



SPECIAL FEATURE

THE BITMAP FLANGE RASTERDOOBRIE

The Mega CD is a compact unit that sits happily underneath the Megadrive. It's very similar in styling to the Megadrive and once in place it looks dead sexy. The internal gubbins are a mass of smart custom chips and processor doobries. The Mega CD uses a Motorola 68000 chip, like the one you'd find in an ST or an Amiga. This chip runs at 12.5 MHz, which is bloody fast, especially when used in tandem with the Mega-drive's own 68000. This is all very well, but a CD ROM really needs one thing...a RAM cache! What's a RAM cache? Well, when a CD unit sends graphics and sound to the host machine, it needs to hold a lot of information in memory. If it can't do that, then you get a very irritating lag while the machine accesses the Compact Disc. This was a big problem with the PC Engine CD unit, the waiting time can get quite aggravating. Fortunately, the Mega CD has a large RAM cache and can handle up to 6 Megabits of info at one time, this is more than enough space for pause-free gaming. As far as sound goes, the Mega CD is a big improvement over the Megadrive. It has an extra 8 channels of PCM sounds and they are well up to the quality of a decent Keyboard. These can be played at the same time as the Megadrive's chip and can also be used with live CD tracks so musically, you can't go far wrong. The extra processing power built into the new unit, means that the Megadrive can now perform the kind of scaling and rotation tricks that the Famicom is famous for. All in all, a smart bit of kit.

MEGA-CDの超高
1 大容量6MbitバッファRAM搭載



So here it is. The battle of the giants. Nintendo and Sega have been waging war in the console market for years now, with Nintendo always having the upper hand. Sega looked all set to change this around in the British market at least, with the launch of the Mega CD. Nintendo however had different ideas and decided to bring forward the launch of the Super NES (Super Famicom to you and me). The launch is all set for spring, with Super NES machines in the shops, possibly as early as February. Sega don't plan to launch the Mega CD officially until Summer next year. Now here's the question on everyone's lips: Do you buy the Super NES, or wait for the Mega CD? It's not an easy choice, so here's a guide to what's hot and what's not about the two machines...

BIG IN JAPAN

The Mega CD has been widely heralded in the land of the rising sun, as the machine that will bring CD ROM into the home. There are already a couple of CD ROM standards in Japan, the most successful of which is the Sharp FM Towns. This computer is basically a souped-

MEGA-CD SYSTEM



up PC, with smart graphics and a built in CD unit. The thing the FM Towns is most notorious for, is the number of games featuring scantily clad women. It's widely expected that this kind of dodgy software will appear on the Mega CD, although Sega's strict quality controls should filter the worst of it



SPECIAL THANKS!

CVG would like to thank the fine gamers at Ace Consoles (071 383 0480) for getting a Mega CD to our office the very day following its launch in Japan! Best known for their Super NES (Famicom) expertise, Ace are expanding their horizons to take on Sega's wonder machine, so call 'em for info!



MEGA CD VS SUPER NES

SPECIAL FEATURE



out. The Mega CD was re-released in Japan last December and basically sold out as soon as it hit the shops. Sega cleverly released limited numbers, so selling out completely isn't quite as impressive as it sounds. The demand though is easily outstripping supply even now. In the UK, when the machine was launched, grey importers like Advanced Console Entertainment and Console Concepts were snowed under with orders. In fact, when we picked up our Mega CD, there was nearly a riot because it was the last one in stock!



WHERE'S OUR BLIMMIN' MEGA CD?

After months of sneak previews and much speculation, we finally got hold of a Mega CD! The machine arrived in the CVG office only days after its release in Japan. The excitement in here was unbearable. Problem was, when we first got it, we had no software. When you turn the machine on, you are presented with a really sexy demo. This shows the Mega CD logo floating in the sky, it starts turning, spinning and swooping around the screen. It's all very impressive, but it's even more impressive when you discover that the logo isn't a polygon, noparoony, it's a sprite. This gives just a peek at the machine's true potential. The music that plays during this demo is groovy, but hardly mind-blowing.



バックアップRAMツール
内蔵バックアップRAMは
SEGA_CD-ROM 用です。
データ数 0 空きブロック 125
バックアップRAM カードマジは
ありません。
ボタンを押して下さい。

A SONIC CATHEDRAL OF SOUND...

Not only is the Mega CD a smart piece of video gaming technology, it's also a bloody good CD player. Instead of the usual array of buttons and dials, all you do is slot in a normal CD and press start on your control pad. The screen then changes from the demo to a menu of options. These allow you to play any track on your CD at random, or if you like, in a preprogrammed order. There are tons of useful options and if you're into music you'll love it. You can for example, loop small sections of any track, useful for sampling chords or instrument sounds. There are a wealth of options and the sound quality is quite remarkable. Using the audio ports and connecting the Mega CD to speakers, the sound quality is easily as good as a decent CD player. Put through a good stereo system with amplifiers and the unit becomes a formidable bit of Hi-fi equipment.

SO IS IT ANY GOOD OR WHAT?

Well, there's no doubt about it. The Mega CD is a dead hard bit of kit. Problem is, the first few games don't really take full advantage of it. There are a few Japanese RPGs available already, most with untranslatable names. The RPGs all follow the kind of Gauntlet inspired top-down perspective, with a lot of spell casting and wandering about. The one advantage CD brings to this type of game is in the lengthy graphical intros. You get treated to highly impressive cartoon sequences throughout and the accompanying music is quite awesome. We've only seen two arcade style games so far. The first, Heavy Nova is a cross between a shoot 'em up and a beat 'em up. It's a horizontal scroller, very playable and very fast. Again, this game features huge cartoon intros and smart music, but graphically it doesn't do anything you haven't seen before. Sol Feace is the second of the arcade games and it's a good old horizontal scroller. This is a real disappointment. As far as graphics are concerned, this is no better than say, Thunderforce or Gaiars. There are the now mandatory intro screens and the music is funky and well composed, but you could easily be mistaken for thinking this was a Megadrive cart. There are a few big titles penciled in for future release, expect to see a lot of Sega's arcade catalogue, G-LOC and Radmobile for starters. Best of all though, a little birdie tells us that Sonic 2 may well appear on the Mega CD first. From what we hear, it's gonna be something very special indeed!



BUT WHEN CAN I GET ONE?

The Mega CD has had its official launch in the UK penciled in as Summer 92. This is reasonably fast and we'll get it around the same time as America. The machine is certainly expensive as an import, around the 300 quid mark. When it's released over here, the reduction in price won't be all that great. Expect an official price of around 250 quid. The Mega CD imports will only work on SCART Megadrives at the moment, but the console boys are hard at work on a conversion and it should be available for Pal machines by the time you read this.





THE CONSOLE WITH TWO BRAINS!

The Super NES is a very strange machine indeed! Although it's a sixteen bit machine, the central processor isn't sixteen bit at all. It is in fact an eight bit chip, a 65C816 to be precise but a deeply confused one. It runs as fast as a sixteen bit chip and it thinks like one, but it ain't. Kind of like a Volvo with a Ferarri engine...it's not much to look at but it doesn't half shift! The Super NES' main attributes are its brilliant custom chips. These are used to create some stunning graphical effects. The colour palette is an enormous 32,000 and the machine can display 256 colours on screen at once. You can take a whole screen or a small area and expand or reduce it in size very quickly. This effect has been seen before in arcade games like After Burner and G-LOC. The Famicom can also rotate screens in real time, much the way Namco's Assault arcade machine does. The chips are powerful enough to combine these effects and clever programming can produce stunning results. The most impressive thing about the SNES though, is the sound chip. This uses eight channel digital PCM sounds, better quality than most mid-range keyboards. These sounds can be played in true stereo and the effect is jaw-dropping. Trumpets, pianos, guitars, all can be reproduced faithfully through the SNES. You can easily link your SNES to a hi-fi and hear the sound through decent speakers, it's well worth doing. In real terms, it's a much more powerful machine than Sega's Megadrive.

**THE GOOD
THE BAD AND
THE SAD**

The SNES obviously excels in anything that involves colour and sound, especially using the rotation/scaling hardware. Where it falls down a little is on its sprite handling. The SNES is capable of displaying tons of sprites, but the speed suffers when there are more than 128 on screen at once. Much has been made of this problem in the computer press, but the Megadrive suffers from this too, although not to the same extent. Where this problem arises most is in fast shoot 'em ups with tons of baddies on screen at once. You'd be less likely to notice



on say, a beat 'em up or a driving game. There are ways round this, with clever programming and tight use of the hardware, but it's not as big a problem as you'd think.

**THE BIG TOP SECRET
THING THAT WE
CAN'T TELL YOU ABOUT!**

After wearing our special investigator trousers for months, we discovered something about the SNES that will make you fill your pants with sheer bed-wetting anticipation. This makes the CD ROM look pathetic and it will change the face of SNES gaming forever! What is it? We're not allowed to tell you! Ha! Are we evil or what? All we can say is this, when it appears and you own a Famicom, you'll be even happier than a big bag of really happy things. Is it hardware? Is it software? We're not telling, but look out in future issues for more news. It's a biggie!



**FABBY FAMMY
FROLICS**

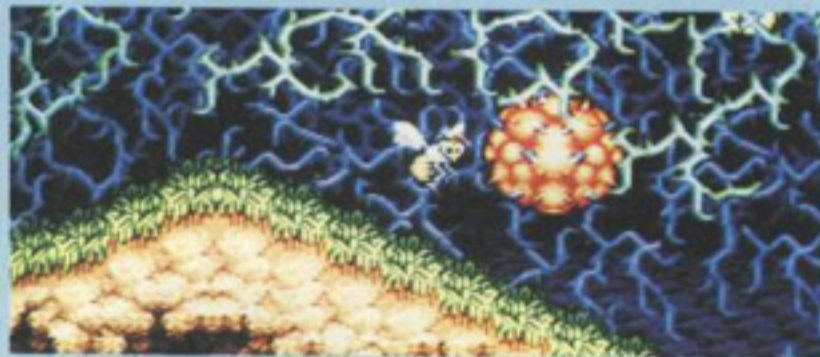
The initial batch of Famicom games upon its release in Japan was spectacular. The one to buy the machine for though, was Super Mario World. This was the fourth installment in the series and is still easily the best platform game ever. The games, unusually for a console included a couple of strategy games, namely Populous and Sim City. These went down a storm in Japan and shifted untold numbers of Famicoms. It's highly likely that the first batch of games will be the same as the first lot of Japanese games. Look out in the future though, for great titles like Street Fighter 2 and rumours already abound of Mario 5.

THE **MEGACON** **FINANCIAL**
MACHINES
ARCHIVE
FEATURE



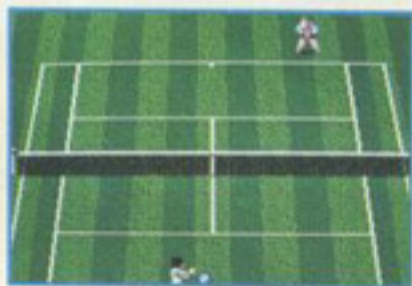
THOSE DAMN YANKEES!

The SNES went on sale in America last year and was greeted with great interest, but it didn't do as well as expected in sales terms. There were two main reasons for this, firstly, the Megadrive already had a firm foothold in the market and secondly, NES owners were quite happy with their old machine. Software support was fine, with a lot of great titles released with the machine, but many stores had problems getting enough copies. After some teething troubles and a lot of speculation, the SNES is now doing great guns, with a



CD SHENANIGANS

Nintendo have had a lot of political turmoil with their CD ROM system. This should have been available now, but development changes put paid to that. The Nintendo CD ROM was to be developed in conjunction with electronics giant Sony, but the deal fell through early last year. However, the unit was nearly finished and Sony still had the legal right to release the machine. It will probably appear in Japan in the next few months, it's to be called the Sony PlayStation. It will be entirely compatible with Famicom cartridges, but with the addition of a CD ROM drive. Early peeks at the machine reveal it to be a sleek black unit, similar in appearance to Sega's Mega CD. Sadly though, there will be little in the way of support for the CD unit, with most developers opting to use Nintendo's system instead. This new system has been designed with the help of Phillips and looks set to beat even the Mega CD, at least in terms of tech spec. It should be ready soon and there will be an interesting three way competition between Sega, Sony and Nintendo.



SO WHICH ONE SHOULD I BUY?

It's up to you. If you're dead wealthy, get 'em both, if not, ask yourself these questions; How much do you have to spend? How important is CD ROM? Do I wait for official release, or buy grey imports? Both the SNES and the Mega CD are brilliant machines and both have their strong points. The Mega CD remember, is an add-on and not a stand alone unit. The SNES is due for release very soon. Add all these points up and decide for yourself, but remember, you heard it here first!

