



PROBOTECTOR



▲ An exploding bridge too far.

Intergalactic peace seems to be a very unlikely event, at least according to games writers. In Probotector, Alien robots have invaded, and it's up to one man - or two, if wanted - to stop the conquest and destroy the mother alien and her island bunker. To achieve this the commandos are armed with the latest peashooters - although power-up tokens are available at certain points during the action.

Most of the eight levels are left-to-right scrolling blasters, with the heroes jumping, somersaulting and ducking their way

through the platforms that make up the battlefield. However two levels are viewed

in 3D, similar to Dynamite Duke or even Operation Wolf. Here the

heroes dodge a hail of bullets and bombs until they blast through the walls, leading on to the next challenge.

The trail of devastation finally leads to the source of the invasion, an island fortress infested with Aliens (yes, those Aliens!) and assorted nasties. Getting to this stage is far from easy, though, as there are Ice Worlds, bunkers, and bases to fight past. But who said destroying an alien race was easy?

▼ Our happy heroes go on a skiing holiday.



▲ Giant Hula hoops from hell!



COMMENT



This is one of the Playchoice Ten games to be found in many pubs and arcades, although the name is Contra on that system - are Nintendo starting to show some political

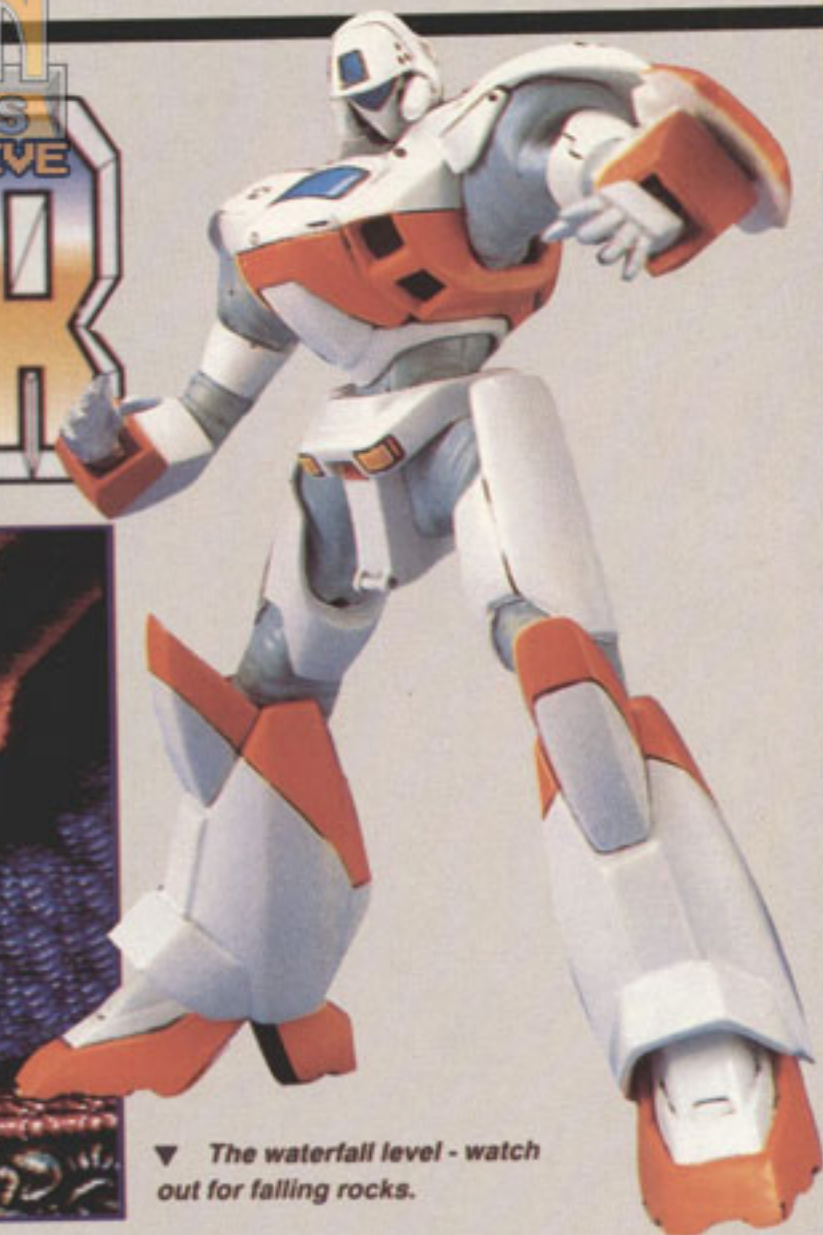
MATT

sensitivity? Anyway, Contra was a boring and repetitive game, and changing its name and the look of the sprites hardly alters that fact. The commandos are awkward to control, and have an annoying habit of crouching down facing in the wrong direction. The graphics improve throughout the game, but then again they have to; the early levels look primitive in the extreme. So considering the NES games coming out at the moment - games that have outstanding graphics, sound and playability - this really can't be recommended.





THE MEAN MACHINES ARCHIVE
GYZOR



▼ The waterfall level - watch out for falling rocks.



CONTRA DEAL

Originally, this game appeared in US arcades as a stand-alone arcade machine called Contra, and starred two muscle-bound heroes on a quest to destroy an evil alien-controlled government in South America. When it was released in the UK, the name was changed to Gryzor, but otherwise the game remained the same. Now it's been converted to the Nintendo, and the sprites have been changed into robots, but the game is still the same. Weird, eh?



COMMENT



The problem with this is that it's not particularly challenging. It takes a few goes to get used to the slightly ropey control method, and after that it's simply a case of blasting your way through the pretty weak alien defences. It's fun at first, due to the fact that you can get pretty far into the game, but once you've completed it, it all gets rather predictable. Gryzor fans

JULIAN might enjoy the action, but really you'd get far more out of something like Snake, Rattle 'n' Roll or Megaman 2.



PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: FEB
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: POOR



PRESENTATION 62%

Don't expect a flashy intro, because you'd be disappointed.

GRAPHICS 72%

The visuals improve as the game progresses, but never reach great heights.

SOUND 56%

Bleepy sound effects and naff tunes don't enhance the action much.

PLAYABILITY 79%

It's fun in a mindless sort of way, and the two styles of gameplay help to give the game depth.

LASTABILITY 69%

This will amuse in small doses, but it's too repetitive and not challenging enough to keep you coming back.

OVERALL 73%

Not bad, but not particularly brilliant either. Look at other Nintendo titles before buying this.