



REVIEW

Those evil Xenites are back, and this time they're twice as deadly! After having their baboon asses well and truly dusted in Xenon I (which never appeared on the consoles in any form at all), they retreated and regrouped, coming up with an even more dastardly plan for universal domination!

And what a plan it is! Their new blueprint for cosmic domination involves striking at the heart of the Earth Empire by blowing up massive bombs throughout the planet's past history, thus making it an easy target in the future. To give their dangerous scheme an even bigger chance of success, they've also deposited massive laser-spewing forces to guard the bombs, along with gargantuan end-of-level bosses!

As you may have gathered, behind the scenario lies a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, boasting three levels of explosive blasting mayhem all backed by a Master System version of Megablast - the ball-bouncingly brill Bomb The Bass theme tune!

XENON MEGA



▲ Shoot the icon container to release the goodies!



COMMENT



As you must have already seen for yourself by looking at the screenshots on this page, Xenon II is one of the finest-looking Master System games yet released. Its

JULIAN

gorgeous, beautifully coloured graphics make it look just like a 16-bit game - the backgrounds and sprites are all utterly stunning! And the game's not just a visual

BOMB THE BASS: THE FACTS

Xenon II features a Master System rendition of Bomb The Bass' Megablast tune, as taken from their Assault on Precinct 13 album (and the Megablast tune itself is derived from the theme tune of the movie of the same name!). Considering the Master System's limited sound chip, this ker-azy remix isn't that bad. Bomb The Bass have a new album on the shelves now called Unknown Territory that features their recent single Winter in July. Bomb The Bass are also one of the first bands to make use of the Roland surround-sound system - a method of creating "3D sound" using ordinary stereo speakers!



BLAST



▲ Catch the Z icon to blow up everything on-screen!

knockout, either. It's addictive and enjoyable to play, with three long and challenging levels to keep blasting fans happy. I don't think it'll take particularly long for shoot 'em up experts to finish the game, but it's of such high quality that you just want to keep on going back to have another blast. The Master System game range, although huge, isn't exactly bulging at the seams with really high quality shoot 'em ups, so if you're a blasting fan make sure that you don't miss this.

SHOOTING WEAPONS

There are many different weapons available to the Xenon pilot in the game, each divided into the weapon categories you see before you:

PROJECTILES



The bog-standard weapon for the Xenon craft. Power-ups provide a faster firing weapon, which can also release more powerful shots. This weapon is also available in side and rear-firing forms.

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MODULE WEAPONS



Up to four modules can be bolted-on to the ship, and these can be any combination of lasers or cannons - it all depends on how you choose to spend your cash!

CANNON



Exclusively available from the Intergalactic Shopperama, this cannon locks on to the front of the fighter in place of the projectile weapon, although you can buy extra side-mounted cannons as well! Cannons can be powered-up to shoot off a far more powerful projectile.

LASER

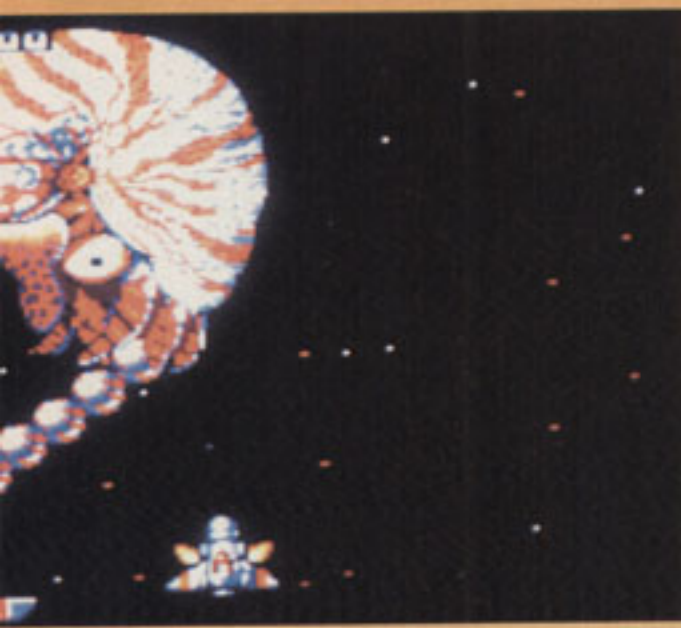


Another weapon that you pick up first at the Shopperama, this laser cuts through all foes in its path, although it's slower than the cannon. Like the cannon, it's annihilation potential is greatly increased through the use of power-ups.



SHOP-RELATED MALARKEY

At the end of each level, after the boss has been defeated, the Xenon craft docks with the Intergalactic Shopperama where weapons are bought and sold. However, the shopkeeper is a bit of a stingy - offering about half the original asking price for second hand gear!



THE END-OF-LEVEL CHALLENGE

Not surprisingly for a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, there's a massive end-of-level boss just waiting to give your monkey ass a good busting-and-a-dusting. The first such repellent creature (as pictured) is a large shellfish-type abomination, requiring many hits in the eye before it obligingly kicks the bucket.



COMMENT



RICH

I know that vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups are something of a rarity on the Master System, and while Xenon II holds lots of promise, it's a tad lacking in the excitement

department, simply because of the game's pace. Even with no bolt-on weapons attached and hardly any enemy sprites on-screen, the action is just a tad too slow for my liking. This isn't to say that Xenon II is a bad game, because it's still quite addictive and there's a strong urge to see the next level and all the weapons. In fact, the sheer variety of weapons increases the lastability of the game. Once you've completed it, you'll want to do it again with different armaments! That should take a while though, because this is a very challenging game - it took me a fair few goes just to crack the first level! The other thing on Xenon II's side is that it is probably the best-looking and sounding Master System shooter, (though a few more sound effects in the MUSIC OFF mode would have been welcome). There's no doubting that all you starved Sega blast fans will love it, so what are you waiting for? Get down to your software store and give it a whirl!



▲ The ship's attacked on all sides!



▲ A well-armed ship kicks monkey ass!



BY: MIRRORSOFT

PRICE: £TBA

RELEASE DATE: TBA
 GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
 LIVES: 3
 CONTINUES: 0
 SKILL LEVELS: 1
 RESPONSIVENESS: PRETTY GOOD

1 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 77%

Well-presented during the game, although the opening sequence is a little dull.

GRAPHICS 93%

Some of the finest backdrops and sprites ever seen in an 8-bit game.

SOUND 80%

The Master System's version of the Bomb The Bass soundtrack isn't bad, although the sound effects are lacking.

PLAYABILITY 88%

Although it's a bit slower, Xenon 2 has all the playability of its 16-bit brother.

LASTABILITY 79%

Only three levels, but the enjoyable action, along with the sheer variety of weapons is enough to keep you coming back.

OVERALL 84%

One of the finest Sega shoot 'em ups available. Highly recommended,