



Zoras the evil magician has been exiled to the far wastelands of the east, where it is said that he has been consorting with foul, depraved demons. Unfortunately, Zoras and his new-found buddies have returned to our green and pleasant land and have viciously murdered good King Pallas. The guiding light of law and order has been snuffed out and evil creatures now roam the land.

Obviously, at this point some kind of hero is required, and two such people are ready at hand to dish out the required violence. Enter Brodan and Shardan, a brother and sister who have decided to rid the land of Zoras and his depraved minions. The player can choose either of these muscle-bound barbarians they wish to play as during the game, although the choice of character in no way affects the gameplay.

The general gameplay involves walking across the horizontally scrolling screens using the Sword of Sodan to chop up any of Zoras' minions that you may find. They may leave potions behind that have many and varied effects on your barbarian hero.



▲ Check out the map for your next destination.



▲ A bit of hand-to-hand combat as our hero battles on.

SWORD

Both heroes have a number of potentially lethal sword-slinging moves at their disposal with which they may dispose of Zoras' evil creatures. An overhead swipe is just the business for dealing with any tall foes (like the giants at the end of level three) whilst the bog standard swipe is good enough for



▲ Jump to avoid danger!



▲ The bog standard attack!

POTIONS

Vanquished creatures tend to leave behind very helpful potions. These all have a different effect. For example, some may give our hero extra stamina or a higher hit strength. Others do nothing unless you mix them with another potion. Different combinations produce different results and produce such magical results as powering up your sword with extra flame power, or receiving a magical shield. But beware! Some potion combinations produce a highly toxic poison which drains a lot of energy.



COMMENT



MATT

of Sodan is a tepid beat 'em up effort which should be avoided.

Whoops! Electronic Arts have a reputation for quality gear, and unfortunately Sword of Sodan doesn't quite live up to expectations. The graphics are superb and the sound isn't bad, but the gameplay is sadly lacking in any sort of variety whatsoever. It's just a case of walk along and cut things up with your enormous sword. The potion mixing idea is quite novel, but otherwise Sword

▼ The foes line up for the slaughter





**SEVEN LEVELS OF DOOM**

The journey to Zoras' lair is long and fraught with danger. Level one takes you to the City Gate, but before you can progress you must destroy Zoras' contingent of guards. The Bridge of Spikes comes along next, where our hero must do battle with yet more soldiers. The problem is that there is the ever-present danger of being skewered up the backside with a wooden pole. Level three takes our hero into the City Streets, where yet more soldiers and a couple of giants face up to the Sword of Sodan. Later on, the barbarian has to cross the Zombie Graveyard dealing with all manner of spirits and shades. After they've been dispatched, Castle Cragganmore awaits. Three more levels of hacking and slaying remain before the final confrontation with Zoras himself. But beware, Zoras has left plenty of surprises for you in the castle foyer, underground passage and most terrifying of all - Zoras' tower...

**COMMENT**



**JULIAN**

After a string of impressive titles, Sword of Sodan comes as a b-i-g disappointment. At first it looks pretty tasty, with impressive opening screens, large sprites, colourful backdrops and great sounds. However, good as though they might be, they simply don't paper over the gaping cracks in Sword of Sodan's gameplay. It's just plain boring. Ponce your way around the landscape jabbing at the rather stupid enemy sprites and avoid the occasional hazard. There's simply not enough variety, excitement and challenge to keep you coming back after you've played it a couple of times.

**SKILLS**

any foe. A jab is good for holding back advancing creatures as along with the damage inflicted it also forces any evil creature back. Ducking and jabbing is the fastest and probably most effective method of attack. Also, ducking and jumping is required to dispatch some of Zoras' more cunning chums



▲ The low-chop in action...



▲ Brodan lashes out!



**BY: EA**

**PRICE: £34.99**

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY

LIVES: 3

CONTINUES: 0

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RESPONSIVENESS: SLOW



**PRESENTATION 80%**

*Nice in-game screens and a good feel within the game itself.*

**GRAPHICS 82%**

*Enormous, detailed sprites and nice backdrops, but the animation is pretty ropey.*

**SOUND 79%**

*Digitised effects abound, but they aren't of an astounding quality.*

**PLAYABILITY 61%**

*Initially quite addictive, but the hack 'n' slay gameplay isn't really that addictive...*

**LASTABILITY 47%**

*...and consequently doesn't keep you at the Megadrive for long. There's just not much of an urge to complete the game.*

**OVERALL 59%**

*Brilliant graphics are let down by a very monotonous game concept. Save your cash for something better.*