

QUESTBUSTERS

The Adventurers' Journal

Vol. VIII, # 4

April, 1992

Not sold in stores

Star Trek: The 25th Anniversary Edition

Just as there were countless books, magazines, records, posters, toys, calendars and other shameless marketing tools of the original *Star Trek* series after its resurgence in the '70s (culminating in six feature films and a TV sequel), there have been a number of *Star Trek* computer games released both commercially and through shareware over the years. There was even a popular *Star Trek* game that took place on a grid way back in the days when people paid for time on a local university's mainframe or other business's computer.

Most of these games have been quite honestly dull, with some better than others. Only in the past few years have graphics and animation been added to *Star Trek* computer games. The most recent release was *Star Trek V* from Mindscape, a valiant effort that lost out due to poor arcade sequences and a confusing interface.

Type: graphic adventure & space combat simulator
System: MSDOS (640K, color monitor and 10+ Mhz required, EGA, TGA, 256-VGA; Ad Lib, Roland, Sound Blaster, Pro Audio
Planned ports: maybe Amiga, Mac

A skyful of Star Treks

Now the flood gates have opened! A *Star Trek: The Next Generation* game is on the way from Spectrum Holobyte for IBM, Amiga and Super Nintendo, and other *Star Trek* games are due from Konami for the Nintendo and Game Boy game systems.

But the first of the new wave of *Star Trek* games hails from the designers of

by Russ Ceccola

The Bard's Tale series, *Castle and Battle Chess* — Interplay. *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary* capitalizes (a little late) on the anniversary of the debut of the TV show and puts the player in charge of the original show's main characters on seven challenging missions.

The first time I heard about this game, I pleaded with Interplay to do it right or not do it at all because there had already been a bunch of poor games over the past years. It turned out better than I expected, effectively capturing the spirit, mission types and look of the classic episodes and cast.

Two games in one

Part adventure, part combat simulator and all fun, *Star Trek* thrusts the player into the midst of what might have made a few good episodes. The only wish I have at this point is that Interplay were able to get a clause in their contract that enabled them to use the *Star Trek* license for mission disks or perhaps another game, and not just for the anniversary of the show.

25th Anniversary is limited to two views/sequences: the bridge of the Enterprise and the beam-down sight of the landing party on a particular planet. Although it might seem almost too limited, this setup works well.

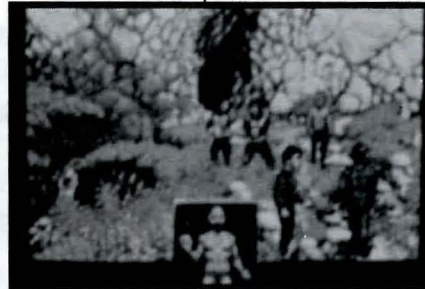
The bridge screen provides access to all functions and stations of the Enterprise, including combat sequences in the main view screen. The landing party consists of Kirk, Spock, McCoy and a character with the most dangerous position in StarFleet — the red-shirted Security Officer with no name who

always got killed within five minutes of beam-down on the TV show. There are 20 stars to which you can journey in the game's galaxy, and you must be careful where you go or you might encounter hostile Klingons, Romulans or Elasi Pirates.

The game is most easily played with the mouse and a few hot keys on the keyboard. You select options from the icon list for a particular

character and can save games at any point. You see the entire bridge from a perspective above and behind the turbo-lift and can monitor all activity with the blink of an eye.

Planetside, the view is similar to a Sierra game, with animated characters seen from a third-person perspective. Again, you control the characters (but mostly Kirk) as the others go off and do



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Shay Addams'

Adventure Road

As mentioned in last month's "Adventure Express," I was recently appointed Rumor Czar for the software industry.

Two rumors worth mulling over while I check them out concern Infocom co-founder Marc Blank and a new computer magazine. Blank is supposedly coming out of retirement to start a software company called Kroz. First release will be a GUI version of *Cornerstone*.

I also heard that *Computer Shopper* is about to put out a new magazine that will save you even more money — *Computer Shoplifter*. The first issue will have a feature on how to hide a notebook computer inside the magazine.



The Dagger of Amon-Ra

New Quests

Interplay says *The Two Towers* will be out in late April for IBM. The next *Indiana Jones* quest from LucasArts will show up this month or April. Origin says either *Ultima VII* or *Ultima Underground* (or both) will ship this month.

Planet's Edge should show up any minute. And look for New World Computing's next *Might & Magic* in June. *The Clouds of Xeen* takes place in a world composed of an earth level and a cloud level — and will let you build your own castles with components found during the quest. (I also heard it uses lyrics from a Rolling Stones song for some of villain's dialogue).

In April, SSI will churn out *Treasures of the Lost Frontier* and *Dark Queen of Krynn* for IBM. The first of their own — non-SSI — games formerly called *Tales of Magic*, will also ship in April under the title *Prophecy of the Shadow*.

Sierra update

Sierra is releasing two trilogies at \$69.95 each for MSDOS: *The Space Quest Trilogy* (I, II and III) and *The Adventurer's Start-up Kit* (*King's Quest I*, *Space Quest I*, *Larry I*).

The new Laura Bow game, *The Dagger of Amon-Rah*, was actually designed by Bruce Balfour, who did *Neuromancer*. Roberta Williams, creator of the character, set the style and and functioned as creative consultant on *Dagger*, a classic murder mystery with lots more dark humor than the first *Laura Bow*.


Sierra also reports that Al Lowe is doing "something completely different in a new time and setting," so don't look for Larry Laffer or Patti. *Space Quest V* is also in the works (more on that next month). And I hear that Jim Walls is doing his next adventure for EA rather than Sierra.

Amiga update

Gateway to the Savage Frontier (reviewed in October 1991) is out. Also: *Space Quest IV* (May 1991), *Leisure Suit Larry I*, *Castles* (September 1991) and *Elvira 2* (March 1992). *Eye of the Beholder II* is on the way.

One Amiga/IBM simultaneous release was expected this month — *Out of the World* from Delphine/Interplay. It's an action adventure that uses polygons and rotoscoped animation, technology usually restricted to flight sims.

Game over?

Game Player, published by Signal Research, recently vanished. As The Industry produces bigger but fewer computer games, there won't be as many game to advertise — so expect to see more of the slick rags going the same route over the next year. If I had to recommend one (and fortunately I don't), it would be *Computer Gaming World*. 

The Mail Maze



Dear QuestBusters:

I greatly enjoyed *Knights of Legend*, especially the combat system. When will the sequel be out? Do any other games use the same combat system?

Glen Elder

Origin, for some odd reason, prefers for Chris Roberts to focus on the *Wing Commander* series and his upcoming *Strike Commander*, so no sequel is planned for *Knights of Legend*. You might look into Microprose's *Darklands*, whose combat system, while not the same, may be appealing for some of the same reasons you enjoyed *Knights of Legend*.

It is set in 15th Century Germany and employs 26 attributes and skills. You'll spend a lot of time fiddling around with all kinds of weapons and armor to tediously equip your party members, as in *Knights*, but the actual combat is reminiscent of the *A D & D* series.

QuestBusters™ The Adventurers' Journal

Editor: Shay Addams
Managing Editor: Dora McCormick
News Editor: Dick Van Dyke
Contributing Editors: Bernie Yee, Al Gioveti, Rich Heimlich, Ken St. André, Stephen King, Brian Smith, Steven Payne, Russ Ceccola, Bruce E. Wiley, Duffy, This Reviewer

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Dusk of the Gods

Representing many hours of research into the Norse myths by Chris Straka and his staff, *Dusk of the Gods* may well be the sleeper hit of 1992. It is interspersed with numerous interactions with non-player characters and pages and pages of script that are faithful to the Norse myths. The interface is smooth and well thought out, and the sound, color and graphics are pleasing and attractive — I cannot say enough good things about this game. (Thanks is given to Clancy Shaffer, whose comments and insight helped me with this review.)

The plot begins with your death and transportation to Odin, who makes you an Einherjor, one of his special champions. Odin charges you with the task of travelling through the worlds of creation and changing the course of fate. The Vikings believed that evil is stronger than good, and that Ragnarok, a final battle between good and evil would result in the destruction of good in the form of Odin and the gods of Alfheim.

Type: Fantasy Role-playing
System: MSDOS (640K required, 12 Mhz, VGA & mouse hard disk recommended; 256-color VGA/MCGA, 16-color EGA; Roland, Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, Tandy 3-voice)
Planned ports: none

Your task involves travelling the ten islands and continents of creation and stacking the odds of the final battle in the favor of the gods of Alfheim. The Einherjor's tasks include the waking of Brynhild, reforging Thor's hammer, slaying Grendel and his mother, and a variety of other tasks needed to save the good gods. The plot is an authentic and historically accurate recreation of the Norse myths, with the added twist that you assist in the triumph of the gods of Alfheim.

Sages & Warriors

Dusk offers a multitude of character statistics. The character generation routine allows you to develop your character into several different alternatives of Sage and Warrior. By joining battles and, to a lesser degree, raids, the character becomes a stronger Warrior. By staying at towers of learning, he develops bonus to his Sage ability.

By visiting the temples of the gods in the character generation phase, up to four points can be gained (one point per visit, in each of the four gods). The more points gained, the more spells specific for that god will be gained by sacrificing to the god in the game itself. You may have to generate several characters before you create one with satisfactory attributes.

Exploration can be conducted by keyboard, mouse, or joystick, with movement in eight directions of the compass. The main window on the world can be fully open, showing a large portion of the map. The world is vast and portrayed on a single scale with the same overhead oblique view for exploration, combat and character interaction.

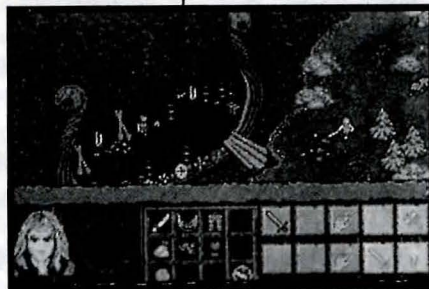
Get a map!

You may find travelling around the map a bit disorienting, since there is no map presentation that shows more than 26 character moves in any direction. (A map, which was supposed to be included with the game, is available from Event Horizon if you write or call.) The scale of the map and characters is much more acceptable than many other games and less disorienting than the scale in *Ultima VI*.

Day, night and lack of light are annoyingly depicted by the screen

becoming darker. Darkness can be abated for a short time by torches or by Freya's light spell.

Character interaction is accomplished by pointing to the character or using the keyboard hot-key (C) to raise a cartoon-like balloon over the selected non-player character. The



mouse proved most effective for selecting non-player characters. The puzzles can be solved by careful conversation with all the

available characters, and the conversation is an entertaining presentation of the Norse myths.

Text can be printed out by selecting this option from the hot-key activated game option screen. You will end up with well over 100 pages of text from character interaction if you leave the printer turned on; this fact attests to the complexity and depth of characterization in the game.

Spells & combat

Combat is conducted with melee and ranged weapons as well as spellcasting. Two hands can be used in combat, and are activated by icons or hot keys which happily remain simultaneously active regardless of the selected input device.

Spells are cast by the character through the power of the four main gods: Odin, Thor, Tyr and Freya. Combat and adventuring spells include Light, Death, Spellfire, and other standard spells. Light is the most useful, since the torches burn out quickly. The 24 god spells, about six per god, are cycled through leaving one active from an icon on the character sheet.

Spell power is increased by worship. Access of certain spell powers requires possession of a magical object or one of eleven runes.

by Al C. Giovetti

Continued on next page

Dusk of Gods....from page 3

Various types of armor and magical protection, from unarmored to invincible, can be obtained to protect your character from attack.

A character sheet, which shows the current status of the character, can be pulled up from the bottom of the screen to various positions, allowing for access to spell and weapons icons, and for visual tracking of hit-points and spell power levels.

Tote that bale

Items can be picked up in combat or exploration and can be dropped, and they will remain there indefinitely. The limited character carrying ability of 20 items can be overcome by using locations in the game to store items or by carrying quivers, boxes, or bags.

Contents of boxes and bags are made available by holding them in the character's left hand. If too many items are carried, the character may become encumbered and move and fight slower, making him more vulnerable. Weapons, armor, clothing and jewelry are placed upon a picture of the character's body in paper doll fashion, similar to *Dungeon Master*.

Sound from the Sound Blaster was very nice on my 386, but I had to disable the Sound Blaster on my 486 in order for the game to run. *Dusk* has a musical theme, mood music and sound effects. The 256-color VGA is quite attractive, considering the scale. A full palette of colors can be seen, and no apparent limitation on shades or repeating colors is noticed.

Game options include save, restore, quit, battle text and print conversation. There are only nine save games. Once enabled, sound can be turned off or on from any part of the game. The install program was bug-free. Documentation consists of a well-written 123-page manual and version sheet. It includes an entertaining and engaging narrative summation of the pertinent Norse myths.

Conclusions: If you play *Dusk* while waiting for *Ultima VII*, and you will not mind the wait. But be warned — you may miss the arrival of *Ultima VII* until you have had your fill of *Dusk*. Highly recommended, *Dusk* is the kind of game you will play from dusk until dawn — you'll need an alarm clock to remind you to go to sleep. **RR**

Difficulty: Intermediate
Company: Event Horizon
Price: \$60
QuestBusters price: \$48

Back Issue Bonanza!

This is your last chance — after May 1, 1992, all but a handful of back issues will go to the plant to be recycled into paper towels. But you can still buy a complete year's set of 1990 for a mere \$12, which includes shipping to USA addresses. Order more than one set, and the price drops to a stagger \$10 per set. We still have a few complete sets are available for 1985, 1986, 1987 and 1988. More exist for 1989 and 1990. (1991 back issues are still a hot item, so the \$2.50 price remains in effect.) The farther back the date, the more likely that some of the issues will be photocopies. (In fact, most of the pre-1988 back issues are photocopies.)

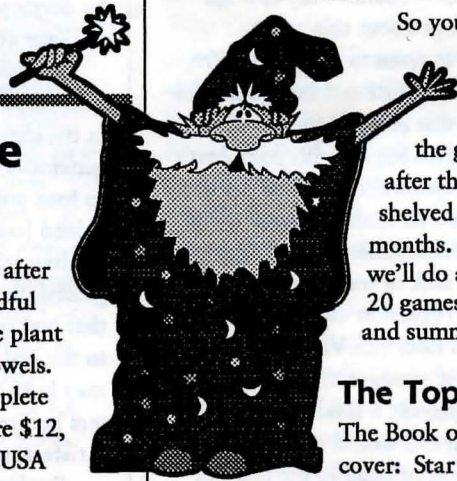
For hard-core collectors, we still have a few original copies of *QuestBusters* premier issue from November 1984 for a mere \$10 — and you'll also get a photocopy of the December 1984 issue.

We will not reprint or even photocopy back issues again, so this is a one-in-a-quest opportunity to finally get what amounts to the *Encyclopedia Adventura* at a bargain basement price. And yes, we are finally accepting Mastercard and VISA! Please print and sign full name as it appears on the card, and include the expiration date and your daytime phone. **RR**

Quest for Clues: The Book of Orbs

There will be no *Quest for Clues V*. Instead, the next volume is called *Quest for Clues: The Book of Orbs*. The plan is to publish solutions to 20 of the Christmas releases in the spring, rather than hold onto them until we've got 20 more to put in a traditional *Quest for Clues*.

So you'll get these 20 solutions while you're still playing the games, not after they've been shelved for six months. In the fall we'll do a book with 20 games from spring and summer.



The Top Twenty

The Book of Orbs will cover: *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary Edition*, *Might & Magic 3*, *Conquests of the Longbow*, *Vengeance of Excalibur*, *Pools of Darkness*, *Monkey Island 2*, *Roger Rabbit*, *Police Quest 3*, *Martian Memorandum*, *Leisure Suit Larry V*, *Willy Beamish*, *Les Manley 2*, *Gateway to the Savage Frontier*, *Megatraveller 2*, *Spellcasting 201*, *Conan*, *Elvira 2*, *Cruise for a Corpse*, *Ultima Underground* and *Buck Rogers II*.

Free shipping!

Origin says it will be out in May, and advance orders postmarked by April 30 will get free shipping to USA addresses. *Quest for Clues: The Book of Orbs* goes for \$15 this time, and — even though there will be no coupon good for free issues of the newsletter in this book — current members will get one free issue of *QuestBusters* for each book ordered. (Overseas orders, however, will pay half the usual shipping charges, or \$6; Canadian members, \$3 shipping.)

And you can finally charge it to your VISA or MasterCard. Yes, just print and sign your name as it appears on the card, and provide the expiration date. **RR**

Questing for clues on The Sierra Network

by Russ Ceccola

Rarely does a product come along that takes up just about all of my free time, but I may have found one that's perfect for anyone seeking fun, information and new friends everywhere. In the past, such hits with me were any Infocom game, the *Wing Commander* series, Steve Meretzky's games and most Psygnosis titles.

Now my newest vice is TSN, The Sierra Network. Sierra President and co-founder Ken Williams' baby, TSN has all the nice elements of BBSs and other online networks and an important advantage for *QuestBusters* readers — online hints for all Sierra and Dynamix adventures.

TSN is perfect for people who like to interact with others. Users design a picture of themselves from component pieces [insert your own Jeffrey Dahmer joke here] to create an online persona that looks as much like them as possible. You pick four interests from a list of many and skill levels in the online games, which all appear in a character profile that others can examine.

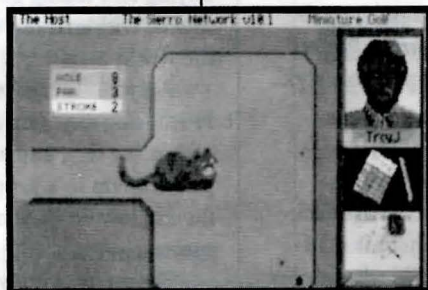
After logging on, you enter a waiting room. You can chat with others here, or go to the bulletin board, a conference room or other host. You can play backgammon, chess, checkers, hearts, cribbage, mini-golf and bridge with people, and more games are on the way.

Clues, clues, clues

It is from the bulletin board that Sierra/Dynamix game players can access hints for all currently available titles. This certainly beats calling Sierra's BBS or 900 hint line, or buying a dedicated hint book. You can sign onto TSN for the cost of a couple clues, and the fee depends on

your locations in the country.

West Coast TSN users have a flat rate, and everyone else pays by the hour. It's still cheap for what you get from TSN. The main hint menu lets you choose from all the Sierra game series, a miscellaneous group mostly of one-shot titles, and a Dynamix sub-menu for hints. Moving through these menus is easy to do, and the



hints for a particular game, once you reach that spot on a menu, are laid out like Sierra's hint books.

Unfortunately, there are no "levels" of hints like the old Infocom clues. You get all of the information for the hint, not just a little nudge in the right direction. The hints I checked were thorough and worked for some games I was reviewing.

A bonus is that you can save all the hints from a session to a file off

on disk and look at them later if you forget what they said. And the TSN game hints is that these hints sometimes make it up online before the cluebooks arrive in the stores.

Obviously, this section is perfect for die-hard Sierra fanatics. Besides that, the amount of fun to be had on TSN almost surpasses that of the games for which you needed hints. That's because fun on TSN is of a pure social nature, playing games and interacting at any time of the day or night with friends across the country.

New areas of TSN called SierraLand (which will feature an online version of *Red Baron*) and LarryLand will provide additional online entertainment for all ages and adults respectively. Look for TSN to hit it big across the country! Once you log on, you'll love it — no question about it! And you'll be able to get those desperately-needed hints for Sierra and Dynamix products. Make sure to say hi to me when you log on to TSN. My ID is RCCola. Well, I'm off to TSN to have fun! See ya! 🐼

Kobold Korner: Twilight 2000

It's been awhile since a review received as much reviewing as Al Giovetti's March look at *Twilight 2000*. We always welcome feedback from other gamers — and sometimes we even publish it!

Disliked the game and the review

First off was Paul Kmosena's letter: "I picked up my March issue, and to my horror I saw a positive review of *Twilight 2000*. Never has a QB reviewer been so wrong.

"To its credit, *Twilight* has nice graphics, sound effects and intriguing personal combat. Unfortunately that's all it has. People can die from five shrapnel wounds in the leg but not

two bullet wounds in the head. Tank combat is almost amusing, because buildings destroyed in 3D mode are magically repaired when 2D resumes. The story is sparse, limited to "updates" every 15 or so missions.

And it's the missions that are the weakest part of the game — there are only six different types, which occur over and over, the only break in the tedium being different town names, rewards and language spoken by the town leader. Even the words of praise from the town leaders are the same.

"Make no mistake, this is not an adventure game. There are no clues to find, no passwords to decipher, puzzles to solve, or even people to

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Uncharted Waters

“...the real action is in planning out the series of moves and coordinating all the factors and variables.”

The first voyage of Koei, award-winning war game and strategy computer game manufacturer, into the world of role-playing games, *Uncharted Waters* is the initial game in a series for which they have coined the term ‘ReKoeition.’

It’s a free-form strategy game with role-playing and war game characteristics, similar to *Pirates* or *Samurai* by Microprose. And while the similarity to *Pirates* is very strong, *Uncharted Waters* displays its own distinctive, playable style.

A seafaring 16-year-old

The story sets sail after a rather long sequence of scenes that serve as the background to this voyage. The hero is a 16-year old son of a former noble who is now a shipwright in Lisbon. Leon’s father goes on a long voyage to trade with the Far East. After a successful voyage, the fleet of Leon’s father is consumed by a storm, and only the first mate survives.

The first mate returns to Lisbon to tell Leon of the fate of his father’s fleet. Leon is faced with the challenge of restoring his family to peerage.

But he can aspire to greater things, such as the hand of the lovely Christiania, the Ducal title, wealth, fame and the conquest of a new world. Christiania, the 14-year-old only child of the King of Portugal, secretly follows Leon’s exploits and hopes he will gain the king’s favor and her hand.

It is the year 1502, and Leon must meet the challenge of Bartholomew Dias (who rounded the cape of Good Hope), Christopher Columbus (who discovered a new world), and Vasco da Gama (who discovered a sea route to India). The seaways are opened up to the Spaniards and the Portuguese, and the Ottoman empire’s vise grip hold on the spice trade is slipping away. The gauntlet is thrown, and Leon must persevere to succeed.

Trading for Dollars

Uncharted Waters presents you with the choice of becoming a merchant, an ambassador, a pirateer or a patriotic military commander in the Portuguese fleet. The game’s merchant module is like those used in many other trading games, such as the classic *Sundog*: Leon has to determine which places have the best prices for buying and selling goods in more than 50 towns, with markets scattered throughout the world map.

A dynamic market system is in place. Purchasing any item drives up all the prices within the city, and selling drives all the prices down in a proportionate fashion. Buying low and selling high ensures success.

Bar maids who work the pubs in the

50 cities also present Leon with tasks to perform. A barmaid will give Leon a message that one of the three kings (Portugal, Spain or Istanbul), or a merchant within a certain city, has a task for him to perform.

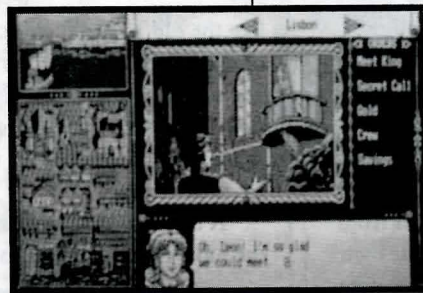
If Leon goes straight to the city and finds the

merchant, he can then accept or turn down the task.

Should Leon choose to take up the quest, he will be rewarded with a down payment of half the proposed payment for the task. He gets the other half upon completing it. Completing tasks is much more enjoyable than hack and slash. The game can be played to successful completion without killing a single character.

The pirate and military combat sections of *Uncharted Waters* are played out on a hexagonal playing surface similar to that used in Koei’s *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Rounded combat is used in typical war game fashion.

When you win a battle, you get the the treasure and plunder of an enemy fleet consisting of up to five combatants per side. Victory conditions involve sinking the enemy flagship, killing the enemy crews or forcing the flagship to flee off the map. The war game portion of *Uncharted Waters* is very well done, even if it is unnecessary to the success of the game.



In port

A series of 10 x 10 spaced maps arranged in an 18 x 18 grid make up the exploration playing field. Upon these maps is drawn a very detailed map of the world. Many of the port cities on the map are hidden and must be "discovered" by moving along the shoreline with your ship and a telescope. Movement is automatic after you select one of the eight compass points for a heading.

The direction interacts with the velocity and direction of ocean currents and wind to give the ship's speed and direction of movement. A pop-up menu stops the action and provides for a tremendous number of interesting options. The game is very versatile.

Any port in a game

Each port is carefully and interestingly floor-planned, with from two to nine structures, including the pub, castle (only in a capital), the market bazaar, an inn, a shipwright, a guild and a church. The Portuguese castle of Lisbon is where Leon meets with the king, banks his gold, obtain support from the king in the form of money and crew, and courts the fair Christiania.

At the inn you can review the statistics on the captain, the mates, the ships in Leon's fleet and the town where Leon is currently hanging out. The guild sells jewelry for presents to the princess, talisman against sea-going disasters and navigational tools.

The game manual shows a sense of humor when it refers to the commands of save, quit or change message as 'divine commands' and houses these commands in the church. Brief and written well, the manual doesn't fully explain many of the game functions. The mouse-driven system is somewhat intuitive, allowing you to pick up the style of play by playing the game, which makes the explanations in the player manual less important.

Save game files could have been limited only by the size of the hard drive, but the Koei developers opted for five user-definable save games. There is no copy protection.

EGA graphics, which I swear look better on my Super VGA monitor than the EGA graphics I remember on my EGA monitor, are supported. The digital sound effects emanating from my sound board were good and of sufficient number, but the musical score was loud and annoying — I had to turn it off with the convenient toggle provided within the program.

I did get bored following the half-inch square EGA galleon around the world map. The galleon seemed to move very slowly on my 33MHz 486, until I tried to change its direction or stop it cold.

The real action was planning out the series of moves and coordinating all the factors and game variables. I had to take voluminous notes; you will need a paper and pencil. Perhaps a computer game should automatically keep track of the statistics.

Conclusions: I found this strategic war-gamish RPG very enjoyable. It was fun to play and worth my time and effort. I recommend it to anyone who liked *Pirates* or *Samurai* and didn't grow bored with

them as time passed. *Uncharted Waters* is unique enough to provide a different and unusually entertaining experience and will monopolize much of your leisure time.



At sea

Type: Strategic role-playing/war
System: MSDOS (640K required, mouse optional; VGA, EGA, CGA; Ad Lib, Sound Blaster
 NES (5 megabit cart with battery back-up)
Planned ports: none

Difficulty: Intermediate

Company: Koei

Price: \$60

by Al C. Giovetti

Duck! Rogers! Gold Box Cubed!

“...a fun way to pass your time, just don't expect to be thrilled or wowed.”

It would be oxymoronic to call *Buck Rogers: Matrix Cubed* the “new” Gold Box game from SSI. With the Gold Box series, it seems that nothing is ever really new. But, being a duty-bound *QuestBuster*, I plodded onward and introduced my hard drive to its umpteenth version of the Gold Box engine.

This Gold Box game takes place in the 25th century, after years of war and pollution have devastated the human race and its genetically altered offshoots. Funny how that the game engine remains the same from the time-shrouded past of *Pools of Darkness* all the way into the future, huh?

Matrix Cubed is the sequel to *Countdown to Doomsday*, in which your party of six set out to destroy the Doomsday Laser. You don't play Buck Rogers, but you do get a chance to meet him during your travails. You can import characters from *Doomsday*, or create a whole new party of higher-level characters.

Levels in the 25th century? Yep: the game system is pretty similar to A D & D; you have different races with different attributes, different character classes and experience levels. Hit points are familiar, but this game system also has a list of skill attributes that your characters will need to survive in a technologically advanced and brutal world.

Bloodletting

Your game starts off at a coronation ceremony for a peace-loving Mercurian king. You receive orders from B-B-Buck himself to avert a potential assassination attempt from RAM, a megacorporation with roots in the 20th century (selling graphic interfaces require you to purchase more memory and larger hard drives). By the 25th century, they've become the Russo-American Mercantile or something, a cruel and profit-driven super-corporation. You arm yourselves and set off on your first quest, which will provide the main plot

(the Matrix Cubed device) and a chance to scarf up experience and explosive grenades and weapons. From there, you head off into space, where there is some elementary space combat. It's quite disappointing.

There's no animation to speak of, and no real tactics (extra-disappointing, because one of the few strong points of the Gold Box engine is tactical combat); on the good side, you don't have to learn new ship controls! You just target various systems on your enemy ship and fire away until the opponent's ship's hit points reach zero, while your engineer attempts to jury-rig damaged systems. SSI should have provided a boarding option (like *Rules of Engagement* and *Breach 2*) so you can really plunder another vessel.

Calvin's transmogrifier

The plot is certainly timely; a scientist has invented a device that can transmute elements into other substances; this would be a huge boon to a polluted Earth, which could transmute wastes into oxygen and water. (If it could transmute vapor-

ware into actual software, that would be a miracle!) Of course, in the wrong hands it could transmute ship hulls into paper mache — or even worse, software reviewers into game designers!

You crew's job is to complete Buck's various quests in order to hold back the factions to your outfit, the NEO (New Earth Organization), while figuring out the secret to the Matrix Device. It's actually a fun story (an important saving grace) that is punctuated with cameos by Buck Rogers and his various foils and villains.

Based on happy times

All the old quirks plus a few new ones. No auto-mapping, for example. Some areas have that overhead map option that doesn't show doors, while others tell you “Not here.” *Matrix Cubed* is, unsurprisingly, combat-intensive. The combat system, however, allows you a degree of tactical flexibility that really is still largely unmatched in any RPG engine.



Buck is back

QuestBusters

Graphics are in VGA, but that does little to dull the *deja vu* of yet another Gold Box game in VGA — *Pools of Darkness*, *Savage Frontier*, etc. And unlike *Pools of Darkness*, the sound was played through a PC speaker while musical passages were played through my Sound Blaster. Actually, it's a good thing, since the sound in *Pools of Darkness* got old quick.

And the auto-combat system is exceptionally stupid, even for a Gold Box game. My characters went off on their own gung-ho charges, with little regard for tactics. In fact, a quick-combat character deliberately lobbed a grenade right near another party member. Ahh, inter-party tensions! But gameplay (i.e., combat) seemed easier than in *Countdown to Doomsday*.

Despite all the negatives, I found *Buck* pretty enjoyable. The reason is simple. There are no new real science fiction RPGs out there, and certainly no sci-fi RPG series like *Ultima* or *Might & Magic*. Technology gives the game a whole new twist from the A D & D game systems, and it's welcome.

Magic is limited, in a sense, to existing in a world defined by swords and scrolls. Technology opens up a much more limitless frontier. It's unfortunate that this potential isn't realized, perhaps because the Gold Box engine was essentially designed to run on an Apple II. To SSI's credit, I'm pretty sure that the rigid adherence to the Gold Box engine is in part mandated by the guys who own the copyright to *Buck*. And it's economics: the game is gonna sell anyway, even if it doesn't have anything new — so why bother? Yep, we've heard that in Detroit 20 years ago.

And now, we're considered illiterate and lazy. Makes you think, doesn't it?

Never mind

The question that raged through my mind is why did it take so many people to do


by Bernie Yee

this game if it the game is so similar to its predecessors? I honestly don't know. Maybe SSI is trying to push back the unemployment figures by hiring more people. You'd think that a cookie cutter game like *Matrix Cubed* would have a *Bard's Tale Construction Set*-type editor to make things a little simple. Hey, a new game every couple of months! Beats waiting for *Ultima VII*, right?

On the positive side, the engine has proved so enduring for reasons other than sloth and greed. It is quite playable, and *Matrix* held my attention longer than I would have guessed — until the lack of auto-mapping and the thrill of finding cool new energy weapons ran out, anyway. And SSI is always to be commended for allowing you to raise your player characters up through their games. A sense of continuity is a powerful magnet for role-playing gamers.

Conclusions: It comes down to this — with *Matrix Cubed* you know what you're getting. If you're a fan of the series or the engine, you'll want to go out and buy this. And if you are looking for a science fiction RPG (of which there are so few in the computer gaming world, especially since Interplay seems to have abandoned the *Wasteland* follow-ups), *Buck Rogers* is a fun way to pass your time. Just don't

expect to be thrilled or wowed. (If you're looking for a cutting-edge science fiction RPG you'll have to wait for New World Computing's *Planet's Edge*.) SSI knows what to do

to keep their market growing. That approach may leave gamers feeling full but dissatisfied. 

Difficulty: Intermediate

Company: SSI

Price: \$50

QuestBusters price: \$40



WALKTHRU: Conan the Cimmerian

by F. J. Phillip

Episodes and

Mini-quests

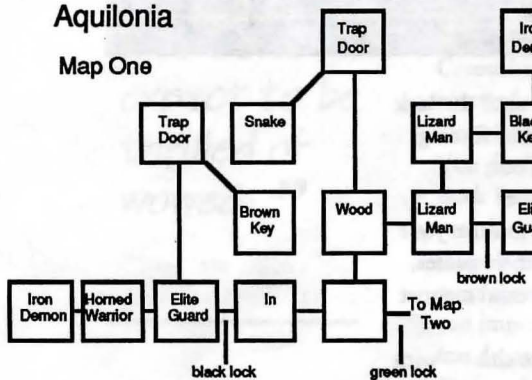
There are seven main episodes and six mini-quests along the way. The latter are not necessary to complete the game but will furnish you with gold.

Shadizar

Your first objective will be to rob every house in sight for money and gems (sell them). While you're doing this talk to everyone for clues and hints.

Aquilonia

Map One



When you have enough gold, buy a better sword and train with Quan Yo in thrust and chop. Buy one of each key. Buy torches.

Combat Strategy

Swing: Thieves, Assassins, Horned Warrior, Horned Ape, High Priestess

Thrust: Toughs, Priest in underground, Priests, Snake, Temple Priest, Guardian, Underground Rats, Spiders, Thoth Amon

Chop: Guards, Mummy, Jalung Thongpa, Corsair, Elite Guard of Set, Guard in Thothes Palace

Key Locations

Quan Yo: southwest corner of large building southwest of Red Dog

Tavern: west of Temple of Adonis (Swords, Keys); between Bazaar and West Gate; Ishtar Temple (due south of Bazaar, door's on the south side).

Side Quests

Gem Of Sight

Buy two Teleport spells. Go to the southwest corner of the Broker (west along wall from Main Gate). Teleport to roof with door. Enter. Get Gem. Take it to Temple of Crom.

Thieves Guild gold and Amulet of Undead

Buy one Teleport spell. Buy a Golden key from Broker in the southwest corner building. Go to and enter the building east of Set Temple. Move carpet. Enter underground. Proceed to northwest corner with several doors. Enter second door from left and get treasure. Exit. Go east a few steps, then south to a dead end. Teleport to the southeast tunnels. Work your way east, south and east to a number of doors and try all until you find the Ruby Amulet door. Enter and get Amulet. Continue east to ladder. Up. Exit building.

Emerald Amulet

Buy two Teleport spells. Go to Temple of Set. Teleport to roof of Temple (with door). Enter and get the Amulet. Exit and teleport down. Keep this for the final confrontation.

Wizard's Gold

Bribe owner of Dead Crow Inn (between Red Dog and Temple of Set). Buy two Teleport spells. Enter underground east of Set Temple. Go west, then south. Teleport to outside room with no obvious entrance (southwest). Enter room. You'll need the Golden key.

Staff Of Power

Enter underground from same location. Check all rooms until you locate the Staff. Return it to the Temple of

Adonis for reward.

The Main Quest

Setting Out

By now you should have: trained in Swing, Thrust and Chop and possess the Brass, Bronze, Silver, Golden keys, the Enchanted sword, several White Lotus potions and torches. You can carry 20 items (not counting gold). When you complete a quest, you're automatically returned to the Red Dog Inn and informed of the next one.

Episode One

Go to the Red Dog Inn and talk to the owner. Head for the Inn of Veils. Enter and go out the back door. Go south to the last building and enter. Talk to Taurus. Enter underground. Light torch. Go west, south and west to the door with the jade lock. Go west, north, east, and up to the Temple of Set. Head west to Gargoyle statue. Go west and kill Priest (Thrust). Get Jade key. Return to door with jade lock and get the Snake sword. Return to Temple. Use Snake sword. Go east to statue. Click on statue. Enter room below statue. Kill the snake. Go west and get the Eye of Serpent.

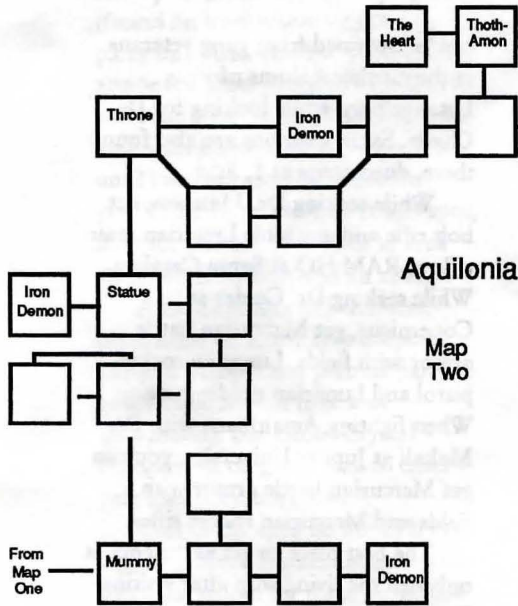
Episode Two

Talk to Vicarus. Exit city. Move north to Skeleton ikon. Get staff. East. Click on statue. Get rope, flint and steel. West. Use flint and steel on wood pile. East. Take King's sword. West. Mummy will follow you. Move west of fire. Search Mummy for King's crown and Steel key.

Episode Three

Talk to Jalek. Exit city. Move southwest to Jungle Ruins. Fight your way northeast, then north to pyramid. On the east side of the pyramid, climb vines to the room at the top. Enter. Drop all metallic items. Get Obsidian

QuestBusters



sword. Use it. Climb down. Go east. Kill Enchantress. Get Copper key. (If playing the original release of the game, you may encounter a number of Corsairs in this episode. In that case, use the Chop fighting style.)

Episode Four

Talk to Juma. Exit city. Move southeast to Zamboula. At oasis, search man after he dies. Get paper. Examine paper. Walk west along wall until you locate section with three heads. Walk into wall. Follow the map provided here to find the kidnapped Princess. Enter door.

When magician is in center of room, use the Staff. (The map shows only the halls to pass through, using others as landmarks. After going through level three, use the next map of level two to return, then the final map of level one to rescue the Princess.)

Episode Five

Talk to Akado. Leave Inn. Go south two buildings (between Red Dog and Skyline Inn). Enter building and talk to Morhan the Sage. Buy map of Larsha

from chartmaker. Exit city. Move southwest to Larsha. Examine map.

Fight your way north, east and north to a building with steps leading up to a door. (Any swing is effective against the Lizard Men.) Enter and get the map to Thoth Amon's ring and the Marble key. Go northwest from the steps, then west to a dead end and enter the door to get the Horn of Valhalla.

On your way out, go to the building to the west, then northwest of the entrance to Larsha and get the Staff of Power. You may wish to pick up the Lizard sword in a building to the east and center.

Exit Larsha and return to Shadizar. Go to Snake Alley. Go east, south, west, north and west to a door. Enter and go to roof. Move north, east, south and west to a ladder down to the Inner City.

In the Inner City, go south to the second building and enter the middle door. Click on the first wall hanging for lots of treasure. The second wall hanging is the room with Thoth Amon's Ring. Take Skeleton key first, then the Ring.

Episode Six

Return to Larsha where you will encounter the Iron Demon. Exit immedi-

ately. Go to Jungle Ruins. Go northeast near the monolith (but not too close). Wait. The Iron Demon will be trapped. Return to Larsha. Go to the northeast corner to a door. Enter. Use Skeleton key.

Go north to ladder and up to the roof. Move west to a ladder up, then west to a ladder down. Go north, then east to a ladder down. Move east to a door with steps.

Enter the Scriptorium. East. North through hole. East. East. Head north through the gate. Get Scroll of Skelos.

Episode Seven

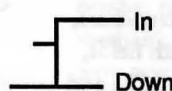
Exit city and go west to Tarantia (see map for locations.) Get the Black key. Get the Brown key. Get the Green key and potions. Confront the Mummy. Go west, then north and use the flint and steel on wood.

Return to mummy room. Go north through wall covering. Go west, north, east, north, west to statue. Immediately use Freeze Amulet. North. Click on throne. Down, east, Up, east. North to Thoth Amon.

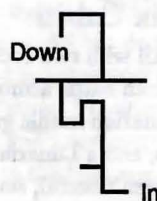
Use the Emerald Amulet. Use the Staff of Power three times. Use Lotus spells to stay alive. Use Horn of Valhalla. After he's dead go west. Change fighting style to Swing.

Destroy Thoth Amon's heart by clicking on the glass jar with your sword. (If you have trouble, it is sometimes possible to duck into the west room and smash the jar without killing him. Ⓜ)

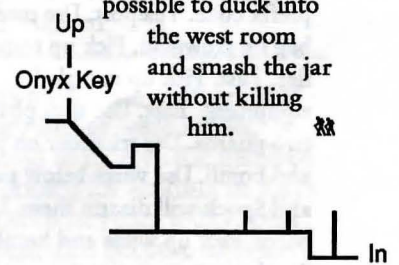
Zamboula Tunnels



Level One



Level Two



Level Three

Keys to the Kingdoms™

Star Trek: 25th Anniversary

Mission One: Demon World

When you beam down, talk to Angiven: 1, 1, 1. Head east into chapel. Talk to Brother Stephen. Use medical tricorder on Brother Chub. Go west and north. Use stun phaser on Klingons. Use tricorder on Klingons. Get hand. North. Get berries. Return to chapel. Use berries on Stephen. Go to lab. Use berries on Stephen. Use berries on molecular synthesizer. Use Spock on computer. Use display. Speech option 2. He'll offer descriptions of what's in display. Go through all selections. Pick up the case. Pick up twisted metal and skull.

Return to chapel. Use flask on Chub. Talk to Chub and Griznash. Return to berry bush. North. Use tricorder on door and boulders. Shoot boulders with full-power phaser until man is exposed. Use medical bag on man. Talk to man. Use hand on panel. Return to lab. Use hand on Stephen. Use hand on workbench.

Return to boulders. Use hand on panel. North. Use tricorder on machines and panels. Use panel with dials. Set dials so each row of lights has only one light glowing. Speech options: 2, 2. Use tricorder on alien. Use twisted metal on alien.

Mission Two: Hijack

On the bridge, select Spock and ship's computer. Type "masada" and note override code. Select Ohura and send prefix code. Teleport. Use medical bag on crewman. Pick up transmogrifier. East. Pick up mangled equipment. East. Use stun phaser on two guards. Use tricorder on panel and bomb. Use wires below panel, and Spock will disarm them. Use panel. Pick up wires and bomb. West. South.

Use Spock on transporter control.

Use full-power phaser on welder. Use welder on metal scraps. Use comb-bit on transmogrifier. Use transmogrifier on transporter controls. Use wire from bomb on transporter controls. Use transporter. Talk to Cerath. Speech option: 1.

Paul Shaffer

Mission Three: Love's Labor Lost

Beam to station. Use Spock and McCoy on computer. Go to replicator room. Get anti-grav unit from cabinet. Go to engineering. Pick up wrench. Open red panel. Use wrench on nitrogen tank, gray panel on left console, and vent screen. Use anti-grav unit on nitrogen tank. Pick up insulation. Go to main lab and use insulation in distillator. Go back to replicator. Use wrench on valves above tanks. Use polyberelcarbonate on red doors. Use Spock on controls. Take TLTDH cannister. Switch nitrogen and oxygen tanks. Use controls and take ammonia.

Go to freezer in main lab. Take virus culture. Use culture in testing machine and ammonia on nozzle. Use McCoy on testing machine. Place cure sample to replicator chamber and activate controls. Use syringe on Spock. Throw TLTDH down duct in engineering. Use ladder in main lab to descend to lower level. Use cure on Romulan guards. Enter control center. Use Kirk on hostages. Talk to Dr. Marcus. Use cure on Romulan Preax. Compliment his honors.

Matthew R. Hager

Buck Rogers: Matrix Cubed

Equip all with two rocket launchers, Mercurian battle armor with fields, two Lunarian needle guns, ECM and goggles, and a Lunarian rocket pistol. Rifles aren't useful, since most action is at close range. Rocket launchers

can be obtained from gang veterans in the northeast slums of Lasangelborg while looking for Dr. Chade. Extra weapons are also found there, downstairs at 1, 5.

While seeking Dr. Malcolm, get bolt rifle and assemble Lunarian laser rifle at RAM HQ at Santa Catalina. While seeking Dr. Colder at Copernicus, get Mercurian battle armor with fields, Lunarian rocket pistol and Lunarian needle guns. When fighting Amalthians with Dr. Makali at Jupiter University, you can get Mercurian battle armor with fields and Mercurian rocket rifles.

The best place to get experience is onboard the living ship after visiting Fungus Asteroid. You get over 30,000 points each time you make peace between the Pirates and Stormriders and successfully repair the ship before trip to University.

Dennis R. Ewell

Eye of the Beholder 2

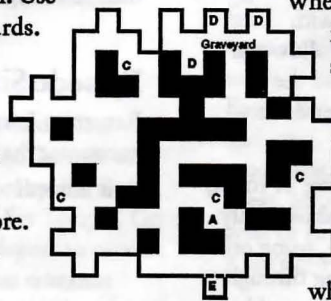
Forest: get the objects marked on the map provided here. Bones are at (D); dig grave. Arrows are at (B). Arm rear ranks with rocks (C) and daggers (A), which can be thrown in battle.

When the old woman appears, inquire. Enter the hidden stairs and get the leather armor and scroll (E). Enter temple. Go west and talk to woman. Don't let Insal the Thief join, or he'll take off with your equipment when you rest. Search basin

in Guards Barracks for dagger. Bash barrels to get contents (if any).

Donald Tong

Silver Tower, Blue Tower: Beholders and Wisps are immune to magic. Use hit and run tactics and save often. Kill



Eye of the Beholder 2: The Forest

QuestBusters

all Beholders. Before leaving the Silver Tower area, the party must have a +2 Green Crystal Hammer (found on level where wind takes party up). Area also has good leather armor for Thief (dragonskin). To leave the area for the Temple, search area with illusionary/shifting walls until you find and kill Beholder; you'll find Plate. Near or at this spot, look for button. This leads to area with two Beholders and an altar.

After disposing of Beholders, place hand on altar. This teleports party to Temple and permits party to pass Magic Mouth (Mark of Darkmoon). Use Green Crystal Hammer +2 on green wall to enter pale blue (Crystal?) tower.

Cast magic spell on both Elf carvings to proceed further. In area with Basilisks, search for three gems. Use teleportation devices to find one. Look for another in area where holes appear and disappear (follow holes traveling down passage). Look for third gem behind illusionary wall. Use in room with "cold to the touch" device on wall. This opens nearby door. In room with holes on floor, touch button. This closes a hole for a short time. Using haste spell, proceed. Repeat when returning (touch circular floor area, however).

You must find and secure "Eye, Crimson (ruby?) key and other parts of a Sword that look like keys. Use "Eye" in room with moving wall. (To get the "Eye," the party will suffer many Fireball spells that can't be escaped. Rest and save often. Map carefully. When all is secured (red key, talon, spur, eye, etc.), return to Temple. Open lock with Key and use items to enter next level (it will turn into a +3 level sword).

Charles Don Hall

Crimson Tower: To turn off force fields at the three altars in Halls of Hells, locate the two dials and turn each to 3 o'clock, then to 6 o'clock, then back to 12 o'clock. Use the glass spheres at the altars. This opens

a hole in the ceiling and reveals a lever. Pull the lever, and you'll be transported up to the level with the Mindflayers and Salamanders.

Find the room where a wall has two triangles with fields in them. Cast Dispell Magic on each triangle. This opens the door. Save game. Enter the door and go up the stairs. Dran's room is around to the left. Before entering his room, make sure none of your party members has a complete set of Elf bones, or you won't get to fight Dran.

To defeat Dran, lure him into a room. Hit him once or twice, then step left or right before he has a chance to strike or cast a spell. When he steps in front of you, hit him again; repeat until he moves beside you, and take this opportunity to run into another room. Save game and wait for Dran to enter the room. Repeat this sequence until he's vanquished. Do the same when he turns into a Dragon.

Steve Byers

Twilight 2000

Always manually recruit. Select "random generation" and reroll to a shot at more than 32 points (max is 46). Create 4-6 combat specialists with Initiative of 6; all should be very strong and have Load carrying ability, so they can use AGS-17 grenade launchers and M2HB machine guns. They also need high Rifle skill and high Heavy Weapons. The leader needs high Forage and/or Hunting.

The rest of the platoon should be 1-2 doctors (high Medical) and 1-2 mechanics (high Mechanics). Someone should have high Interrogation, and you need to have all 26 languages covered.

First have the team tackle the combat missions. All but doctors, mechanics and interrogators should have several "mules," characters with high Strength and Load carrying who can be called to the field after the battle is won and pick up the enemy's discarded weapons. Exchange your

flak jackets for the enemy's Kevlar ones. In combat, engage at long range with grenade launchers, machine guns and anti-tank weapons.

In tank-to-tank battles, choose "interactive" combat mode; close in and try to disable enemy vehicles. Then bail out of your tank and finish them off with anti-tank weapons. Be sure you're within range before dismounting. To avoid losing your tank to anti-tank fire, bail out of your tank one kilometer from the enemy infantry and walk into battle.

Gary Miller

Uncharted Waters

Buy sugar in Lisbon, coral in Santa Domingo, wine in Bordeaux, artwork in Istanbul, grain in Majorca and Sumatra, carpet in Baghdad, porcelain in Venice and Nagasaki, pepper in Malacca or Calcutta, cinamon in Ceylon, pearls, raw silk, and silk in Zeiton (China), cloth in Goa, ivory in Mombasa and San Jorge, gold in Sofala and Panama, silver in Nagasaki. Sell arms in the Americas, spice in Northern Europe and Mediteranian, etc.

Buy barmaids 20-30 drinks until they buy you drinks and swoon over your return to their bar. Barmaids will provide essential information concerning merchant, warship and pirate fleets.

Buy talisman, buy a dragon figurehead (Seville), and save game often to avoid being wiped out by storms. Buy navigation aids from guilds. Recruit all five mates early, give them all experience in piloting ships and give them some gold to promote loyalty.

Al C. Giovetti

This month Steve Byers and Gary Miller were randomly selected to receive the game of their choice for sending in Keys. So send in yours today! (All submissions become exclusive property of Eldritch, LTD. until October 11, 2317 A.D.

Star Trek.....from 1

their own thing. Back on the bridge, you battle other ships by targeting the enemy with the cursor and pressing the mouse or joystick buttons to fire phasers and photon torpedoes. Anticipate the enemy's path and lead him a little, and everything will go fine. You can even switch to a full-screen view of the action if you have enough memory. At this point, the game becomes a bit of a simulator.

Graphics and missions

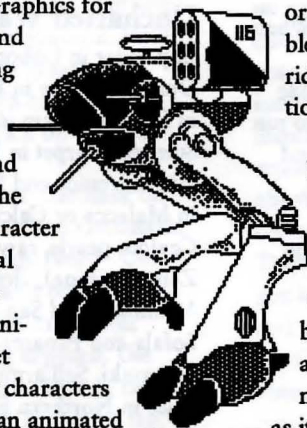
The graphics, sound effects and music are right on target. Graphics for the ship explosions and the show's theme song are a bit weak, but everything else — from phaser blasts and Enterprise flybys to the hailing noise and character movements — are real nice. Illustrations are colorful, and communications from StarFleet Command and other characters are accompanied by an animated figure of the character in question.

Cinematic sequences are liberally interlaced throughout the game for story purposes, which also brings the visuals to life. I'm just happy they got some of the more important sound effects right and that the game plays smoothly without graphic delays.

The missions will satisfy most fans of the series. From mini-battles and protection of other forces to investigation of unexplained events and escort services, the Enterprise and her crew are put through their paces. Even Harry Mudd pops up in one of the missions, but I have not seen a sign of a tribble yet (darn!).

He'd dead, Jim: you grab his tricorder, I'll get his wallet!

A lot of the puzzles are object-based, while some also require politically correct negotiations with aliens.



Capturing the spirit of the series, the missions make good use of all the *Star Trek* gimmicks and gadgets, like tricorders and handheld phasers. Missions are laid out, usually by StarFleet Command, for the crew and, as Kirk, your next steps are up to you. The dialogue is also typical of the series and you'll hear such famous lines as McCoy's ever-popular "He's dead, Jim."

25th Anniversary takes the throne as the leader of all other computer game homages to *Star Trek*. I wish I could have explored more of the Enterprise and the beam-down sites, but perhaps that can be worked into the next game or mission disk. My only other possible complaint with the game is the ridiculous over 45 minutes installation time.

Come on, Interplay, give us a break! While waiting for it to install, I was inspired me to go back and watch some of the old episodes (I have all of them on tape, and watched most of them before the game was ready to play!) and had me wishing that the original had not gone off the air as early as it did. Now we finally have a *Star Trek* game stands out above all others.

Conclusions: I'll leave you with two thoughts. Did you know that not once in any of the episodes or feature films did any character say the often misquoted and popular phrase "Beam me up, Scotty"? Also, I would like any reader who has a positive, confirmed explanation for the numbers in the stardate to send them along to me in care of *QuestBusters*. As a huge *Star Trek* fan, I'm embarrassed to admit it, but I've been wondering about this for years! Thanks. Beam me out of this review, Scotty!

Skill Level: Intermediate
Company: Interplay
Price: \$59.95
QuestBusters price: \$49

Kobold Korner.....from 5

talk to. The plot is linear, allowing absolutely no deviation from the chosen path. I wouldn't recommend this game to anyone, not even my mother-in-law."

Liked the game, but not the review

Fred Brooks disagreed with Giovetti's conclusion that it was "complex, difficult and involved," citing seven parts of the review, including character generation and equipment, the tedium of moving from place to place, and the lack of logic in the 3D vs. 2D modes.

"The review says 'the major deficiency is the inability of the interface to deal with the tedium of moving from place to place in a vast world where everything is the same size.' Not!! Yes, it's tedious to drive 60 miles in a tank at 30 kph in a real-time game, but it's not necessary. Using the Mapper, you point and click where you want to move to, and you're moved there instantaneously in real time...and in a city, pressing C takes you to the center of town."

Brooks, however, "...liked the game, the graphics and the interface" but concurs with Kmosena that the lack of variety in the missions is its downfall. "I still play it, but only while waiting for something new."

Conclusions: These are all all valid points. Except Kmosena's comment about it not being an adventure. The review described it as "militaristic role-playing," which falls into the general category of adventure (though you're right that it's not a pure adventure in the puzzle-solving tradition of Sierra games).

Looking back, Al agrees that it's the lack of variety in missions that is the game's weak point, but argues that "it is difficult and complex if you don't use the pre-rolled characters and are not focusing solely on this game — it's very easy to miss something in the 100-page manual, like the 'C' option, which even Paragon didn't mention when I asked them about this part of the interface on three occasions."



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