



When it's a sunny day, most people think of having a picnic or going out for a day at the seaside. Not so you, who would much prefer to see how fast you can drive your expensive sports car. The trouble is, your arch-rival (who's also in possession of a smart automobile) has had the same idea. So it's thrash central as you and the other driver race full tilt along public roads attempting to be the first past pre-designated checkpoints.

Test Drive 2 is an updated conversion of the reasonably successful home computer game. It's a driving simulator (now there's a surprise), viewed from the driver's seat with you, the player, flogging the car to its limits in an attempt to become Mr Driving Head of the Year.



▲ The Porsche slams into a shambling Transit van, as indicated by the crumpled bonnet.

CAR CHOICE MALARKEY

Rather than lumbering you with just one car, Test Drive 2 gives you a choice of three top cars: the Ferrari F40, a four wheel-drive Porsche 959 or a Lamborghini Diablo. To help you make up your mind each car has its own information screen which details all its vital statistics such as acceleration, braking times and so on. After you've chosen your vehicle, you're given the choice of which of the other two cars you wish to race against.



COMMENT

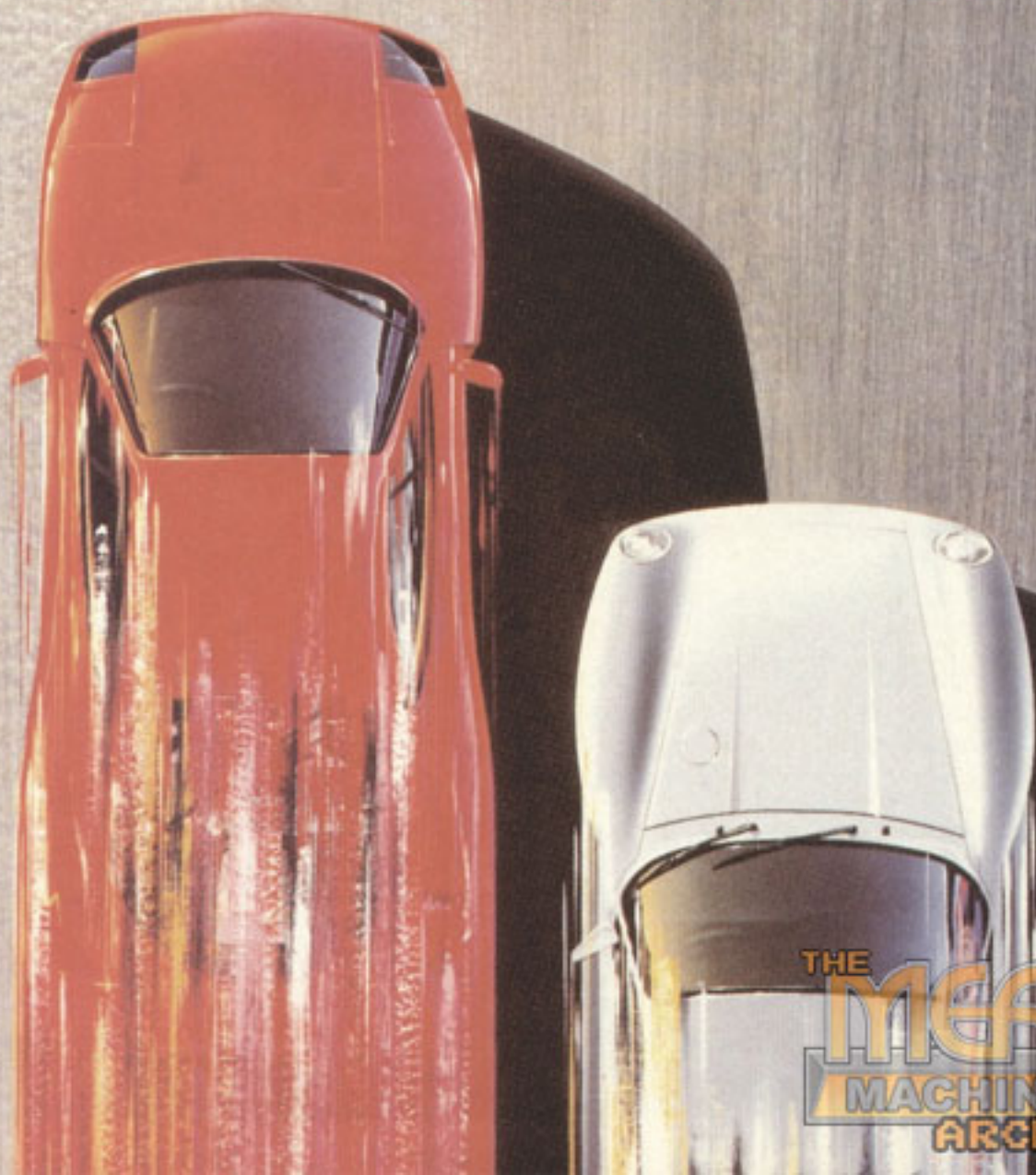


RAD

Test Drive 2 incorporates some new and neat ideas, which along with the smart presentation should have made it a winner. Sadly, this is as far as The Duel's good points go.

For starters, the collision detection is ridiculous - you must have the widest car ever built. Even if you think you've only just scraped your wing mirror you can expect to see the windscreen shatter signalling the loss of a life. The controls are also wildly over-responsive, resulting in much crashing and general needless doom. The in-game sprites are poorly drawn, the backgrounds are bland and the 3D update is some of the worst I've ever seen on the Megadrive. The sound is of a similarly low quality with an ever present grating engine drone and a couple of tunes obviously blagged from Outrun to assault your eardrums. If it's racing thrills you're after, Super Monaco GP or Road Rash are still the ones to go for.

The Duel
TEST DRIVE II™





CAR-DIAC ARREST

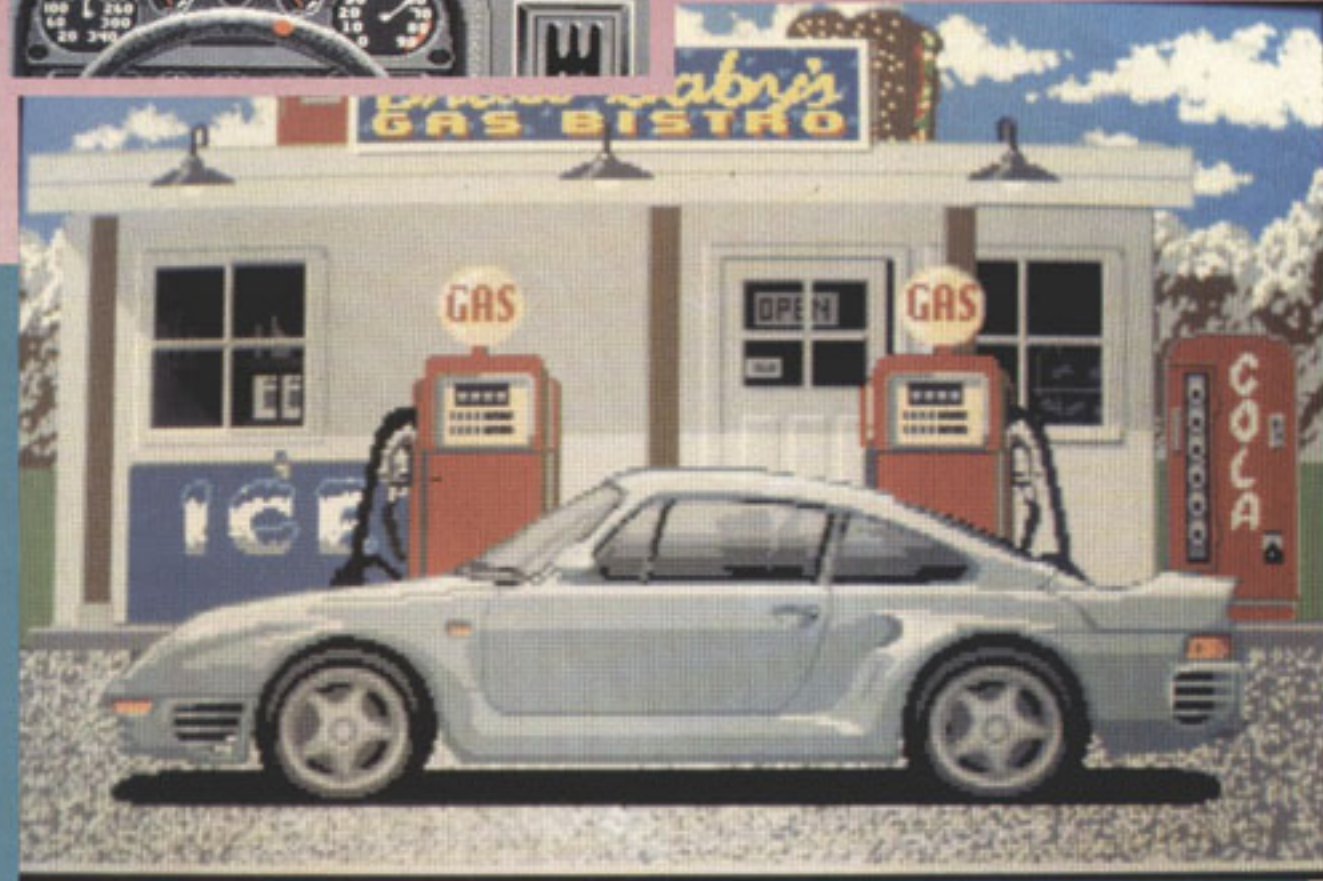


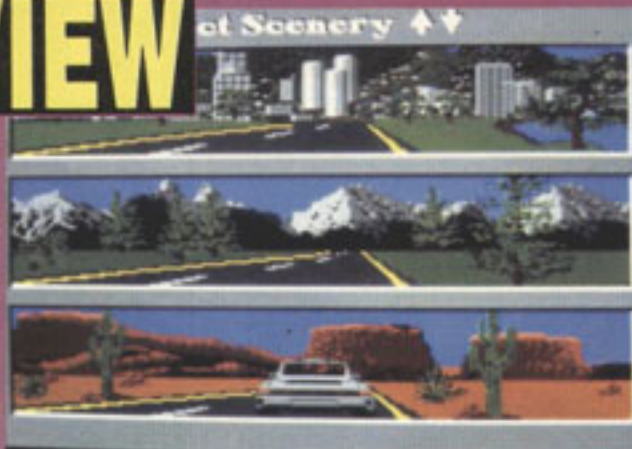
In order to justify their salaries, highway police often feel they must stop and arrest so-called "reckless drivers" such as yourself. Obviously, if this happens the chances of you passing your rival are right up the spout. So, if you see flashing blue and red lights in your mirror, or even worse, heading straight for you at a great rate of knots, it's best to drive with much haste. Luckily, the police cars are comparatively slow and it's easy to outrun them (or lure them off the edge of a mountain if you're particularly skillful).



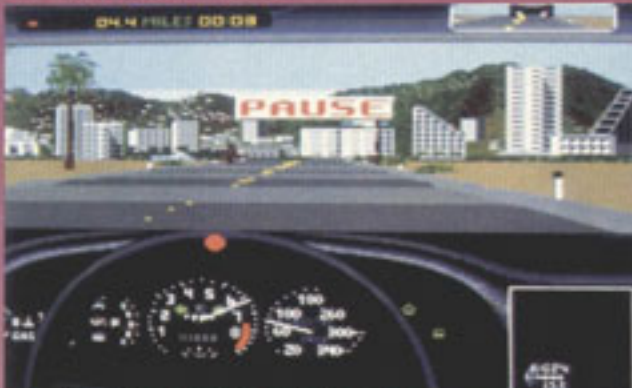
PETROL STAT-ION

At the end of each stage is a petrol station. It's essential that you don't drive past these or you run out of petrol way before the end of the next stage. The petrol station is also the place to check on your game stats. Your average speed, top speed achieved, number of lives left, time taken for the stage and whether or not you are beating your rival are just a few of the things that the helpful assistants will tell you, unlike the ones you find in real petrol stations who won't even give you directions to the motorway.





▲ Select your route.



▲ A long, empty road. Hurrah!



CROSS-TOWN TRAFFIC



If you've ever been on a road, you might have noticed that people tend to drive in the opposite direction on the other side of it. This is something the programmers of Test Drive 2 have taken into account and included in the game. Should you wish to overtake a crawling crapmobile in front of you it certainly pays to check that there's nothing coming in the opposite direction or it could be high speed impact ahoy! Four crashes and it's game over, so always remember your Highway Code.

COMMENT



JULIAN

The thought of driving three of the world's hottest cars to their limits on public highways certainly had me working myself up into a frenzy of anticipation, but sadly the end

result is an anti-climax on a grand scale. It seems fun at first, but there are two big flaws which eventually spoil the game - the dodgy collision detection and the awful graphics. You crash into things when they're miles in front leaving you with the distinct impression that the bonnet on each car is about thirty feet long. The same crash problems occur when you're nipping in and out of traffic - you're judged to have side-swiped a car when it seems like you've given it plenty of berth. On the graphics side the presentation screens are nicely drawn and the car interiors are good, but the oncoming cars are laughably badly drawn, the backgrounds are simple and bland and, the thing that really spoils the game, the 3D update is jerky and completely unrealistic. Test Drive 2 could have been a stunner, but sadly it falls far short of its considerable potential. If it's high-speed thrills and spills you're after, check out Road Flash.



BY: BALLISTIC

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE DATE: MAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 4
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: HYPER



PRESENTATION 71%

Lots of nice intro screens, plenty of options and stacks of stats, but the in-game presentation is poor.

GRAPHICS 59%

The presentation screens for each car and the car interiors are great.

SOUND 40%

The tunes are thin and reedy and the effects don't inspire atmosphere.

PLAYABILITY 69%

The game objective is straightforward, but the dodgy collision detection and lack of challenge make this stall on the starting grid.

LASTABILITY 64%

It's not very hard, the action isn't very addictive and it doesn't take long before its appeal wears off.

OVERALL 67%

A potentially superb product ruined by poor collision detection, naff graphics and a severe lack of long-term challenge