



REVIEW

Poor old Carmen Sandiego. She's merely a victim of an uncaring consumer society, cast out as a social pariah because of her poor GCSE grades. There was only one thing she could do - assemble a cartel (called VILE) of time-travelling criminals and wreak terrible vengeance throughout the space-time continuum.

You, on the other hand, are a time cadet of the Acme Detective Agency and it's your job to put a stop to her nefarious plans. This is achieved by using your Chronoskimmer time-travelling device and your natural detecting abilities.

The presentation of Carmen Sandiego is simple in the extreme. The main display is taken up by the chronoskimmer's control panel, with a smaller sensor picture of your surroundings on the side. Using the panel, menus are selected which amongst other things allow you to question suspects, compile evidence and set course for your next destination. This might make things sound easy, but be warned, you only have a limited amount of time before you are pulled back to Acme HQ.

Before you can go about capturing a criminal you need an arrest warrant, and you don't get one of these until you've uncovered some hard evidence. And to do this you question suspects and seek out informants, as well as find visual clues with your scanner. As you receive each piece of information, enter it into a blank data form. When you have three clues or more, you can ask your on-board computer to work out which of the villains is the perpetrator of the latest dastardly crime. Then it's just a matter of tracking him or her down...

JUST THE FACTS MA'AM



Many interesting facts are contained in this game.

An all-action shot.



The original Santa Claus returns to Holland.



WHERE IN TIME IS CARMEN SANDIEGO

Look who's on the case. ▶





RAD
as a Bullseye Christmas Special, and the sound is most poor - there's no tune and only a few gasping effects. However, it didn't take me long to become quite engrossed in the investigative gameplay. The educational element really doesn't make itself apparent except for the reference book

COMMENT

The fact that this is a supposed "edutainment" cart did put me off initially, worried as I was that it would be all edu and no tainment. Certainly, the graphics are about as thrilling

style intro to each country and time period as you arrive. There are a couple of problems though. Carmen Sandiego is huge, for sure, and there's a password system so you can restart from your last case, but each case is much of a muchness. It takes a long time to complete, with later levels featuring really unforgiving time limits, but there isn't an awful lot of variety. There's also a pointless infinite continues option which takes most of the thrill out of the game. After all, whether you capture the criminal or not, you don't have anything to lose. Still, if brain exercising is your thing, you won't be too disappointed with Carmen Sandiego.



GO?



DON'T FORGET TO WIND YOUR WATCH

Although you constantly run into VILE henchmen along your travels, they pose no threat (unless you call waving a sword around intimidating). Your real enemy is the strict time limit imposed upon your investigation.



Each action you carry out uses up valuable time - one hour is taken up when you interrogate suspects, two are used when seeking out informants and up to six hours are squandered when travelling to a new location. Obviously things can get a bit nerve-wracking when you've only got seven or eight of your original thirty-one hours left and you've only just got your arrest warrant!



◀ *Become a literary know-all with this game.*

LOOK IN THE BOOK TO HOOK THE CROOK

If you get stuck somewhere and the clues given are no help (like some of the references to Medieval constitutions!) there's still hope. Carmen Sandiego is one of the new range of "edutainment" games which is designed to educate whilst entertaining, so included with the game is a paperback encyclopedia for you to simply look up key names or events and find out when and where they lived or happened. Cor - live 'n' learn, eh?





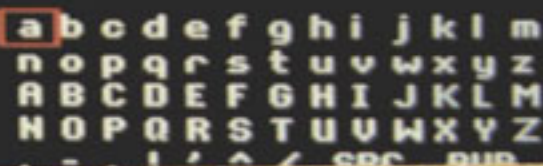
REVIEW

This is our standard liability release form. Please enter your name and press <START>.



THE DETECTIVE AGENCY
Liability Release Form

Hereby releases the Acme Detective Agency from all liability associated with the pursuit and capture of dangerous criminals no matter what might happen.



▲ Sign up here.

COMMENT



Usually, games that have pseudo-educational overtones are about as thrilling as train spotting on Dyfi Junction on a cold, wet day during a British Rail strike. This one isn't quite as bad as all that, and provides quite a bit of fun at first as you whizz your way around time itself in search of dastardly villains before your time limit runs out (although I can't understand why you run out of time when you have control over it). However, complete a couple of levels and the game's weaknesses are revealed: apart from the increasingly tighter time limit, there isn't much difference between levels, and after a while it all becomes a rather repetitive and routine game. Yes, there are things to be learned from this, but it's all trivia-type stuff rather than anything of major benefit. While I certainly don't want to knock original ideas, *Where in the World in Carmen Sandiego* just doesn't offer quite enough entertainment or education to be a truly worthwhile purchase. It's fun for a while, but personally I'd prefer to thoroughly enjoy myself playing a pure out-and-out videogame and then turn to a really decent book of my own choosing and learn something of real value in the process.

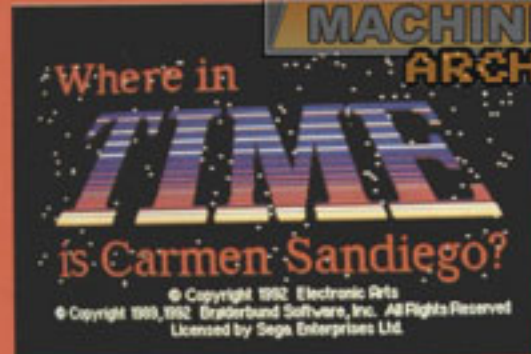
JULIAN



GIVE US A CLUE



Finding each villain is trickier than you might think, after all, they have the whole of space and time to hide in. Luckily their passage often attracts the interest of the locals, who gladly tell you anything they know, such as "He was planning to protest against Ivan the Great's behaviour". When you think you know where they're going, select the TRAVEL menu to check your list of places of times you can reach from your current location, select the one you think is right and launch into the ether. Be careful though as selecting the wrong destination causes you to waste disastrous amounts of time and lose track of the criminal you're chasing.



BY: EA

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE DATE: MAY
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: INFINITE
CONTINUES: PASSWORDS
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: OKAY



PRESENTATION 34%

No options, and the game is only played on one screen!

GRAPHICS 58%

Not much variety, but there are set graphical pieces for each country and time zone.

SOUND 22%

Hardly any at all, and what there is isn't too hot.

PLAYABILITY 69%

The investigative gameplay is absorbing - for a while. The lack of variety does mar things a little.

LASTABILITY 61%

It's a very big game and does get very hard, but you find yourself doing the same sort of things over and over again,

OVERALL 63%

An unusual and highly commendable game concept which is spoiled by a lack of variety. Perhaps a sequel could put a bit more fizz into the gameplay?