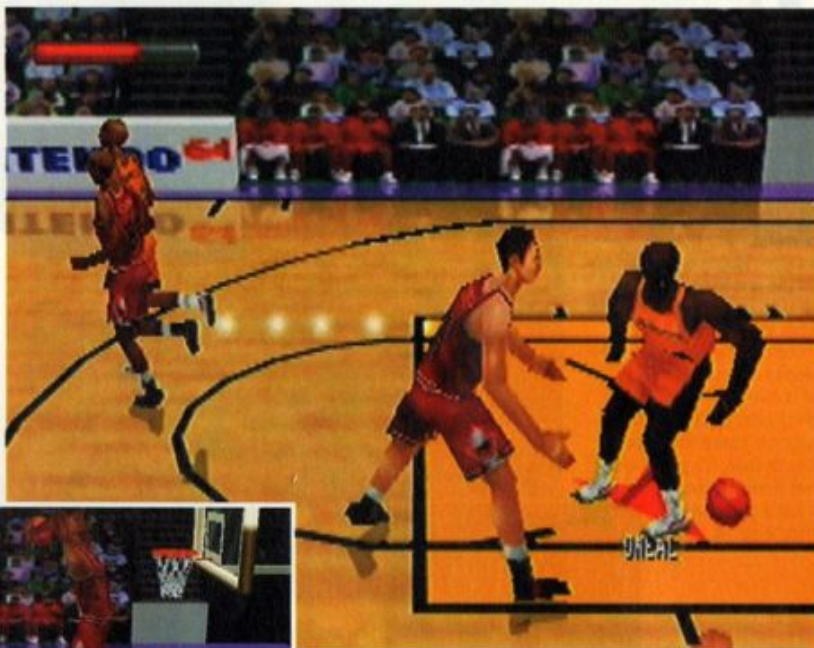
NBA BASKETBALL

Nintendo doing a basketball game? Hmm. Well the credits after the Nintendo screen say 'Left Field Productions' so we'd hazard a guess that Nintendo of America are playing a significant part in proceedings. However, even at this very early stage (only half done), the game is showing some familiar signs of Nintendo quality.

The game is officially licensed by the NBA and is a full ten-player basketball simulation. None of your four player Hangtimery here, oh no. The most obvious detour from what must be one of the well-trodden gaming routes in history is the use of the C buttons to pull off special moves and tricks. Two that we found were an opposition-confusing swivel and a cunning-as-a-fox, behind-the-back turn and dodge. Lovely.

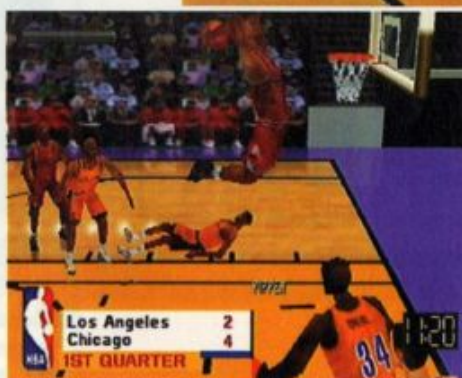
Other controls are kept simple but can be used in combination to produce different effects. The A button causes the player with the ball to pass forward or shoot if he's within range of the basket. Players without the ball will be prompted to try to steal it. The B button is a jump/block command and can be used in conjunction with the Z trigger to create dunk shots. One feature we liked particularly was the R button. Holding it down allowed you to move your player with his back to the basket, shielding the ball from the defenders and looking slightly like a great bandy-legged crab. Another good touch was a variable stamina meter which, according to our guide, allows players to pull off trick shots when fully charged up.

Even at this 50 percent complete stage, *NBA Basketball* is clearly outshining Konami's NBA attempt. The resolution is crisp and sharp and whilst the graphics aren't finished yet (there aren't any player reflections or shadows, for instance),



△ Nice detail on the players, but it's the variety of moves available that impressed us.

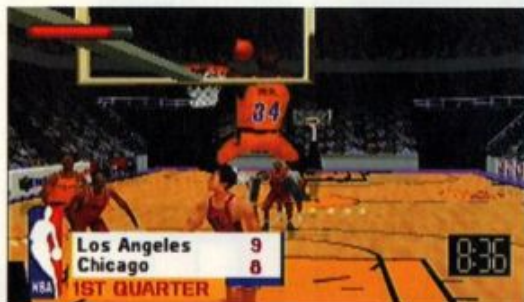
◁ While some bloke blatantly bunks off, Pippen (first names Cox's Orange) dunks away like a good 'un.



they're clearly 'N64'. Nintendo will also be looking to improve the overall speed of the game – the show version felt fairly sluggish under our inexperienced control.

Basketball isn't *N64 Magazine's* computer sports sim of choice, but we were heartened to see the big N apparently determined to give the whole flabby genre a good kick up the, ahem, ass. We'll have to wait until July, though.

▷ The basket's got a reflection but the players haven't. Odd, eh?



△ It's the boy Pippen again. Is there no stopping him?



developer: Imagineer release: December '97 status: 90% complete price: ¥6800

SIM CITY 2000

While there's no denying that *Sim City* was a great game on the SNES back in 1991, Imagineer's 64 version might have trouble repeating its success. In comparison with Nintendo's 64DD version of the game, where you can swoop down into your streets and fly along them in perfect 3D, waving to the smiling inhabitants as you go, graphically at least, Imagineer's rather drab isometric version is going to leave you considerably overwhelmed.

The very nature of Space World meant that a full assessment of *Sim City 2000* was impossible. However, it seems that the familiar point-and-click standbys have been maintained, with the overall premise of building ever larger and more complicated urban environments the same as ever. Imagineer must be heaving a hearty sigh of relief now that the 64DD (and hence Nintendo's *Sim* game) have been delayed further – it'll give their version of the game a few months without competition on the shelves.



Graphics just like its elderly PC cousin did not make us smile.



However, it was a great game the first time around.



We wonder how Imagineer will tweak it to make us interested all over again.



The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Bottom Up release: March status: 90% complete price: ¥7800

BIO TETRIS

Featured here more as a curiosity than anything else, *Bio Tetris* is basically a ropery old version of the familiar *Tetris* standby. The number of blocks per piece can vary (along with their shape) and the width of the well is wider than eight blocks. *Tetris* completely messed up, then.

No, the news with *Bio Tetris* is the special memory pak that comes with it. A wire runs from the pak to a small plastic crocodile clip. You attach this to your ear and the game can then read your pulse rate and blood flow. The idea of this is that your 'bio feedback' is used by the game to adjust various parameters while you're playing. Close questioning of the Bottom Up man on the stand seemed to suggest that if your pulse rate rose, the game made itself easier for you. Which

seemed a little wrong to us, somehow.

Anyway, dodgy *Tetris* games aside, the idea of Bio Feedback is an interesting one and we're sure it could be used in a whole variety of much more interesting ways. Jonathan welcomes your imaginative suggestions in Club 64.



This is the pak (left) and this is someone looking a bit odd using it (above). There must be a better use for it than Bio Tetris, surely?

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Imagineer release: April status: 95% complete price: ¥6800

FIGHTING CUP

Just an update on this one really, as we've seen loads of it already from Ocean who have the game for European release. Curiously, Imagineer had the Japanese version slated for an April launch, but Ocean are still hoping for a pre-Christmas slot over here. Odd.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Imagineer release: March status: 60% complete price: ¥6980

KIRATTO KAIGETSU

This was an odd one. Imagine a giant board game where the pieces you move around are actually real-life animated human things. According to the Imagineer operative, each square you land on has a different surprise hidden under it. We couldn't make head nor tail of it but if you want an outside bet for the surprise hit of '98 you could do worse.



The N64 Eager Waitometer

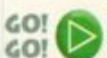


developer: Seta release: April status: 100% complete price: ¥9800

MORITA SHOGI

Shogi – as we all know – is Japanese chess, and this super-bland simulator from Seta has been specially endorsed by Japan's very own Shogi grand master, Mr. Morita himself. April is a long time to wait for an already-finished game but, rest assured, N64 Magazine has a copy reserved.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Hudson Soft release: Out now Japan status: 100% price: ¥6980

DUAL HEROES

Perhaps one of the best of the four-or-so beat-'em-ups on display at Space World was the heavily anime-influenced *Dual Heroes*. The game's intro – which seemed to go on for hours – was a series of story-telling stills but when, eventually the action did start, a slick, colourful little cyber fighter burst into life.

Eight fighters were initially available, with robot things, pert-bottomed anime babes and long-haired hero types all up for selection. Once we had a bout up and running, we could see that the arenas followed a similar plan to Sega's *Fighting Vipers* – plenty of room for ruckage but the whole thing enclosed by steep walls, allowing you to back up and trap your opponents – a tactic the CPU opposition exploited ruthlessly.

The controls follow a *Virtua Fighter* pattern with Block on B, Punch on A and Kick on Left-C. We couldn't seem to find any other commands – the Hudson lot weren't particularly helpful – but three commands were good enough for VF, so we shouldn't be overly worried about that.

However, for a 100% finished game (and one we'll have a review of next issue), there was a worrying delay between pressing a command, and your fighter actually executing it. As good beat-'em-uppage is all about timing and quick response, this is a big worry and certainly enough to make us sceptical about the entire game. We'll wait and see, though.



◁ A massive two hit combo there. We really can't wait for this one.

▽ The mighty Guin gets one in the mush from Hana. Nice.



◁ "Hello, boys." Another great metallic sex symbol enters the world.



The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Culture Brain release: Out now Japan status: 100% price: ¥6980

HIRYU NO KEN TWIN



◁ "Am I a man or a woman? Write in and win my tiara."

The idea behind *Art of Fighting Twin* (to translate its Japanese name, above) is a novel one. The game includes two completely different styles of fighting based around two sets of graphics. On the one hand, you have the tall strong realistic fighters of games like *Dual Heroes* or *Virtua Fighter*, and on the other, you have the super-deformed, cute types from games like *Snowbo Kids* or *King of Pro Baseball*.

At the moment, it seems you can play either/or game styles, but can't have one competitor from one fighting against another. Fighting styles include the standard mixture of kung-fu, karate and wrestling and the game includes multiple throws, kicks, punches and projectiles.

Those of you with an extensive beat-'em-up

knowledge will recognise the title *Art of Fighting* from an SNK fighter on the Neo Geo. The N64 game is indeed an attempt to transfer this

sprite game into a fully polygonal environment. If it's successful, Culture Brain could have a major hit on their hands.

Culture Brain are hoping to release their game in America in April. However, there's been no word as to a possible publisher and nothing at all about a UK release. We'll keep you posted.



The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Konami release: March status: 80% complete price: ¥7800

G.A.S.P!!! FIGHTERS NEXTREME

Another month, another name for Konami's slowly developing beat-'em-up. From the decidedly wobbly version that appeared on show at September's ECTS, to the almost presentable version showcased here at Space World, to now give the game its full title – *Generation of Art, Speed and Power: Fighters Nextreme* – leaves you positively breathless.

The biggest improvements in the game revolved around an increase in the screen resolution and the overall speed of the proceedings. The game is still a *Virtua Fighter* fisticuffer rather than a *Soul Blade* sword-flasher, but our honest assessment is that work still needs to be done if the N64 is to get the beat-'em-up it so obviously deserves.



◀ We've had everyone in the office practising this. Two had to go to Matron.

◀ The backgrounds are all lovely 3D arenas



◀ Konami are definitely in the premier league of N64 developers.



◀ G.A.S.P. continues to improve at a pleasing rate, but we're very close to its release date now.



developer: Banpresto release: March status: 50% complete price: TBA

SUPER ROBOT SPIRITS

For lovers of huge mechanical things knocking the non-living stuffing out of one another, *Super Robot Spirits* will be as welcome a surprise as the chocolate mint some hotels are bizarrely placing on your pillow nowadays. Maybe.

Rather than follow the *Virtual On* style of encounter, where tactical running and hiding were the order

of the day, the idea in *Super Robot Spirits* is much more simple – it all boils down to a basic lug-fest. Yep, all you've got to do is smack your fellow mech up until it falls over, KO-ed. Fairly simple, really.

At 50% the game looks and feels very early. The resolution is low and the differentiation between the ten mechs on offer fairly rudimentary. "Which one am I?"

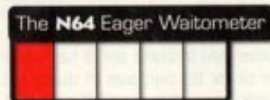
"I think you're the one on the left." That sort of confusion. March for release? Mr. Slip will surely be paying a visit to Banpresto HQ, you mark our words.



developer: Imagineer release: January status: 80% complete price: ¥6980

KING OF PRO BASEBALL 2

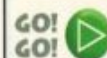
Although the Japanese gaming fraternity disagreed with us (and went with Konami's midget baseball sim) we thought the first *King of Pro* was the best baseball game out there. *King of Pro 2* introduces a few new features, including a bat indicator to show by how much you missed the ball (if you did) and mini replays of notable game events. Unfortunately, though, the screen resolution seemed a little less than the original and the new camera angles are going to take some getting used to. As the original *King of Pro* was never released outside of Japan, the chances are we won't have to worry about any of this, though.



developer: Atlus release: Out now status: 100% complete price: ¥6800

SNOWBO KIDS

It may just have been that we came to *Snowbo Kids* after 1080°, *Nagano* and *Snow Speeder*, or it may just be that the game is as bad as it first appears. To be fair, we played the game moments before the burly security guards appeared to throw us out of the show and only had chance to sample the stunt course and one downhill track. It appeared that there was a different stunt assigned to each of the C buttons, but what with your characters being of the super-deformed big-head variety, accurate movement was extremely difficult. A full review next issue is our solemn promise.



developer: Imagineer release: March status: 70% complete price: ¥6980

SNOW SPEEDER

The harassed man on the Imagineer stand confided to us that the 96 Megabit *Snow Speeder* was nowhere near the advertised 70% complete. In fact, he called the figure an "outrageous lie." What was on view was a bit of a mixed bag, with some very good points sitting uneasily alongside some severely rosey bits.

The strongest counter-attack the game has in the face of the inevitable strong competition from Nintendo's 1080° *Snowboarding* is the fact that both skiing and snowboarding are included.

Second up in *Snow Speeder*'s defence is the fact that it was one of the fastest racing games on display at the show – occasionally too fast, in fact. Controls have been kept simple: the A button causes you to brake and B has you lifting off into the air for the purposes of stunts and turning. The joystick is used to steer left and right and pushing back helps your snow speeder dig his edges into the ice, helping you to turn.

One of the most enjoyable modes of the game was the two-player split-screen race where skiers could race against boarders. On top of this,

the game's three play modes – Alpine, Slalom and Gate – should, in theory, provide gamers with more than enough to keep them interested. There is a 'however' coming, though.

However, *Snow Speeder* did have some serious problems. While the characters were distinctly anime at the select screen, in the actual game they were more like Bill and Ben the breeze block men. According to one of the N64 party the ski poles "looked like tree stumps" and, although the scenery was whipping past at unheard of speeds, collisions produced a bout of glitching that had polygons, bending, stretching and disappearing in all directions.

So we're going to sit on the fence with *Snow Speeder*. Graphically it's not yet up to the standard of 1080°, but it would appear to have a lot more in it. It's probably only 50% finished as well, so who knows how it could finally turn out.



△ The finish is already in sight and his saloppes are barely sweaty. What a skiing legend this man is!

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Nintendo release: TBA status: Unknown price: TBA

JUNGLE EMPEROR LEO

Not actually playing in any form at the show, a tiny glimpse of Miyamoto's next 'big' game was afforded by the official Space World video, showing on a continuous loop all around the show floor. *Jungle Emperor Leo* is a name that probably won't mean anything to a British audience, but one that is clearly exciting the Japanese and American audience alike.

The game will be based on the cartoon series of the same name which has been an enormous hit around the world (except here) since its creation in the sixties. Leo (Kimba in America) is a young white lion who defends his

jungle kingdom from all comers. When Disney's *The Lion King* came out, the story's similarity to JEL caused a bit of legal rumbling between the two companies. Shigs' game appears to be just a 3D

engine at the moment, but hopefully next year's Space World will have a playable version.



△ It could be a huge hit for Nintendo but don't be surprised if you have to wait until 1999.

△ Can't say he looks much like a lion – more a friendly pussy cat.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



developer: Konami release: Out now Japan status: 100% complete price: ¥6800

NAGANO WINTER OLYMPICS

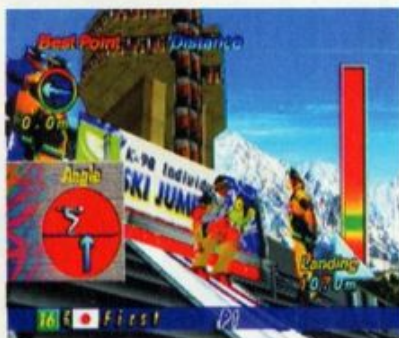
Konami's winter sports track and field bonanza was present at the show in completed form. The really great news is that the overall speed of all the events has been significantly increased, with a number also benefiting from what

seemed to be an improved screen resolution.

While certain events – particularly speed skating and curling – are unlikely to ignite outbreaks of

frenzied cart buying amongst the gaming public at large, lots of the events are excellent, with the downhill and slalom skiing a particular favourite in the N64 office.

We'll have a full review of Nagano next month so we won't waste any more time wibbling on about it now. Right then, on to the next.



◀ Ah, the Luge. Time to break out the figure-hugging lycra again.



△ Bob Sled is fun at the start, but a bit hit and miss once you're in your sled.



developer: Bandai release: December status: 100% complete price: ¥6800

TAMAGOTCHI WORLD 64

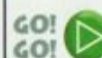
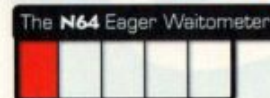
Enormous still in Japan and very much a part of Nintendo's Nurturing, Collecting and Swapping game strategy, Tamagotchi 64 was, unsurprisingly, completely incomprehensible. The graphics weren't astounding (from watching over people's shoulders) but we wouldn't be surprised to see this game, or its descendents, form a vital part of Nintendo's 64DD strategy.



developer: Seta release: April status: 90% complete price: ¥6980

PACHINKO 365 DAYS

Bagatelle – that's what it used to be known as but there's no denying that Pachinko is a Japanese national obsession. You fire a ball-bearing up a brightly-coloured table and, as it makes its way back down under the influence of gravity, there's a slight chance that it may fall into a prize winning slot. Seta's virtual Pachinko works along the same lines but with the reduced interest of not actually offering you a prize if you win. Released by Nintendo over here with a big TV campaign. Only joking.



developer: T&E Soft release: Out now Japan status: 100% complete price: ¥7980

AUGUSTA MASTERS '98

Anything would be better than Seta's St. Andrew's Golf and Augusta Masters looks to be a vast improvement. Gone are Seta's crazily-animated figures and tricky 'virtual golf club' and back come proper digitised swings and one of

those multi-coloured arcs we're more used to from a thousand PC games of old.

Complex Japanese menus didn't really help our assessment of the game or even enable us to count the number of courses on offer. However, as the game is almost out (and certainly due for a review in the

February issue of N64) we didn't get too hot under the collar about it. All will be removed next month.



Showing up – Sneaking off

Games new to Japan but not to us

NFL QuarterBack Club '98
Extreme G
Clayfighter 63 1/3
Wayne Gretzky '98
San Francisco Rush
Hexen
Top Gear Rally
Lamborghini 64
FIFA '98

Surprising absentees

Conker's Quest
Mother 3
Any of the other 64DD games
Body Harvest
Any surprise announcements from Namco
Anything from Capcom
Hybrid Heaven
Castlevania

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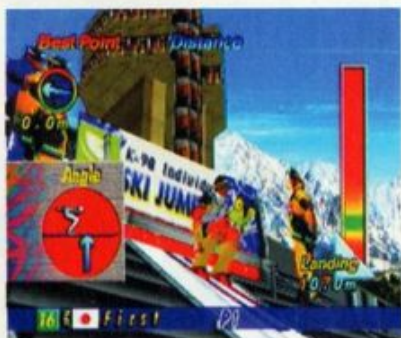
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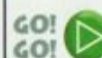
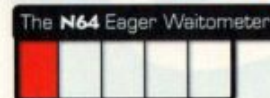
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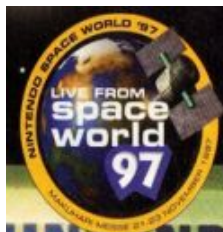
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Castlevania



NINTENDO 64



Japan is holding its breath for it. Nintendo is banking on it. And here at N64 Magazine we can't wait to get our hands on it. At Space World, however, we could only peer longingly through a pane of glass at it.



△ It could've been ours. But James forgot to bring the glass-cutter.

The ne

The 64DD, which was only visible behind glass at Space World, appears to have mutated into something rather different to the straight disk drive add-

on Nintendo originally revealed at last year's show. It's not the hardware that's changed so much as the type of software Nintendo are creating for it.

When Nintendo originally exhibited the 64DD at last year's show, it was simply meant to provide an alternative way of getting games into your N64. Carts are fast and reliable, but 64DD disks would handle bigger games and be cheaper to produce. And a demonstration of *Super Mario 64* running off a disk rather than a cart seemed to back this up, along with talk of add-on disks for cart games.

But the twelve months since then have caused Nintendo to do a lot of serious thinking. Their traditional audience in Japan has moved on from the cheery world of Mario and his pals. The PlayStation now dominates the market for 'conventional' games, and few people seem interested in even the greatest N64 titles like *Starfox 64* and *GoldenEye 007*. And yet, Nintendo are still making enormous profits in Japan. How come?

The answer is *Pocket Monsters*, a Game Boy game that has both kept interest in Nintendo's eight-year-old handheld alive, and, along with Bandai's Tamagotchi, created a completely new market from scratch. Nintendo have cleverly seized upon *Pocket Monsters* and, through a

marketing and merchandising blitz, have turned it into the most successful game in Japanese history, outstripping sales of even *Super Mario Bros. 3*.

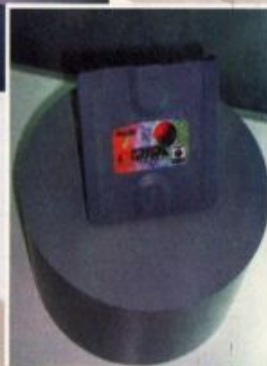
Pocket Monsters isn't a 'game' in the traditional sense, however. It's sort of a cross between a Tamagotchi 'virtual pet' and an RPG, allowing you to nurture a monster and then fight battles with him against your friend. And it appeals to a quite different audience to ordinary Nintendo games – a younger audience, of girls as much as boys. And it's this audience that Nintendo is now going to try to woo to the N64 using the 64DD.

Most obviously, *Pocket Monsters Stadium* is a blatant attempt to persuade *Pocket Monsters* players to buy N64s and 64DDs. It includes a special Controller



△ The hardware is certainly a giant leap forward for the Nintendo 64...

...but the software – so far at least – is, erm, a bit weird.





◀ It might not look like much yet, but with some Picture Maker textures stuck onto it...

The N64's new mouse will be vital for the 'multi-media' ideas Nintendo are playing about with.

◀ Design your very own tower blocks, and then live in them, sort of.



xt step



△ That could be your face being mapped onto a 3D bloke...

...if you were to make use of the new N64 Capture Cassette and a camcorder.

pack that allows players to download monsters from their Game Boy carts and fight battles using the N64's 3D graphics; and should be irresistible to anyone who's spent ages building up their monster but has only ever seen it in black-and-white. *Pocket Monsters Snap* and *Pikachu Genki Dechu* (a cart game) also take advantage of the Japanese tendency to completism.

And the only other 64DD software to be displayed at Space World was the *Maker* trilogy – *Talent Maker*, *Picture Maker* and *Polygon Maker*. While these disks have nothing to do with *Pocket Monsters*, they are trying to tap into exactly the same Japanese desire to be 'creative'. And with the special video digitiser cartridge Nintendo are producing to accompany them, they'll be able to do things that simply haven't been possible with a games console before.

Compatibility between different software packages also seems to be a 64DD goal for Nintendo. The *Maker* disks all

allow you to use blank disks to swap data, loading pictures you've drawn in *Picture Maker* into *Talent Maker*, and objects from *Polygon Maker* into *Picture Maker*. And you'll be able to build cities in *Sim City 64* and then fly around them in *Sim Copter*.

Nintendo see themselves very much as the visionaries of the video games industry, initiating the next trend while others are still trying to catch up with the last. And they really do seem to believe that, in Japan at least, the future lies in 'creativity software' rather than just straight games.

You're not happy, are you? Go on – admit it. And, to be honest, we're not exactly enamoured by Nintendo's new ideas either. We want bigger and better games from the 64DD, not *Mario Paint* all over again.

But, luckily, it looks like Nintendo won't be deserting their gaming fans just yet. Miyamoto, the driving force behind Nintendo, has already announced that Nintendo are working on a special 64DD version of *F-Zero X* that uses disks to add extra tracks and allows you to design your own circuits (maybe using textures you've drawn in *Picture Maker*?). There are still plans for a 64DD version of *Zelda*, although it seems these aren't as advanced as was previously thought. And plenty of third-party developers have plans for the 64DD, taking advantage of its capacity and economy to design games they couldn't have done on cart.

And, of course, Nintendo remain committed to making brilliant new cartridge games, as they've proved by stunning everyone with *Zelda* at Space World and producing surprises like *1080° Snowboarding*.

So look at the 64DD software on these pages and think not of weird yellow creatures and bonkers karaoke software but of the power that lies behind them, and imagine what it'll make possible in the Nintendo games of the future.

WHAT IS THE 64DD?

The specifications of the 64DD were finalised some time ago, but the Space World show helped to set its capabilities in stone.

What does it do?

It's an add-on for the N64 that sits underneath the console and allows it to access high-capacity discs. These discs hold 64 Megabytes of data each (that's eight times the size of a Super Mario 64 cart).

What's on the disks?

Anything, really – a game, some extra levels for a game, some updated stats for a game, a track you've designed for *F-Zero X*, a picture you've drawn with *Picture Maker*... anything.

What's the advantage over CDs?

Although 64DD disks are smaller than CDs, half of each disk is writable, so games can save enormous amounts of data onto them. They're also about three times faster than CDs, so "Loading – please wait" messages ought to be infrequent.

What's this about a clock?

The 64DD unit has a real-time clock built into it, like the one in a PC. Nintendo have plans to take advantage of this in games, so you could, for example, find that time still passes in an RPG if you switch it off and come back to it later.

There was talk of a modem...

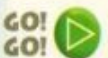
The 64DD modem appears, unfortunately, not to have materialised, so downloading N64 stuff over the Internet has gone out of the window. Maybe Nintendo will introduce an add-on at a later date, as it seems too good an opportunity to miss.

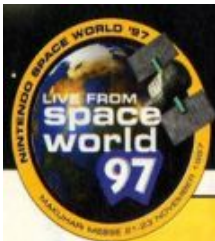
How much will it cost?

No price has been set for the 64DD yet, but Nintendo are likely to sell it as cheaply as they possibly can – for less than the N64 itself, probably.

When's it out?

The 64DD was going to be out in April in Japan, but it's now been pushed back to June. As for dates elsewhere in the world, well, we'd be surprised to see a European launch for the 64DD before 1999. Er, sorry.





64DD softs

THE 'MAKER' SERIES

Remember *Mario Artist*? The Super Nintendo's drawing package was distinguished by spawning the SNES mouse, but was otherwise useless thanks to losing everything you'd done when you switched the machine off. Fortunately, the *Maker* series looks like being a lot more fun. For a start you'll be able to save everything you do onto blank 64DD disks. And you'll also be able to swap data between the three packages. The *Maker* disks are all due in Japan in July. It's questionable whether they'll ever make it to Europe.

Talent Maker

By far the weirdest thing to have come out of Nintendo for years, *Talent Maker* allows you to create your own 'talent' (a word the Japanese use to mean 'pop star'). This involves stretching arms and legs about, choosing a face and set of clothes, and then coming up with songs and dance routines for your talent to perform. You can also, we'll wager, somehow sing into it through a microphone for a karaoke effect. Erk.



Picture Maker

This is very much the N64 version of *Mario Paint*, an easy-to-use art package that enables you to create simple drawings and animations. The video footage shown at Space World had four brushes/pens drawing on the screen at once, so it looks like there'll be some sort of multi-'player' facility. *Picture Maker* will come into its own for creating images to use in other 64DD applications like *Polygon Maker* and *Sim City 64*.



POCKET MONSTERS

Pocket Monsters on the Game Boy is what's keeping Nintendo alive in Japan at the moment, so they'll be doing their damndest to sell the 64DD to the huge *PM* fan base. With this in mind they're creating a suite of *Pocket Monsters* 64DD software. Given that *Pocket Monsters* hasn't yet made it to the West (Nintendo of America are currently mulling over the possibility of a US launch for the Game Boy game), don't hold your breath for a European release for either of these.

Pocket Monsters Stadium

The idea here is that, having carefully nurtured your *Pocket Monster* on your Game Boy, you download him into your 64DD by plugging your GB cart into the new 64GB Pack and then battle against other Monsters in glorious 3D. The graphics do indeed look smashing, with huge monsters and loads of special effects. But this is clearly only going to interest *PM* fans, and there aren't many of those outside Japan.



△ The graphics are great, zooming right in on the super-detailed monsters.

WE WANT GAMES!

It's not all *Pocket Monsters* and karaoke, thank goodness. Although proper 64DD games weren't much in evidence at Space World, there were a few green shoots. The following DD games are definitely in development...



Sim City 64

This looks great. You construct cities in time honoured fashion, but you can then view them in 3D – either in an isometric from-above view, from a true 3D perspective, or, best of all, zooming down to street level and seeing cars driving around and people walking past.



◁ Sim City's always been great, and this should be the best version yet!



Polygon Maker

This is for budding Jurassic-Park-dinosaur creators. While creating 3D objects is normally a laborious process even with the most powerful hardware, Nintendo appear to have come up with a simple way of constructing things by starting with a cube and then pulling points out from its surface to turn it into more complex shapes. The centrepiece of the whole Maker demonstration was an amazing animated T-rex constructed with Polygon Maker.



The N64 Eager Waitometer

Could this be Airfix kits for the 21st century? The canopy won't get glue on.

Pocket Monsters Snap

Another weird-and-yet-at-the-same-time-brilliant idea, *Pocket Monsters Snap* casts you as a photographer, roaming the landscape in search of *Pocket Monsters* in order to photograph them. You then store your photos in an album (courtesy of the 64DD's writability) and... er... well, yes.



But, hey, it could be really good fun. We're looking forward to it.

The N64 Eager Waitometer



"Say 'Cheese'!" Or, at least, don't attack us, eh?

SIM COPTER 64

This was pretty dull on the PC, but the 64DD should have miles better graphics. You'll be able to fly around the cities you've constructed in *Sim City*.

F-ZERO DD

Alongside *F-Zero X*, Nintendo are working on an add-on disk that'll provide new courses and cars, and construct your own courses, which can be saved to disk.

CABBAGE

All right, not a game maybe, but more a highly sophisticated version of Tamagotchi. You'll create a character who will 'live' inside your 64DD, with the machine's built-in clock ensuring that your character's life goes on even when your N64's switched off. You'll be able to give your character things to play with (possibly bought on expansion disks). And Miyamoto suggests you might be able to download your character into a Game Boy cart and carry it about with you.

AND! The games Nintendo have shown and talked about so far are just a taster of the 64DD goodies they've got in store. They're known to be working on about 30 N64 games altogether, many of which will be disk-based. The biggy, of course, is the second N64 *Zelda* game, but it isn't definitely going to be on disk.

Portable Print Club

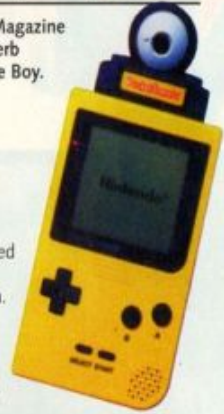
Although they're not strictly of relevance to N64 Magazine readers, we couldn't resist showing you these superb gadgets Nintendo have come up with for the Game Boy.

Smile! It's the POCKET CAMERA

Looking like some sort of scary cyclops, the Pocket Camera is a Game Boy cart with a simple video camera poking out of the top. And it displays a continuously updated picture of whatever it's pointed at on your Game Boy's screen. This could be yourself or, if you swivel the screen around, a chum.

Then, and here comes the clever bit, by pressing a button you can capture the image that's currently displayed. You can then scribble on it, draw borders around it, stick icons on it or write on it. And by capturing several pictures you can create animations. (The ones Nintendo had prepared for their Space World demonstration were exceedingly odd, needless to say.) You can exchange pictures with chums over the data link cable, too.

It's only ¥5,500 (about £25), too. THE Games, Nintendo's UK distributor, reckon the Pocket Camera will make it to the UK soon. But we can't wait, and we're getting one each sent over from Japan when it comes out there in February.



◀ We can't wait to get our Pocket Cameras. We won't point them at Wil, though - in case they break.



Bzzzzzz! POCKET PRINTER

The ideal partner for the Pocket Camera is the Pocket Printer. This connects to your Game Boy through the Data Link socket and allows you to print out your Pocket Camera creations. It's only a simple thermal device, rather like a cash register's receipt printer, but if you combine the two you've effectively got a Game Boy version of the Print Club machines that are currently gripping Japan.

The Pocket Printer will set you back another ¥5,800 and it, too, is out in Japan in February.

Remember the ZX Printer? This works with your Game Boy, and doesn't use silver paper.



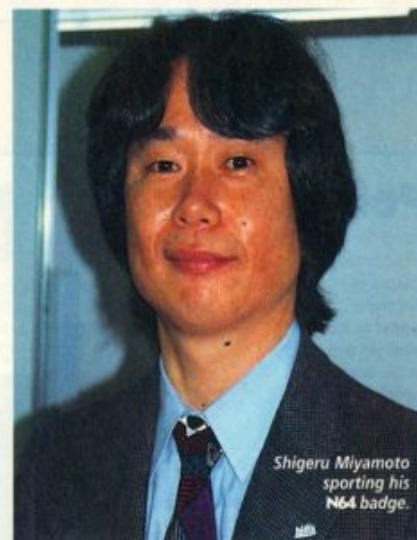
GO! GO!

January 1998

N64 69



There are two men at Nintendo who hope they can see the future. One looks after the money and one looks after Mario. It's vital for all of us that both of them get things right.



Shigeru Miyamoto sporting his N64 badge.

Ahead of the game?

While Nintendo employ hundreds of highly talented people across the world, there are two men at the top who, more than anyone, are responsible for Nintendo's continued good health. Hiroshi Yamauchi is the businessman behind Nintendo's transformation from a small Kyoto playing cards manufacturer to the world's leading computer games giants. Shigeru Miyamoto is the games genius whose work on arcade and home machines, from *Donkey Kong*

in 1981 to *Super Mario 64* in 1996, has constantly redefined the state of the art.

While Hiroshi and Shigeru have completely different personas, much is demanded of them at Nintendo's annual show. Yamauchi must deliver a speech outlining the current state of the company he leads and its future direction, and Miyamoto must show that he and his co-workers can keep the hits coming. **N64** Magazine was at Space World to hear the two men speak. This is what they had to say.

Hiroshi Yamauchi

Speaking on the first day of the show, to a hushed throng of shareholders, journalists and gamers, Yamauchi gave an idea of quite how far Nintendo were preparing to change in the next couple of years. The speech itself lasted about an hour-and-a-half, but its main thrust can be distilled down to a number of major points.

Yamauchi on: the state of the N64

The N64 has done well in America but after initially strong sales, stalled in Japan. The lack of software has been a

problem but simply providing more is not the answer.

Yamauchi on: the games market

People are becoming tired with the same old titles. Very few games offer anything new and, importantly, very few games producers are making any money from them. We believe that if there were only a tenth of the current releases (on all formats) then the situation would improve considerably.

Yamauchi on: the way forward

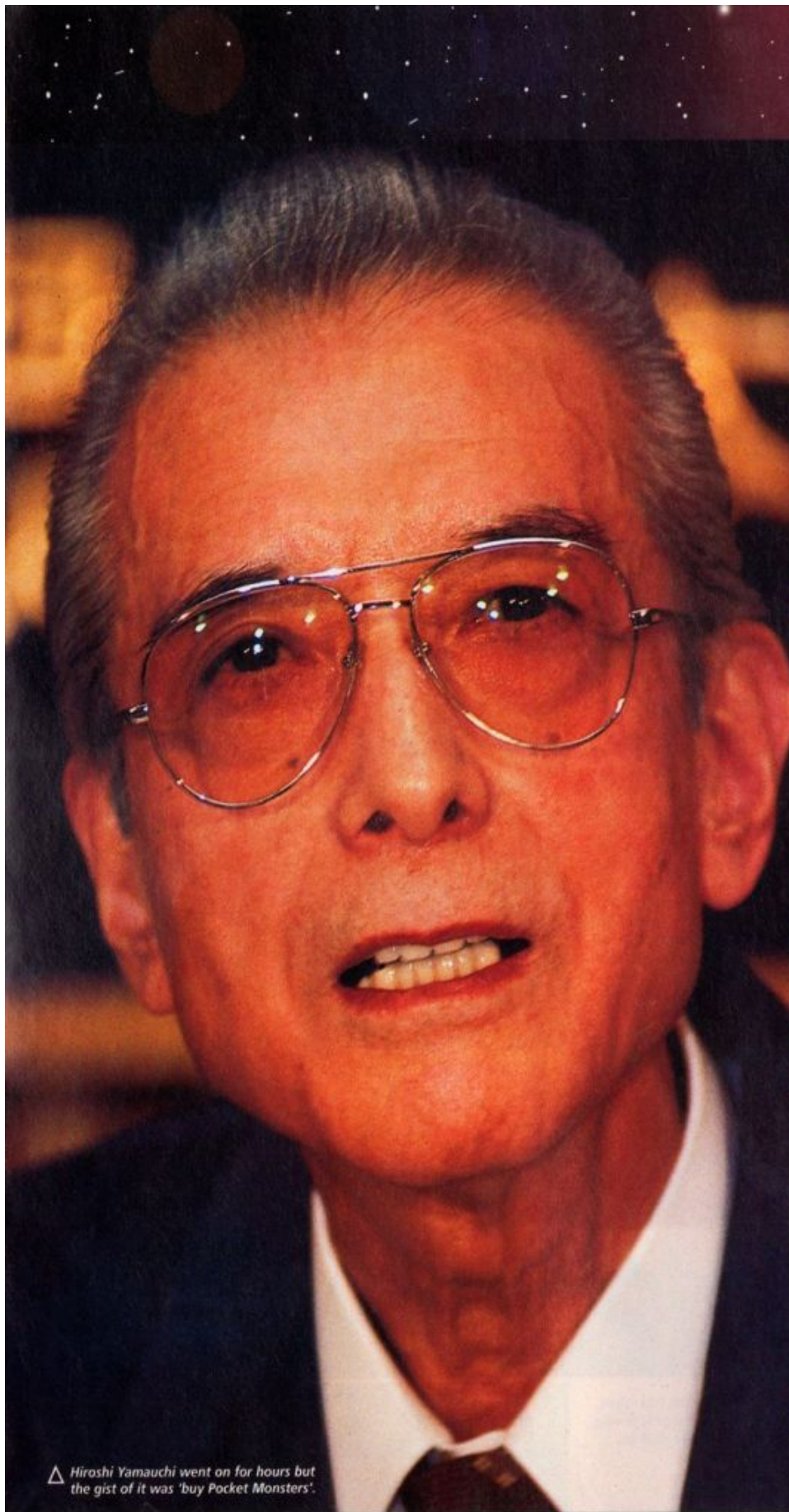
The biggest game phenomenon in Japan is *Pocket Monsters*, which has

outsold everything that we have ever produced. We have analysed this game and found that it contains four key ideas which we think will form the basis of the software industry's future. These are:

Nurturing

The first nurturing game was the *Tamagotchi*. Nurturing games require the gamer to nurse a virtual entity and care for its growth and development. The 64DD game *Cabbage* is an attempt to take this idea one step forward. It's a type of game that





△ Hiroshi Yamauchi went on for hours but the gist of it was 'buy Pocket Monsters'.



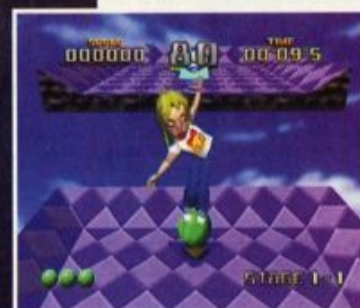
△ What part will Pocket Monsters Stadium play in Nintendo's future?



△ Can making pictures really be the future for Nintendo's fans across the World?



△ Will we be able to make our own personal versions of games with our own graphics?



△ And maybe see characters we've designed in the leading roles?



Nintendo feels is impossible on other games machines other than the N64 and 64DD.

Trading and Collecting

This is a concept realised by *Pocket Monsters* and the Game Boy connection cable, where gamers can swap different Monsters amongst one another. The fun to be had here is similar to the age-old tradition of collecting and swapping trading cards. It is also another thing that present game systems cannot do. The beauty of the link up cable is that you can see the person you're trading or competing with rather than the anonymity of the Net.

Addition

The idea of addition is that once a game has been bought, extra bits and pieces for it can be released to lengthen its life. Examples here will be the extra *F-Zero* tracks that will become available for the DD once the cart game has been out for a while.

The beauty of addition is twofold. Firstly sales of software can be prolonged past three weeks (when the vast majority are sold) which is good for the manufacturer. Secondly, the gamer can get more pleasure out of a single title, rather than conquering it and becoming tired of it in a few weeks.

Yamauchi on: the 64DD launch

To make the system successful, we have to persuade the public that it has unique features to offer. This is why the launch has been delayed until June – until the launch software line-up is exactly right. People have complained about the lack of RPGs, but even RPGs have a limited life. We are trying to create games and software that will last a lot longer.

Yamauchi on: *Pocket Monsters*

Nintendo want everyone in the world to experience *Pocket Monsters*, but different countries have different traits, and alternative versions of the game are currently being worked on. The USA will be the first country outside Japan to get the chance to play.

Yamauchi on: the future

The games market is on the edge of a big decline in Japan. It is healthier elsewhere, but will soon face the same problem. If videogames cannot break away from the conventional ideas, it will be the end of the business. We are trying to create a new entertainment industry based on new types of game, the equipment to share these games and other secondary products related to the

games. We see a future where everything is connected and where they can expand the horizon of the entertainment industry.

N64 Comment

As show speeches go this is a biggy. What Yamauchi seems to be saying is that we should stop looking for bulging release lists and the scattergun approach to games publishing, where maybe one game in ten is a hit. Nintendo want their new games – especially those on the DD – to be ones where gamers can become far more involved, can swap data with their friends and buy extra bits and pieces to keep their enthusiasm fired.

It's difficult to get excited about this if, like us, you've never been able to play – or even properly imagine – a game like *Pocket Monsters*. It's easier to see what Yamauchi's driving at, though, if you take some more familiar examples.

Say you bought your *F-Zero* cart on the second day of its release and played and played it until you'd beaten all its courses. That might take you a week. You concentrate on the multiplayer mode, but after a couple of weeks you tire of that as well. Imagine now that Miyamoto releases a DD disk with another 12 tracks along with a track editor to make your own. How many more weeks would that keep you going? What if you could import polygon shapes and textures from *Picture Maker* and *Polygon Maker* – or even your own face from *Talent Maker* – to decorate your new tracks. Not convinced? How about extra levels for *Zelda*, or maybe a dungeon editor allowing you to build your own levels and share them with your friends. Is that cool? We think so.

And who knows, maybe Europe and America will be taken by storm by *Pocket Monsters* and its happy band of associated titles.

Nintendo are looking to the future – the real future, not just where the next decent driving game is coming from. We shall see what happens.



△ 'Lylat Wars? I'm glad I'm not responsible for that. N64's a great read, though, I get it every month.' (Rough translation)

N64 Badge proudly on his lapel, Shigeru autographs a Space World ticket JUST FOR YOU! Well, if you win the competition below, that is.

Shigeru Miyamoto

Doing some of the speaking for him, *Zelda*, *Yoshi*, *F-Zero X* and *1080° Snowboarding* were some of Shigeru's current projects down on the show floor wowing the audience. However, like Yamauchi he concentrated his talk mainly on the 64DD and the future for games development.

Miyamoto on: the 64DD

I think it is clear now why we did not opt for the non-writable CD format for the DD. None of our plans would be possible on a non-recording format.

Miyamoto on: nurturing games

It's not just Tamagotchi-style games that can be considered as nurturing games. There are elements of RPGs that also have this element - where you care for and grow your character over a period of time. Also, the *Maker Trilogy* has a different kind of nurturing, where you're making data grow.

Miyamoto on: the exchange and collection

You know that Nintendo are going to be selling a 3D *Sim City* game for the 64DD and Maxis are going to sell a *Sim Copter* game. By using both pieces of software you'll be able to fly in the *Sim Copter* helicopter around cities created by you in *Sim City*. In the *Maker* series of games, work in one package can be transferred and used in another.

Miyamoto on: addition

The only concrete information I can give you about this is that *F-Zero X* has been programmed with the possibility of making an *F-Zero* disk to follow it. The disk will contain new courses and allow you to create your own and swap them with your friends.

Miyamoto on: the Game Boy adaptor

This new adaptor will allow games to be played both on Game Boy and on the N64. I know that you aren't familiar with *Pocket Monsters* so I will use another example. If you are playing a war simulation on the N64, you will be able to download your game onto a Game Boy cart and continue to play a limited part of the game while you're away from the N64 and your TV. You could solve a puzzle while you're on the train, for instance, then go back home and load your game back onto the N64.

Miyamoto on: Cabbage

Cabbage is going to be the lead character in a Tamagotchi-style game

for the 64DD. Because the DD has a clock inside it, *Cabbage* will be able to be active when you're not actually playing the game. However, you'll be able to download data from the DD onto Game Boy carts and look after the character while you're outside using the Game Boy. You'll also be able to buy *Cabbage* toys - slides and swings for instance - to play with. This data you'll be able to download from real stores and swap and exchange with your friends.

Miyamoto on: new game players

The generation that grew up with computer games are becoming less and less interested in them. The thousands of children who have come to Space World have become interested but in a whole different type of game - not the type of game which we were very excited about a few years ago.

Miyamoto on: the games he wants to make

When I think about what a game means to the game player, I want my games to be loved by, let's say your

father or mother and your friends in the neighbourhood and everybody.

WIN! SHIGS'S AUTOGRAPH

Lovely chap, Mr Miyamoto - all smiles and patience answering (probably) the same questions over and over again from press all around the world. He seemed very chuffed with the N64 pin badge we gave him and put it straight on the lapel of his suit. (If you look at any picture taken of him on the first day, you'll probably be able to spot it). Anyway, we didn't have much time alone with the great man, just long enough to give him the badge and for him to autograph a Space World ticket. If you'd like to win this sacred document - we're not keeping it for ourselves, we like you THAT much - jot down the answer to this simple (ish) question and send it to: **Touched by the Hand of God, N64 Magazine, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.**

Question: What is the name of Shigeru Miyamoto's first game for Nintendo?

PROJECT K

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For a free price list of imported games, accessories and merchandise send an SAE to PROJECT K, The Seedbed Centre, Langston Road, Loughton, Essex, IG10 3TQ



64

**HOW TO...**

infiltrate a Japanese games show

Based on our recent experiences at Space World '97, we here offer a comprehensive guide to the job of reporting (fairly) live from Tokyo.

by James Ashton



1 Getting there

A number of flight options are available to you. If you're sensible, you'll take the Virgin A340 Airbus Heathrow to Tokyo Narita direct – around £800 and a mere 12½ hours in the air.

If you're not so sensible (or you're buying your own fare), you might consider the Singapore Airlines Boeing 747 via Amsterdam and Singapore – cheaper at £580, but a hefty 18 hours' journey time.

If you're slightly deranged, jump aboard the 'fairly reliable' Aeroflot propeller-driven Cold War crate via Moscow, Murmansk and Vladivostok – £200 (or twenty cows and a pair of

Levis), two days' journey time, with the acquaintance of a vodka-soaked potato salesman from St. Petersburg optional.

Flight tips

- Tripling your fare to well over £2000 will allow you to upgrade to First Class and enjoy up to six inches more leg room. The food will still, of course, present significant problems for your alimentary canal, but the stewardess won't necessarily stare at you as if you've just shot and eaten



◀ That's the view out of an A340 Airbus window. It's Siberia.

their mother when you ask for another packet of peanuts at snack time.

- Be prepared for the noise aeroplane vacuum loos make when they flush. DO NOT press the button and be so terrified at the resultant 'jet plane crashing' roar that you stumble semi-clothed backwards through the door into the arms of an understandably surprised Japanese businessman.

2 Arrival: surviving jet-lag

Japan is such an advanced nation they even get their days nine hours before we do. Hence, when you arrive after your long flight, you'll find the Japanese are already well into a day you were hoping to start with eight or so hours of sleep. After a 12-hour flight starting at noon on Monday, Westerners arriving at 10.00am on Tuesday have a special kind of dazed look in their eyes.

Luckily, it's at this stage that the Japanese sense of humour kicks in, and lots of complex and ruthlessly arbitrary questions at the immigration control desk – mother's favourite

colour, length of hair at age five, father-in-law's star sign – lead to amusing misunderstandings and laughs for all.

Jetlag Tips

● However tired you feel, it's imperative that you establish proper sleep patterns quickly. This means staying awake on your first day until it's Japanese bed time, however many tens of hours it might be after your own. In your quest to stay awake, avoid Japanese TV at all costs – five channels consisting entirely of chat shows, cookery programs and

Useful phrases for the jetlagged

I'm very tired. つかれた

Please don't make this difficult. むづかしく しない で

I haven't slept since 1995. さいご に わたの わ 1995 です

I can't remember my inside leg measurement.

まつしと く なん せんつ か おほいて いませい

Please stop asking me these questions.

も この しつもん を しな い で くだ い

medieval samurai soap operas, can induce instant slumber in even clinically hyperactive children after a tartrazine overdose.

3 Making yourself understood

You'll soon find that very few Japanese can manage or understand a single word of English. Rather than let this get them down, however, they console themselves by finding anyone who can't speak their language bowel-threateningly funny. As a visitor to Japan you will soon be faced with a stark three-way decision: employ an interpreter, attempt some Japanese, or

quickly perfect your charades skills.

Language tips

● If you do attempt some Japanese, don't be disheartened when you fail completely to make yourself understood. The only thing funnier (in Japan) than someone who can't speak Japanese, is someone who can't speak Japanese very well.



▷ Plastic food is an enormous industry in Japan. It looks almost exactly like the real thing, providing you dust it from time to time.

4 Getting about

Anyone's who's ever watched Blue Peter will already know that Japan's Bullet train travels at the speed of sound (nearly) and doesn't spill Peter Duncan's coffee while it's doing it. However, for getting around Tokyo itself, you'll find the subway a less glamorous but infinitely more useful alternative.

Londoners in particular may be

Walking anywhere in Tokyo is ▷ not, generally, a good idea.

And trying to get around on a cycle-driven arcade machine will get you nowhere. ▷



confused by Tokyo's subway network, though. The complete absence of diseased pigeons, diseased people, babbling psychopaths with suspiciously-shaped newspaper parcels and clothing stains, ankle-deep litter, fastidiously unhelpful staff and a sense of impending apocalypse will,

Useful phrases for the subway passenger

Sorry. すみません

That hurt actually. いたい! ほんて に

Stop pushing, Grandad. おーじ おさないで

This is my stop. こっこ でおる

If you don't get out of my way, you're coming off with me.

お どけな と わたし というしょ に かるびます よ

understandably, make any regular user of London Transport uneasy. The fact that Tokyo's trains turn up on time and don't mysteriously stop for ten minutes in an unlit, unventilated tunnel threatening the lives of their weaker passengers, can also cause the British to travel the network in a bemused daze. Hold-ups occur at ticket machines which accept, with an electronic smile, the equivalent of £50 notes for a £1.50 fare. The groups of awestruck Londoners gathered at these machines, murmuring "It took a fifty, and gave me change in notes!" in open wonderment are a real queuing hazard.

The only real downside to the whole Japanese subway experience is the rush hour. You might think you've

been on a packed train before, you might think you've seen a bit of pushing, you might even think you've seen gross acts of rudeness. Those, however, were all a walk in the park compared to what 6pm in Tokyo has to offer – we guarantee it.

Useful subway tips

● Most stations have their name written in English script. Except the one you want. Keep your wits about you.

● If you can't work out how much your journey's going to cost, buy the minimum ¥150 ticket and use the 'Excess Fare' machine at your destination to make up the difference. Ingenious!

5 Advice for the hungry

On display in the windows of nearly all Japanese restaurants are highly-realistic plastic mock-ups of all the dishes on the menu. If you speak no Japanese, a quick trip outside with the waiter and some accurate pointing will secure you lunch.

Useful food tips

● Japanese food is fantastic. But then, considering that there's virtually non-stop cooking on TV, there's no excuse for it not to be. Even their beer is superb. You'll probably put on weight within minutes.

Useful phrases for the hungry

That one please. それ お くだし

It is cooked isn't it? すれ ぬあ ひや どうってる いますか?

Oh right. But is it dead? ああ そ めでど のとりぶる です か? すばらし

No, that's fine. But do it humanely, eh?

いざりす から おん ロクスタ セシよ

6 Getting into your show



Japanese hell would probably be a big public event with no carefully arranged system of queuing. Computer game shows are extraordinarily popular, and if you don't

◀ Once you're in, it's every man for himself. "I think I was first, thank you."

want to spend a life-draining aeon in a queue that would make the service in a Russian bakery look speedy, it's best to try to pre-register a press ticket in advance.

Oh, and if you're afraid of incurring animosity when you march to the front, press pass in hand and go straight into the show, don't worry at all – "another mad foreigner missing out on all this lovely queuing" tends to be the typical Japanese reaction to such a move.

Tips for quick entry

● While the show organisers will be unfailingly polite, if you haven't got good credentials, they might think it better for you to experience that lengthy queue after all. Take plenty of identification with you just to be completely sure.

● Wear your embarrassingly large press armband at all times – unless you need to take covert photographs of secret exhibits.

7 Show etiquette

You'll be unsurprised by now to find that Japanese computer game shows are as well organised as the rest of the country. Instead of the mad set-dressing and gimmickery associated with American and UK shows, in Japan it's the games – and a good queuing system – that get priority.

Each game will have a set number of monitors and, usually, a helper for each available play space. The length of time you get on each game is carefully monitored and it's distinctly 'bad form' not to move off immediately when prompted. This isn't a problem when you're playing a Seta game, for instance, but it's a distinct pain if you should happen to be engrossed in one of Nintendo's finest. If you want to play some more, you've no choice but to join the back of the queue and start again.

Nippon relations. Unless it's Seta. They're probably used to it.

● The majority of game 'helpers' are attractive young Japanese ladies, often dressed in game-themed (and ever-so-slightly risqué) costumes, with a varying knowledge of the games they're actually demo-ing. Getting deliberately stuck in a game and asking these beautiful young things to help you out can liven up the duller of mah jong sims.

That's the back of Max's head. Oh, and Zeida's menu screen.



△ "No, you idiot. It's this button for the comedy nose. Cretin."

◀ Very helpful, she was. Showed us all the controls.



◀ This young lady was demonstrating Wild Choppers. (Insert your own gag here.)

Yellow plastic shorts and blue back packs are all the rage.

Show tips

● Being as civilised a country as it is, it is considered impolite in Japan to show anything less than polite enthusiasm for a show game. Dropping the joypad after a minute and walking off exclaiming "What a steaming great dumper!" will not do anything for Anglo-



Useful phrases at the show

I'm a British rock star, you know. いざりす から おん ロクスタ セシよ

I know Shampoo personally. シアムプ わ ともちだち でしよ

What time do you finish here? のんじ に おわります か

I'll see you later, then. じゃ また ね

8 Getting the interview



The press culture in Japan is completely different to the one we enjoy here in the West. Criticism is never expressed openly and it's rare for interviewers to ask probing or difficult questions. For this reason, it's very tricky for Western journalists to arrange

△ Seta's company president and managing director confer.

interviews – the Japanese are wary of our bullying, impolite ways.

If you're persistence at the press office in question does yield an interview, choose your questions carefully and – even if it's with the office cleaner at Seta – don't be too pushy.

Interview tips

● Try to organise your own interpreter. Interpreters working for the company you're interviewing only add another level of subterfuge and obfuscation (thanks, Jes) to any answers you may get.

● Ask your questions in a positive way. "How are you looking to improve the artificial intelligence?" is

preferable to "Are you actually going to put any artificial intelligence in this time?"

● If the developer you're interviewing has a game on display on the show floor, try to play it before the interview. Don't say "Eh?" when they refer to it and follow up with "Is that your new one, then?"

● Conclude your interview with polite thank yous and the assurance that it's been a really useful experience for you. Don't sigh audibly at the answer to your final question, throw your dictaphone in your bag and walk out calling "Cheers, then" over your shoulder as you go.

9 A visit to Akihabara

Before you leave Tokyo, pay a visit to Electronic Town, or Akihabara as it's known to the locals. The best games shops are here, along with any electronic item you care to mention, smaller and cheaper than anywhere else in the world. The chances are you'll probably also see gadgets for doing things you didn't realise you needed gadgets for doing.

Coming back from Tokyo with anything less than a completely new stereo system and a seriously flexed credit card is an opportunity missed.

Batteries not included

● Despite being smaller than a toothpaste carton (and a thousand times sexier than Aquafresh), that tiny £20 mobile phone won't work at home. So put it down.

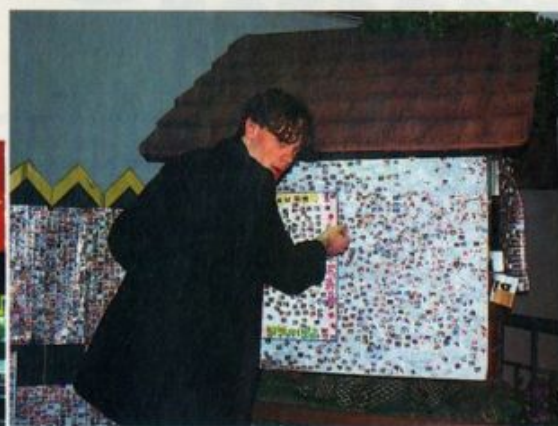
● Many shops have a 'Tax Free' department where you can buy goods designed to work to UK standards (240 Volts, PAL TV etc).



△ Miniature electric Pichachus. We bought a gross.



△ A brand new purple (and a bit see-through) Game Boy. £30 to you, squire.



△ And then, finally, I indulged in a bit of Print Club action. Japan's great. Could I become a permanent foreign correspondent? Please, JD? Please?

Useful phrases for the technologically backward

No thanks. リエ けっこう です

It's more hygienic by hand. いせいでき だしゅ

And there's less risk of a fatal electronic shock.

それかだ こんぐでんぐし わ しません かな

10 Coming home

Wearily but fulfilled, it's now time to return to sunny Blighty and relay your experiences to your eager readership. Make a promise to yourself that you'll start your report on the plane, but, once settled into your seat, opt for the free bar, non-stop diet of movies and

old BBC sitcoms playing on the in-flight entertainment system, and, when all that's exhausted, the little pack of toothbrushes, headphones and stripy nylon socks.

Arrive back in Heathrow 12 hours later, and yet two hours after you first

set off, and immediately start re-acclimatising. Rejoice at the surliness of passport control, persuade the gentle customs men that, for some reason, you shouldn't have to pay the wallet-crippling duty on your new stereo, pay the duty on your new

stereo, savour the inedibility of your Terminal 3 burger and chuckle at the amateurish late-running of the Rail Link to Reading due, cryptically, to 'Staff Shortages at Crewe.'

Aaahh. It'll be good to be home. Probably.

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