



TOP GEAR

Super NES speed freaks who've conquered the likes of F-Zero and F1 Exhaust Heat will doubtless be soiling their underwear in excitement when they plug in Top Gear.

Top Gear offers the usual blend of top-speed thrills 'n' spills as you race through seven different countries, each with their own range of dangerous tracks to master. But whereas previous Super NES games have restricted the fun to just one player, Top Gear enables two players to battle it out in an all-or-nothing bid for glory!

Do you reckon you have the driving mettle of a Mansell? Or is the sluggish speed of a shambling Skoda the best you can achieve? Check out Top Gear and see for yourself!



▲ The races move on to Paris (note the Eiffel Tower in the background)! The red car takes on the white in an all-or-nothing race for Top Gear supremacy. White has the slight advantage of starting a position ahead.



▲ It's a close one here in the Sahara Desert, as the red car uses his speed advantage to pull ahead.



I LIKE DRIVING IN MY CAR

Should you glance at the player select screen, you'll find an option to change the fine automobile that you take into the Top Gear championships. Four vehicles are available, each with their own strengths and weaknesses.



RED



The red car has the highest top speed out of all four cars, but its acceleration isn't too hot and the tyre grip leaves a lot to be desired. Add in the high fuel consumption and you have a car that is best left to Top Gear experts.

TOP SPEED: 147 mph
0-60: 5.9 seconds
TYRE GRIP: Low
FUEL CONSUMPTION: High

BLUE



The blue car is a little better than the sad magenta effort. It's got the same top speed with improved handling and pokier acceleration. A fine automobile for Top Gear players who've just found their feet in the game.

TOP SPEED: 137 mph
0-60: 4.3 seconds
TYRE GRIP: Medium
FUEL CONSUMPTION: Medium

MAGENTA



This car isn't so great, being about as useful as a three-wheeled roller skate. Although its top speed is pretty good, its handling is pretty awful, the acceleration plodding and its fuel consumption unremarkable.

TOP SPEED: 137 mph
0-60: 5 seconds
TYRE GRIP: Low
FUEL CONSUMPTION: Medium

GET IN GEAR

On the player selection screen, you have the option to choose whether your fine vehicle is equipped with a manual or automatic gearbox. The automatic box is good for beginners, but the manual transmission offers quicker acceleration.



▲ Here's the screen that lets you choose between manual and automatic gear boxes. Real men adopt the manual transmission. Beginners are advised to try the automatic box.

WHITE



The white car is perhaps the best choice for newcomers to Top Gear. Although its top speed is decidedly lacking compared to the other motors, its grip is skill and the low fuel consumption is a boon. Its acceleration is the best out of all four cars!

TOP SPEED: 131 mph
0-60: 3.5 seconds
TYRE GRIP: High
FUEL CONSUMPTION: Low

COMMENT



JULIAN

When you play it on your own, Top Gear is a challenging and enjoyable racing game with plenty on offer to keep you occupied. With two players, though, it really comes into its own and provides some of the best simultaneous head-to-head driving action I've experienced on console. The sheer amount of cars and the twisting course make for intense competition, with much sideswiping, cutting up and ramming in evidence! It's truly brilliant fun - we even had a load of greebos in from the Motorcycle News magazine advertising department coming in to play it! The graphics and sound certainly aren't the greatest I've seen, but if it's out 'n' out racing thrills 'n' spills you're after, this is a Super NES-essity.

▼ Before each race, you are given a run-down on the track statistics. Here you decide whether you are going to need to get extra fuel for your motor.



▲ This track combines the high grip of tarmac with the shambling handling associated with sand. Tumbleweeds tend to roll onto the track too. Avoid these or they'll slow you down.

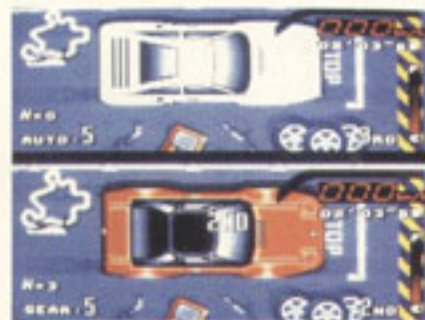


TURBO ACTION

At the beginning of each race, your high-speed automobile is equipped with three nitro boosts. As you may expect, once ignited, a nitro boosts the top speed of your car to almost unmanageable levels! Unless you're a really skill driver, your best bet is keeping hold of your nitros for long straights on the track.



▲ Check out the world rankings in Top Gear! Reckon you're good enough to reach the top?



SPLIT-SCREEN SKYLARKING

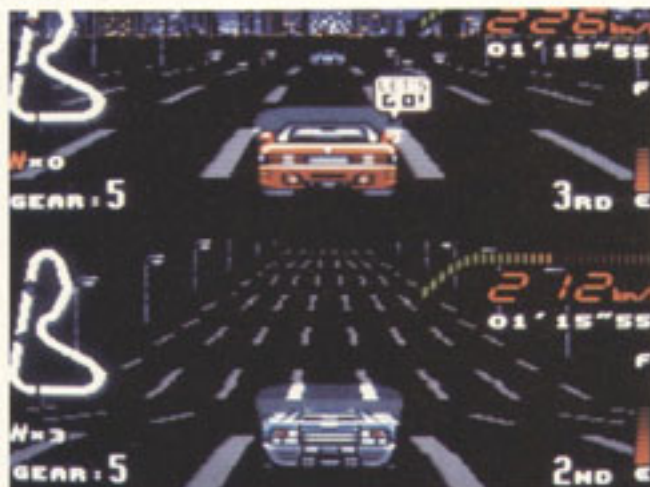
Top Gear is a split-screen road racer (as you most probably figured out for yourselves by looking at the many pictures on the page). In one-player mode, the computer occupies the lower screen providing a stiff challenge to the player. In two-player mode, the second participant uses the lower-half of the screen. The screenshots cannot convey the sheer speed of the game, or the incredible fun of the two-player mode!



▲ A wide road here should cause no problems for Top Gear players. Burn rubber!

LIGHTS IN THE NIGHT

Some of the Top Gear tracks are played in the night! This means that visibility during the race is poor, so be extra careful during these rounds. Luckily, your cars has headlights that automatically activate on these rounds - the only problem is that they're really not very good!



COMMENT



RICH

The programmers sent this topper road racer to us earlier this year and it had me and Jaz hooked for ages. Okay, from the screenshots you might think that Top Gear is a bit average, but you haven't seen the speed of the game or sampled the amazing gameplay! Top Gear is simply the most amazingly playable road racer yet devised. I cannot aptly describe the sheer feeling of speed that Top Gear manages to convey, especially when you make use of one of your three nitros. Add in the two-player mode mode and you have what can only be described as one of the most competitive games yet devised. There are no grumbles about the lack of variety either. There are many tracks to conquer and four cars to attempt this task with. I thought that F-Zero and F1 Exhaust Heat were the best examples of the racing genre, but I was wrong. Everything you really need from a road racer is in Top Gear!



BY: KEMCO

PRICE: £39.99

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
 GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
 LIVES: N/A
 CONTINUES: NONE
 SKILL LEVELS: 3
 RESPONSIVENESS: TOPPER



PRESENTATION 93%

Great. Three skill levels, a password feature, and even an option to select either miles per hour or kilometres per hour on your speed!

GRAPHICS 83%

Nothing really outstanding to look out for, but the visuals serve their purpose, and boy, do they shift!

SOUND 81%

A variety of decent tunes and effects back the action.

PLAYABILITY 94%

Playing Top Gear is immediately fun and addiction sets in quickly. There's even more excitement in two-player mode.

LASTABILITY 90%

Completing the vast amount of tracks should take sometime, but it's the two-player mode that keeps you coming back to this one.

OVERALL 92%

A truly superb road racer that's even better in two-player mode. A truly essential purchase.