Magic Candle II: The Four and Forty

After an eight-month delay, *Magic Candle II* is finally out (it did, however, show up before *Ultima VII*, *Ultima Underworld* and *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis*).The delay was so frustrating to its creator, Ali Atabek, that he once jokingly vowed to there would be executions at Mindcraft — starting with himself — if the game did not meet its Christmas deadline.Thankfully, Ali is still with us...but is *Magic Candle II* worth the wait?

The game now has digitized sounds, music, high-res graphics and color and also enjoys a depth of play and many player innovations that have been a long time coming. I think *Magic Candle II* was well worth waiting for, but let me go over what it's about and what the new features are so you can make up your own mind about the sequel.
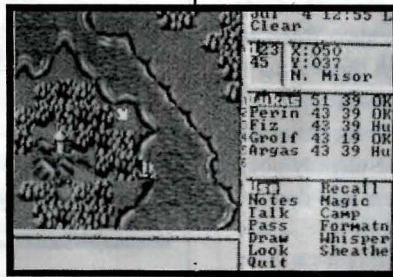
Ten years after

Ten years have gone by since the story of the first *Magic Candle*. The heroes of the first adventure have aged, grown lazy and forgotten their spells and skills. In ten years some new arts have been developed, new spells have been created, and new dangers now stalk the land.

The original "four and forty" guardians have been captured by the forces of darkness. The "four" were imprisoned in white, pink, blue and grey candles, and it's up to you to rescue them by awakening the lost gods and obtaining their blessing. You've also got to recover and activate the lost scrolls, find the four candles hidden deep within

the darkness of the evil, and finally, with the help of King Rebnard, track down a rare bird and the ancestors of four ancient heroes, ultimately banishing Zakhad from the land of Gurtex.

This quest is a vast one, encompassing long treks across and beneath a vast continent. Along the way, library research, the use of deductive reasoning and simple conversation must be used to unearth the secrets of the magic words you'll need to open portals and to learn

the combinations of geometric shapes that activate teleportals. Your group of six adventurers will be required to slog their way from one end of the continent to the other and discover hidden towns and secrets.

Many companions and hirelings, each distinct personalities, may be recruited to travel along. Companions can be assigned tasks to complete and places to go on behalf of the party, while magical contact is maintained with your main hero or heroine.

Classic role-playing

Magic Candle II is a pure role-playing game, with nine basic attributes that include bravery, loyalty, and resistance in addition to the usual six attributes. Bravery and loyalty endow the companions and hirelings with more personality and regulate how the characters behave in combat and on tedious assignments.

There are eighteen skills that encompass fighting, trade, magic and music. Companions can be assigned to work for wages, to go to certain safe locations, or to simply wait at a location until the party returns.

Over 30 companions and hirelings may be recruited, and the recruits may abandon the party for a variety of reasons. Hirelings and companions give the game one of its most pleasant features, because they do not disappear when dismissed. Instead, they attempt to make their way home to the place where they were before recruitment. Dismissed companions and hirelings can be captured by the forces of evil, setting up the possibility of a rescue attempt. Companions and hirelings can be contacted via magical mindstones.

There are three basic perspectives, or views, in the game: the wilderness map, the interior view (inside a castle, city or dungeon), and the room view. In a room, the individual characters move independently; combat is conducted at this level. From the interior perspective, the characters move as a unit with a leader, and this view is the main one used while exploring. On the wilderness map only an arrow appears on the map, marking the party's location; travel by

Contents

by Alfred C. Giovetti

The 386-required games arrive

It was just a matter of time — every software developer has been waiting to see who would go first with a 386-only game, and now Origin has released two.

In order to play *Ultima Underworld*, you'll need at least a 386SX. It also supports the DX and 486. Other requirements are two megs of RAM and a memory manager. I'm playing it on a 386SX at 16 MHz, and it's fast and smooth.

Ultima VII supports same machines — but 20 MHz is recommended. *Ultima VII* has its own memory manager. Other requirements include 21+ megs of hard disk space and 256-color VGA.

What this means for developers is that the market for 386-only games is about to be tested. If Origin's bold move pans out, you can count on seeing more such games from everyone. Meanwhile, if you don't already have a 386 and are planning to upgrade soon, spend a few more bucks and get a 486 so you can keep up with the technology for maybe the next two years.

More new quests

For MSDOS and quest-alikes, Infocom has released Steve Meretzky's *Leather Goddesses of Phobos II*. As the author points out in a recent letter, it is a parser-free adventure whose design called for digitized graphics and sounds from the outset. It's an easy one, though.

SSI shipped *Treasures of the Savage Frontier*, the sequel to and final game (there were only two!) in the series launched with *Gateway to the Savage Frontier*. (Rumor has it a third game was to have been called *Evil Wizards of the Savage Frontier*,

and that a joint production from Infocom and SSI, *Lost Treasures of the Savage Frontier*, is still under development at Back Burner, Inc.)

The Amiga version of *Pools of Darkness* arrived in mid-April (the MSDOS version was reviewed in our October 1991 issue). *Treasures of the Savage Frontier* is scheduled for an Amiga conversion by summer. And Sierra's Amiga *Police Quest III* arrived (see December 1991 for covereage of the MSDOS original).

Bard's Tale IV

Electronic Arts has a new producer in their Stories division — Victor Penman, who was formerly doing the Gold Box games for SSI.

He called the other day and mentioned that EA is currently doing the next *Bard's*

Treasures of Savage Frontier

Tale in-house, though there is no working title or release date yet. My guess is maybe Christmas. (Another source told me EA has already poured nearly a million dollars into the game's development).

Sega vs. Accolade

The latest round in a legal battle between Sega and Accolade may have far-ranging effects on the freedom of all software developers to write programs for computers as well as for videogame machines. Essentially what happened was that Sega's new operating system was revised to include code that causes a message stating that any cartridge inserted into the Sega Genesis was produced by or licensed by Sega.

When Accolade "reverse-engineered" the operating system in order to develop their own games for the Genesis — as developers typically do for the IBM, Amiga and most computers — they mimicked this code without realizing it would produce such a message. Then Sega declared the display of this message when an Accolade game was slipped

The Mail Maze

Dear QuestBusters:

I do like your coverage of dedicated game machines, because there are some good role-playing videogames. Could you rate the top ten games for Sega, Nintendo and Super Nintendo.

Dr. George Perez

Ceccola! Are you reading this? Or just your own reviews? If you do happen to read it, consider this an assignment and get it in by May 30. Give us a one-liner about each game, and don't do more than 600 words.

Dear QuestBusters:

I'm tired of getting a new computer every two years just to keep up with the technology, so I plan to get a videogame machine. Do you plan to do a newsletter about videogames?

Jose Gecko

No way, Jose! We are already way too busy with QB and Simulations!.

Planet's Edge: The Point of No Return

Those of you who frequently visit software stores don't need me to tell you that there is a definite lack of science fiction RPGs and adventures. It is easy to choose such a game when there are only a handful available, but difficult to pick a great game when the field is so limited.

As the technology moves forward in our world, so does players' tastes in quests. In order for a science fiction RPG to work, it needs to incorporate the depth and intuitive interface techniques of the better hack-and-slash, A D & D-type games.

Who better to put together such a game than New World Computing, a company and team of designers who, with their *Might & Magic* series, has years of experience in the fantasy RPG genre. *Might & Magic III: Isles of Terra*, the latest in the *M & M* series, set new standards in that genre, as *Planet's Edge* does for science fiction RPGs.

This is New World's first science fiction game. With intricately-woven story and subplots all tied into a main quest that spans the galaxy, *Planet's*

Type: Science fiction role-playing
System: MSDOS (640K & hard disk required; EGA, VGA/MCGA, Tandy; Roland, Ad Lib, Sound Blaster, Tandy 3-voice/DAC
Planned ports: Amiga

Edge offers lots of fun for the die-hard science fiction fan and a welcome diversion from the standard fare of dragons in dungeons.

The invisible planet

Set in the year 2045, *Planet's Edge* puts the player in charge of a four-person team of galactic adventurers whose job is to reclaim Earth from a warp field that renders it invisible. Despite its invisibility, the Earth's gravity still keeps the moon and satellites

in orbit. It appears that the Earth is still there, but in a different dimension.

Success in attaining this goal — and there are two ways to achieve it — depends on collecting and assembling the eight pieces of the Centauri Drive, an alien mechanism that can restore the Earth to its former glory and visibility.

The planet was warped into a worm-hole as a result of an explosion on the extraterrestrial ship (ETS) that approached Earth in peace, but could not effectively communicate its intentions until too late. You must trace the path of the ETS to unravel the clues to this mystery and the locations of the eight pieces of the Centauri Drive.

" This is a warning ! Stay away from Athena Three or we will be forced to destroy your vessel ! "

The story unfolds in description and dialogue text windows as you examine things and talk to people and robots. To speak with a nearby NPC, you click him with the "talk" icon until you've read everything he has to say — you never have to type in keywords as in an *Ultima*.

You can solve the object-oriented puzzles that impede your progress, giving key characters the artifacts they demand — or you can simply blow them away and walk through the door they are guarding. Every situation can be dealt with in either way, so you can actually complete the quest without solving a single puzzle.

To the moon, Alice...

Moonbase is the HQ for your exploration team and your first ship, the *Ulysses*. Here you can build useful objects for team members and use raw materials collected on the various planets to upgrade the space ship, an diverting activity that is reminiscent of classics such as *Sun Dog* and *Universe I* and *II*.

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by Russ Ceccola

Team member skills and ship weapon and engine configurations can also be modified from the moon. As players find parts of the Centauri Device, they bring them back to the Research Center on the moon for examination and reconstruction.

Your party is well-balanced from a skill standpoint and is also the best racially-balanced computer game I've seen (African engineer, American navigator, Russian weapons specialist and Japanese scientist/physician). Each person has six skills: three basic ones and three secondary skills, from a selection of sixteen possible skills such as Hand Weapons, Ship's Repair and Communications. The pre-rolled characters work well for the game, but a team with strengths in certain areas does have it benefits. These skills do have an important impact on game play.

The original party members are four people who, if killed, can be replaced with clones. Faces and names are the same, but skills are rerolled each time you clone a character. Each of the four can be "recloned" until you are happy with his or her abilities. If the party is wiped out, you automatically start over at Moonbase — and a "rescue team" recovers all the objects they had, which is a real time-saver.

The captain assumes the role of any officer who is killed. (When you click the icon of a dead character while on a planet, you are told "He's dead, Jim," the only *Star Trek* joke I've seen so far.)

Flight control central

Travel through is directed from the bridge of the ship, in *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary*, but with only the four crew members. To enter commands,

Planet's Edge..............from 3

simply click on the appropriate officer for the job to bring up a menu of four or five options.

As you move from planet to planet for each given star to investigate the mystery and follow the leads based on information you discover, you quickly formulate a definite plan of action for exploration.

Flying a space ship is not as hard as it sounds, at least not in *Planet's Edge*. Once you've visited a star system by flying there manually, its name appears in the auto-pilot menu.

Manual flight is more like playing *Asteroids* or *Star Control* than *Star Flight*. Animation is not limited to the ships. Each planet actually moves around its sun instead of remaining stationary, lending the experience a stronger sense of realism. You can see this motion in the main screen, and get an overview in the radar display.

Which brings up one oversight of the manual, which doesn't say a thing about what all those blips and colored dots represent. It's usually easy enough to figure out, at least until the screen is filled with a thousand points of colored light.

Top-down combat

Space combat works well. Instead of the typical first-person, 3D perspective, outer space maneuvers take place in two-dimensional space seen from overhead.

Most the time you'll be looking at an aerial view of the planet, as in *Martian Dreams* and *Ultima*. It is easy to move the team members around and issue commands. But the interface is a bit weird until you get used to it, because there are two sets of command icons that you switch between by pressing the right and left mouse buttons. Hot keys are available for most actions.

Building ships & lasers

Most of your time is spent on the surface of planet after planet, but ship-building and outfitting are also fun. When you pick a new part to add, an animated robot arm grabs it and puts it in place.

You can have up to three ships, each armed and equipped differently. If headed for a star blockade, get a ship with extra firepower, such as a turret gun instead of forward-firing cannon or laser. For trading, you could build a cargo ship that has the largest hull size and could haul more raw materials around space.

There are sixteen raw materials — crystals, alien metals and so on — to discover, trade for, and use to build new weapons and parts. The quality of the things you can build depends on your level of technology, which increases as you make discoveries.

With such a variety of things to do and places to explore, *Planet's Edge* will keep players busy for countless hours. There is much to the game that has nothing to do with the main goal yet offers challenges to the player and more ways to have fun.

You must upgrade your ship and put together certain alien devices in order to increase the level of preparedness for the next set of obstacles. Finding the pieces of the Centauri Drive is a daunting challenge that requires you to properly customize your ships and adapt your team to more dangerous circumstances so they can wage successful battles on planets and in space.

Graphics & sounds

Graphics, sound effects and music in *Planet's Edge* are just wonderful. The screen is filled with large characters, cinematic scenes, vast new worlds to

explore, and dogfights in space. And the planets are incredibly detailed, especially considering the vast number of them.

You can switch between two map magnifications. This is particularly useful during planetside journeys, because they reveal only as much as the team sees through movement and eliminate the need for hundreds of pages of maps that would be necessary to finish the mission.

Throughout your space jaunts, music keeps the juices flowing and reflects the tone of the action at that time. Sound effects reintroduce those great sci-fi pings, blips and beeps that we've heard before, but it's very important to the atmosphere and fun of *Planet's Edge* that they're there.

You can name your saved games, and save as many as you have hard disk space for. When you start the game, it auto-loads your last position, and you can load a saved game without restarting the program.

Conclusions: *Planet's Edge* was hard to put down. It reminds me *Megatraveller* in plot and design, but simplifies a lot of the elements of those games for a better gaming experience. With a *Zork*-like plot and *Star Trek*-like team, *Planet's Edge* takes sci-fi games to a new fun level that was previously hard to achieve when companies simply put the trappings of a sci-fi game on the bare bones of an AD&D-type interface.

All the months of waiting were worth it, because *Planet's Edge* earns new respect for science fiction games. The goal is attainable and appropriate for the story, and you will get so caught up in the exploration of new planets and communication with alien races that you might forget about the Centauri Device and enjoy *Planet's Edge* for the exploration, discovery and fun alone. 🦋

Difficulty: Intermediate
Company: New World Computing
Price: $59.95
QuestBusters price: $ 49
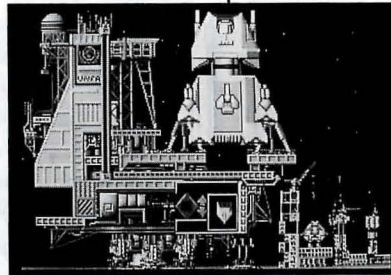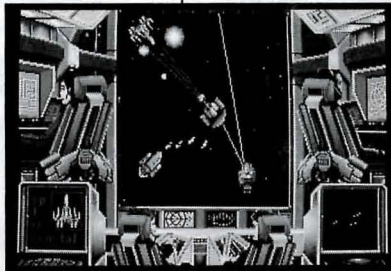
Obitus: another goofy name from Psygnosis

by Al C. Giovetti

On a dark and rainy night, our hero Wil Mason drives his safety-conscious Volvo Estate off the road — yes, even the Volvo dies in this adventure. Wil lives, however, and is soon plodding down the road to find refuge from the storm in an abandoned medieval tower.

After falling asleep, Wil awakes to find that the erstwhile tower — with him still in it — has been teleported to a medieval land ruled by four evil brothers who have absconded with essential tower components. These tower components are gems that are necessary to the efficient operation of the time machine tower, which has now become Wil's only way home to his wrecked Volvo and his supposedly rewarding job in a crowded modern city.

What it's not

Advertised as a "role-playing arcade/adventure game," this European game has all the earmarks of a foreign production. It is supposed to be role-playing, but there are no statistics or improvement possibilities for attributes, skills or levels. There is some limited character interaction. Talking to characters will get you a few clues and more objects to accumulate.

The game is mostly an arcade/adventure game and should be avoided by die-hard role-playing adventure gamers. Those who enjoy adventure with arcade elements will recognize the Psygnosis style of game.

Early parts of the game, called maze sections, are presented in a first-person perspective view of the forest, mines and caves that is similar to the presentation in *Eye of the Beholder* and *Legend of Darkmoon*. The later part (castle sections) and the paths (parallax sections) from the woods to the castles, dungeon, mines and caves are presented in a third-person perspective side view. The third-person-perspective side view is reminiscent of arcade titles such as *Barbarian*.

The map is divided up into four separate quadrants to the northwest, northeast, southwest and southeast, with the tower in the middle. All around the tower is forest (also divided into four quadrants).

Beyond the forest are the four castles of the four evil brothers. There are dungeons in the two eastern castles, while the western castles have caves (southwest) or mines (northwest).

The first key you find allows you to access the northwest quadrant of the map. In addition to the four castles, there are nine six-by-six (approximately) space maze sections, plus 400 characters with whom you can trade, talk and fight.

Dazed and confused

Unfortunately there is no auto-mapping. Combined with the eight possible directions of travel and the first-person perspective in the maze sequences, this oversight makes moving around very disorienting. The disorientation and unusual eight compass direction heading makes mapping difficult.

At the bottom of the display, a compass brightens up at every crossroad to show that you can turn at that point. By turning your character, you can see which passages are available. In spite of the eight possible directions, the maps are arranged in checkerboard fashion, such that the diagonals form a right triangle with the shorter north-south and east-west corridors. As you can see, mapping is possible, but highly confusing without auto-mapping.

Wil has an inventory of objects that can be used to open doors (keys), restore health (food and potions) and increase the ability to fight (weapons and arrows). A full 24-item inventory screen can be displayed by selecting the info icon and clicking on the inventory window.

You won't need to scrounge around for a bow: one just happens to be in Wil's possession when the game starts. The bow appears to be magical, since it does not appear in his inventory. In order to use the bow, Wil selects "use" and makes sure the arrows are in the active window at the bottom of the adventuring display. Clicking on an opponent causes an arrow to be shot at the location pointed to on the opponent.

Combat is real-time, and apparently can be initiated by Wil or the denizens of medieval Middlemere. Some characters will not attack you unless you attack them first. Others, such as bowmen, are anxious to shoot you down if you come close enough.
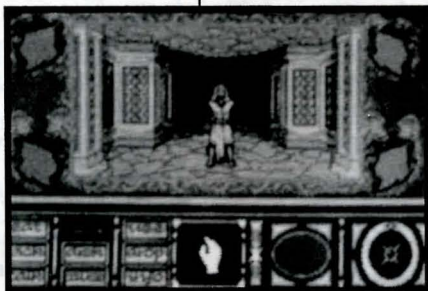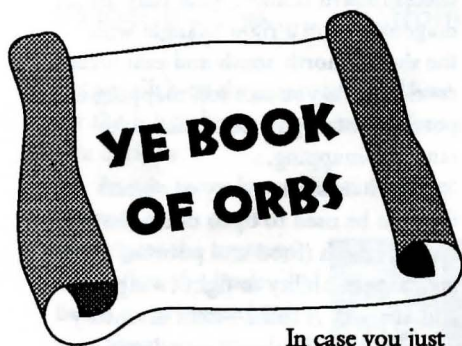
Knights and many more characters are almost invincible, while others dissolve into dust at the mere mention of combat. Illogically, many seemingly non-violent good characters must be killed to prevent them from blocking your path. In fact, the object of this game seems to be: if it moves, kill it.

Game functions such as save, load and pause are supported. The

> Type: Action Adventure
> System: Amiga, MSDOS (640K and mouse required, joystick optional; EGA, CGA, VGA, Hercules, Tandy Color; Ad Lib, Roland, Tandy, Sound Blaster)
> Planned ports: ST

YE BOOK OF ORBS

In case you just joined *QuestBusters* and missed the past two issues of the Journal, the next *Quest for Clues* will be called *Quest for Clues: The Book of Orbs* — not *Quest for Clues V*. Instead of holding onto the solutions we've got now until we have 40 for a traditional book, we'll publish solutions to 20 games in the spring.

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: 25h Anniversary Edition, Might & Magic 3, Conquests of the Longbow, Vengeance of Excalibur, Pools of Darkness, Monkey Island 2, Roger Rabbit, Police Quest III, 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 Underworld* and *Buck Rogers II*.

Order early, order often

Origin says it will be out in May. *Quest for Clues: The Book of Orbs* goes for $15 instead of the usual $25 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. There is no surcharge for VISA or MasterCard. Just print and sign your name as it appears on the card, and provide the expiration date. See the back cover for details on shipping. ⋙

Obitus....from previous page

requiring you to reboot the machine if you wants to quit or exit the game. Copy protection is by keyword from the 41-page manual. The game uses either keyboard or joystick and mouse — but you must have a mouse to pick up objects, manipulate objects and use the save and load screen.

A nice feature is the ability to define movement keys when using the keyboard instead of the joystick. Hot keys can be used for the nine main game icons. You are limited to twelve save games, unless floppies are employed.

Graphics and sounds

Graphics are quite good, with good use of color and detail. Colors are a bit muted and seem be dark and washed out rather than the brighter colors seen in many other games. The musical theme at the beginning of the game is quite good and is enjoyable. But what you hear inside the game is unremarkable, with no real use of mood music or stings.

Conclusions: *Obitus* is a fair effort by the company that has been an innovator in the industry since their hits *Deep Space* and *Bratacus*. *Bratacus* was an arcade adventure with a sense of humor. Years later we are seeing another arcade adventure from Psygnosis of vast scope and with a good plot. .

Still, *Obitus* has room for improvement. It is definitely not a role-playing adventure, but an arcade adventure with limited role-playing characteristics. The game has an inventory, a save game routine and limited character interaction. *Obitus* is worth a look and perhaps, if you like it, you will have found a unique gem. Ultimately, *Obitus* is an arcade adventure — I only hope *Obitus II* will be a Psygnosis *role-playing* adventure. ⋙

Difficulty: Intermediate
Company: Psygnosis
Price: Amiga, $59; MSDOS, $49
QuestBusters price: $$49/39

Adventure Road........from 2

into the machine constituted a copyright and trademark violation.

Already a Federal judge had granted a preliminary injunction against Accolade that, once effective, would prevent them from developing or distributing games for the Genesis. Accolade is still fighting, and if they lose, the decision (which could redefine the definition of reverse-engineering and the impact of relevant copyright and trademark laws) might lead to a situation in which hardware manufacturers decide who writes games for their machines, and what kind of games. Now the key question: what kind of adventure games can we expect to see if IBM or Commodore have control over the topics and designs, the puzzles and the magic systems?

Accolade says a negative decision will not stop them from maintaining their position as a major player in the entertainment software market, but you can be sure that market will not be what it is today if Sega gets away with this assault on the free enterprise system that has made this nation so great (I gather you noticed I've drifted from reporting the hard news into editorializing on its implications; to any Sega attorneys reading an unauthorized copy of *QuestBusters*, I should point out that this is known as freedom of the press).

So what can we as gamers do to preserve our Constitutional right to pursuit of happiness by playing good computer games — instead of the kind we'll wind up playing if it's left up to hardware manufacturers? All I can think of right now is smashing hundreds Genesis machines on the steps of the Federal District Court in San Francisco to protest Sega's totalitarian (in my humble opinion) tactics. *QuestBusters* will gladly provide the sledge hammers.

It may not have an effect on the judge's decision, at least Sega will learn that in addition to copyright and trademark laws, the USA also has a bill of rights that they will have far less chance of "redefining" in a series of hopeless lawsuits. ⋙

On-line role-playing: the future of RPGs?

I've been playing several multi-player RPGs lately, and the most impressive are those with graphic front-ends, especially America On-Line's *Neverwinter Nights* and GEnie's *MechWarrior* game.

Neverwinter Nights

Neverwinter Nights is sent in the AD&D Forgotten Realms world and is centered around the town of Neverwinter, the same environs in *Gateway to the Savage Frontier*. The geography is the same in the computer and online versions, but that's where the resemblance ends.

Neverwinter Nights uses a graphic front-end very similar to SSI's Gold Box games; in many respects, it is actually identical. That's the bad news. Technologically, it's stuck around the level of *Secret of the Silver Blades* — EGA graphics, limited sound, same old hack 'n' slash.

Level advancement stops around 12th level, and *Neverwinter* still uses the xenophobic first Edition AD&D rules, severely limiting non-human character advancement. *Neverwinter* is huge though, much bigger than any SSI quest. And the best part is that you can hook up with one of many real-live players and trek around looking for adventure.

You can only create one character, which is a drawback in the beginning if you can't find adventurers willing to go Lizard Man-hunting with you. It shouldn't be hard to find a party, though, for *Neverwinter* may be America Online's favorite feature. There is a well-planned chat function; you can post messages to all within earshot (10'), and send private messages to party members or ESP messages to anyone in the entire *Neverwinter* game world.

One member is designated as leader, and the others give their characters a "follow" command; the leader moves the party, and in cases of large groups, movement can be slow. Your party can encounter another party in combat, and will have to patiently wait until that combat is completed before moving through, unless they want to join the combat — which is deemed impolite if you're not invited.

Players are so devoted to that they've formed guilds, orchestrated alignment conflicts, set bounties on other players, arranged for player vs. player combat and equipment swaps. These types of players have made the game much more interesting, despite its rough edges, a few of which are limited levels, limited goodies, limited NPC interaction, EGA graphics, constant monster room resets (which are unavoidable, since you can't let one character kill the monster in the room and ruin it for the other 40 on-line that session).

But *Neverwinter* is addicting due to the human interaction. An excellent start — too bad they chose such a flawed engine. Rumor has it that GEnie will be starting up another multi-player AD&D system. Another rumor says CompuServe has something in the works that promises to be better than *Neverwinter Nights*.

MechWarrior

I was gratified to hear of Kesmai Corp.'s reincarnation of *MechWarrior*, an excellent EGA point-of-view RPG (sort of) set in FASA's BattleTech universe. It uses the *MechWarrior* game as a front-end graphics engine, which consists of an EGA, polygon-oriented point-of-view role player in which your "Mech" (a huge armed robot) trundles across a landscape hunting down other Mechs or attacking installations.

Rough by today's standards, the game remains one of my favorites, and Kesmai's approach bears watching. The multi-player additions consist of a Windows-like point-and-click interface that allows you to travel the galaxy (under the aegis of one of the Houses, of course) searching for mercenary missions that benefit your wallet and your House's fame and power. The problem is that since most players opt for House Steiner or Davion, they end up controlling much of the galaxy. Game balance is still being tinkered with, though; *MP BTECH*, as it's called, is in a "public" beta-testing phase.

The most exciting thing about *MechWarrior* is the Solaris game world option. It allows players to team up against another group (up to a four on four melee), or allows players to go every 'MechWarrior for himself.' Because of low-traffic, I only got to duel once or twice, but it was great fun. Kesmai is working on adding a number of new role-playing elements to *MP BTECH*, so the game is still dramatically evolving.

There are a few drawbacks. The number of 'Mechs is limited by the original game. Kesmai may allow you to modify weapons and systems, but that's it. Kesmai ultimately hopes to install a new engine in full VGA like GEnie's now very cool *Air Warrior*.

Conclusion: If you can afford the connect charges, front-end graphic games provide that crucial missing element lacking in most CRPGs — human interaction. I became friends with a player in *Neverwinter*, only to run into him again in *MP BTECH*; luckily for me, he tossed me a few million credits to get me started. The ability to chat and watch fellow party members in AD&D fight intelligently (as opposed to SSI's dreaded "auto-combat" feature) is a pleasure.

There are still kinks — serious ones — in each game system, but what they lack in the latest razzle-dazzles a la *Ultima Underworld* (a spectacular game) they make up for in traditional role-playing: a bunch of people sitting around a table, trying to figure out what to do next. The next step? Human game-masters on-line to take care of conversations and other puzzles. With all the gamers out there, it's hard to imagine GEnie or American Online will find it hard to get some volunteer sysops. ⚌

by Bernie Yee

Clay models in Quest for Glory I,

Sierra On-Line has gone through a lot of work in the past year or so to reintroduce some of their classic games with beautiful new VGA graphics and their new "parser-free" interface. So far *Leisure Suit Larry I*, *Space Quest I* and *King's Quest I* have gone this route. *Quest for Glory I: So You Want to Be A Hero* is the latest game to undergo a face-lift and redesign for the parser-free system. Of all the upgrades, *Quest for Glory I* has made the greatest departure from the original game.

Above: clay model of the Frost Giant
Mid-page: the Frost Giant in the game

Quest for Glory I not only has VGA graphics that improve the tone and feel of the game, but it also sports a line-up of characters sculpted in clay and colorized. It was an experiment for Sierra to use this process for an entire game, but the end results are beautiful and the characters appear from various angles and with easily-adjusted lighting and shadows.

I recently had the pleasure of speaking with Art Director Arturo Sinclair and co-designer Lori Cole about the VGA upgrade of Quest for Glory I. Thanks go out to Bill Linn of Sierra for setting up the interviews and manning the speaker phone.

Arturo Sinclair, Art Director

QB: What is your experience with clay modeling and techniques?

Sinclair: I introduced the use of clay models here at Sierra. The first game that made use of that to a limited extent was *Space Quest I* — just a few sections of it. I decided to go with clay modeling on *Quest for Glory I* for a few reasons. First, it's a time-saver. It also gives a very realistic appearance and solves the lighting problems, so you don't have to rethink how the character looks lit from above or below, left or right. Changes can be made easily to the character.

My background is as a filmmaker. I'm a cinematographer. I have years and years of experience in what people now call "claymation." I worked for 17 years in the industry doing special effects mostly for commercials and effects films like the ones you would see in Disney World that emulate rides ("Star Tours"). I did films for that system.

QB: How long have you been at Sierra and what other projects have you worked on there?

Sinclair: I've been here since February of 1991. I worked on *Space Quest I* and also did some clay animation for *Castle of Dr. Brain.* They usually call me up for every game to do little things here and there, particularly animated sequences. *Quest for Glory I* is the first game I've worked on as Art Director. The next game for me will be *Eco Quest 2.* I'm not sure if we'll use clay animation or not because it's a very different game than *Quest for Glory I.*

QB: Tell me about the clay characters in the game.

Sinclair: Each single character in the game was sculpted in clay first. The ogre in the game is fully animated in clay, but most characters are captured in clay with the actual animation done by the computer.

QB: Do you think clay modeling is a way to go in the future?

Sinclair: For fantasy games it works. But for more realistic games like *Police Quest III,* video capture/digitization is the better process to use.

QB: How do you layer the colors on top of the clay on the computer?

Sinclair: The clay is monochrome, although we are thinking of coloring the clay models to eliminate the intermediate coloring step. But as it is right now, we capture the clay model in gray scale and then use a program like *DeluxePaint* to

and a look at Glory III and IV

colorize the model.

QB: How long does it take to do one character?

Sinclair: The models are basically done in one day. And then maybe a few hours for coloring. So one character may take a couple of days with the finishing touches. It takes about five pounds of clay for each character and most stand about 6-8" high.

QB: How has the process affected *Quest for Glory I* VGA?

Sinclair: It is a very useful technique and economically interesting. It cuts down development time and gives the game a distinctive look. Everybody has been happy with the process and excited with the results. I'm sure clay models will be used in future games. When we have more memory in our games, we'll be able to turn the characters around and the different views will be consistent, unlike with flat animation. Clay enables you to look at characters from different angles and with different light sources and do the work very fast.

Lori Cole, Co-designer

QB: *Quest for Glory I* now uses the new Sierra interface instead of the original parser-based system. What problems or changes did that cause?

Cole: The first thing we had to come up with was a language system that goes beyond what the previous parser-less games used. We developed a menu system where you can talk to characters by clicking on them and bringing up a menu of things you can ask them about. When you ask the character about something, the game comes back with a different menu of subjects that logically follows the first question. The menus are very natural. You control exactly how much information you

want to get and what you want to ask about.

QB: Has the new interface posed any problems?

Cole: I had to rethink how the characters talk in the game. I examined what they said and reorganized it in such a way that it could be programmed systematically into the menus. We also made things a bit easier for people who want to make specific movements by assuming the most reasonable action in certain situations. For example, we assume when people click on a tree that they want to climb the tree and thus eliminate a climb icon from the game. It will make things a little easier because people won't have to outguess the parser or remember a lot of key words.

QB: Would you consider this new version of *Quest for Glory I* such a radical change that people who liked the first one would feel it's an entirely new experience?

**Cole:** Yes. Anyone who liked *Quest for Glory I* in EGA will love the game in VGA. The mood that the graphics create is totally different and the characters show more expression. It's well worth playing again just for the experience. With the *Quest for Glory* series, we put so much into the games that I'm sure players didn't see it all. You *can* play the game with the different main characters and have a different experience each time. The art changes the game visually and mentally and the illusion of reality is getting closer.

QB: Do you plan to redo *Quest for Glory II* or move right on to the third one?

Cole: I would like to do *Quest for Glory II* because there are some things I'd like to

Above: clay model of Sheema
Mid-page: Sheema in the game
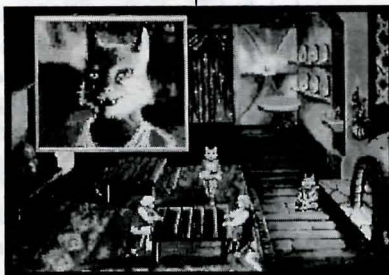
by Russ Ceccola

WALKTHRU: Sleeping Gods Lie

by F. J. Philipp

General

The World of Tessera consists of 8 Kingdoms. Once you exit a Kingdom you can't return. Rest in all safe buildings to return your health to maximum. Mushrooms, apples, carrots, etc. will increase your health. Weapons, ammunition and armor will improve as you progress. There are unlimited saves, so save often.

Caila

You start out in your home in Thurin. Pick up the bowl. Exiting your house to the north you will be in North Caila. Go N and talk to the Hermit. Go W through gate to West Caila. Walk around until you encounter a molehill where you'll get a backdoor key. Go S and E to South Caila. At the pond fill the bowl. Go S through Arch.

Taira

Go E through arch to East Taira. Enter building in center. Get bread and cheese. Exit. Walk around until you find a circlet. Give the cheese to the Red Rat and he'll leave you alone. Go S to South Taira and kill the Red Robber. Get the map.

Secret Passage

Go N and return to North Caila. Give the map to the Hermit. He will give you a draught. Go W to West Caila. Go S to trees and give water from bowl. They will teleport you to South Taira. Go S through rocks. Go to Magic Tree.

North Sylvar

Arriving in Sylvar talk to Prince Gregor. Go east two areas. Walk around until you find a lantern. Go west one area and south to Cave. Enter. Go east one room and south through Crack in wall. Get rope. Exit. Go east to next room and north through crack. Get the crown. Return to Prince and give him the crown. Get hat and 50 gold. Return to Cave. Proceed east until you exit Cave.

South Sylvar

Go E to second area. North to 3rd area. Find molehill. Get belt. Go S to return to first area. Go E to second area. Walk to Fountain.

Delanda

Walk quickly to Ferryman to avoid birds. Take Ferry to Largest Island. Kill Attacker. Get sickle. Go to Tree and get Mistletoe. Go through two stone columns to Island Beyond Stones. Kill attackers to get bow and arrows. Find Molehill. Get armband. Return to Ferryman and take Ferry to Sandy Island. Walk around until you pick up the sandals (these will allow you to walk on water). Talk to Gregors sister. She will give you a bracelet.

Walking on Water

Walk N to Largest Island and locate peasant lying on ground. Get the vial. Walk on water E to Island of Well. Enter Well. Upon exiting look to left for object on ground. Pick up the greaves (tallow).

Simala

Locate Molehill with boots. Go NW between two signs to cross to Icy Mountain Passage. Continue N to Lowest Plain. Go NW until you find the second Red Robber. Kill him. Get his gloves. Enter cave in NW corner. Talk to the Old Man. Get the tinderbox from him.

Freezing

Exit Cave and go to NE corner and enter another Passage. Exit and proceed S through area and exit. Walk to NE corner and kill third Red Robber. Get his cloak. Note Cave in NE corner. Return to Lowest Plain. Move west and you will find the three Witches sitting around a cauldron. Talk to them. Get the pile of wood. You are now on the Highest Icy Plain. Exit to Lowest Plain. Exit NE, through the Passage to another Icy Plain. Now go to the Cave in the NE corner and light a fire.

Morav

Talk to the Witches again. South to Temple. Kill the Priest. Get his robe. Talk to the Wiches again. Talk to the Palace Guard standing outside the entrance to the Palace. Enter the Palace.

The Palace

Go N to Corridor and W to first Room on South Wall. Enter and kill the two Guards. Get the Trumpet. Rest. Get the chain mail shirt. Exit. Continue W, then N through Door. Proceed N to first door on West Wall. Enter. Trumpet will unlock next door. Go through door and walk to Throne.

Sunderabad

Talk to Princess Lucia. Get a necklace. Go N to Rocky Area and exit to East. If you get a dagger you can use it to cut cactus to get water. Walk around until you see a Scarab. Talk to him. Exit to North to the East Sandy Region. Walk South and talk to the Scarab again. Continue South and enter the Great Pyramid. Talk to the Scarab a third time.

Behind the Red Door

Go through the Red Door. Note colored splotches on the ground. As you cross over these different Doors will become unlocked. Keep moving through Rooms until you locate one with a Yellow Door on the North Wall. Go through. Kill the Sorcerer and Archmage. Get the box.

Estamane

Proceed North until you locate Lucia. Talk to her. Avoid birds by rapidly moving through rooms. Continue East and note Fountain. Kill Sorcerer. Go South. Note Peasants. Continue South until you locate a Headless Figure. Kill it. Get the amulet. Go West and get the candle. Return East to last room and North through door. Talk to the Emperors Ghost.

The Fountain

Return to Lucia. Return to the Emperors Ghost. Get the bottle and the helmet. Return to Fountain. Return to Peasants. Go to Fountain. The 3 Witches will appear. Go East and kill the Archmage again. Get the scroll.

Coratinian State

Exit cave. Kill the Dragon. Get dragonskin. Go S through crack into the Hoarding Hole. Take everything there. Exit tunnel to the West. Go W and enter the Grey Lands of Ash. Locate ring lying on ground. Walk around areas until you locate the Hermit in the West Marshes. He will give you a flask to cure the plaque you've contracted.

Getting Ready

Follow Hermit to Molehill. Cave will appear. Enter. Rest. Get suit of armor and shield. Exit. Follow Arun (Hermit) South to next area. Walk across Molehill. Continue South to Unscathed Area. Talk to the 3 Witches again. Get the Ring of Annihilation.

Archmages, Archmages, Sleeper

Go North, East, North and kill the Archmage with the ring. Exit to East and reenter the Dwarf Tunnel. Rest. Continue East to Dwarf Cave and kill the Archmage. An opening will appear in the East Wall. Go through and kill the Floating Face guarding the door. Turn around and kill the Archmage. Note: Resting will rejuvinate ring. Go through door into elevator, which will descend. Go through door. Turn around. Archmage will enter. He will transform into N'Gnir, The Sleeper.

Quest for Glory....from 10

change. Some of the things in the design are a little unfair. What the game really cries out for is a change in the art. It would be so gorgeous to do it in 256 colors and do the Arabian Nights setting right. Whether we do it or not depends on how well the other upgrades sell.
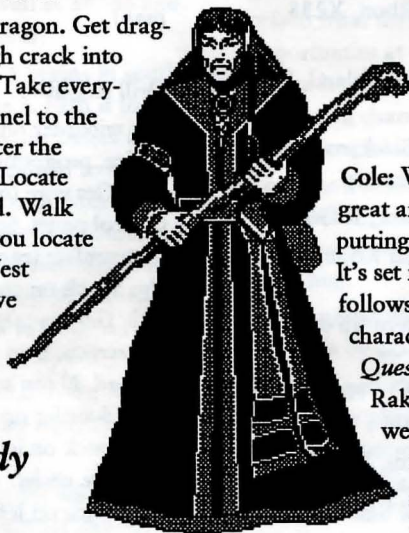
QB: Tell me about *Quest for Glory III*.

Cole: We've already got great art and great teams putting the game together. It's set in Africa and follows the stories of two characters who came from *Quest for Glory II* — Rakeesh and Uhura. We were going to do *Quest for Glory IV: Shadows of Darkness*, a Transylvania-type game, next, but a friend of ours guessed that our next game would follow Rakeesh. When we thought about it, we realized that we could follow *Quest for Glory II* quite easily and pushed *Shadows* back to be the fourth game in the series. We also added another game to the series to follow the original goal of the series.

With the *Quest for Glory* series, we wanted to do a whole exploration of fantasy-type things, different cultures and different people. *Quest for Glory III* explores the vastness of an Africa-like area. We have the savannah and the jungle and different peoples. There is a major city run by Rakeesh's people, a smaller town of Uhura's tribe and a village of leopard men/magic users. There is a huge land to explore and all this culture underneath the plot of the game.

The main quest in *Quest for Glory III* takes place two months after you

leave Shapeir. There is a major war down in Tarna and they ask Rakeesh to come down and stop the war or prevent the war from happening among those three different tribes. Your initial task is to start a peace conference. The full title of the game is *Quest for Glory III: The Wages of War*.

QB: What can you tell me about *Shadows*?

Cole: *Shadows* is going to be set in the country known as Mordavia. You get to understand more about one of the villains from one of the previous games who plays a major part in *Quest for Glory IV*. You also try to prevent The Old Ones from coming back into the world. We plan to do the whole genre of horror in one game, from vampires and werewolves to The Old Ones who want to bring darkness back into the world.

The whole series has always been a transitional series, with a definite pattern between each game. We were afraid that if we put in the *Shadows* story too soon we would create this doom and gloom mood. What we really wanted was to control the movement of the game taken as a series so that it gets more serious as you go along. The stakes keep getting higher as you play the games. We want both the character and the player to become experienced as the games go on. The fifth one will bring everything to a conclusion in which the character will finally get the recognition for becoming a hero. 🏶

The new Quest for Glory I is scheduled to ship for MSDOS in May, and Quest for Glory III is a "fall product." Meanwhile, don't miss Russ Ceccola's exclusive interview with Roberta Williams in the July issue of Computer Gaming World — for the first time, she reveals the "dark side of the force" that brought us King's Quest and Laura Bow.

Magic Candle 2

When published in the April Adventure Express, a few of these clues suffered from misspelled words. They are noted with an * here, and the correction is **boldfaced.**

Portal locations

Under castle in Oshcrun cellar 1: on southwest side at 16, 15

*Upper **Neirwood** Forest: X 60 - Y58

Island south of Karlomug Swamp: X243 - Y096

Tower of Maratul, first level: X025 - Y006

Isle of Winds: X120 - Y056

Under Deadwood (just east of cata-combs entrance): X220 - Y047

Rhon: X220 - Y047

Between Keshkul Lakes and Mand Mountains

Wanasol, in northwest corner of town: X016 - Y010

*Mines of Dorak, near east entrance: X027 - Y102

Tombs of Gods & Secret Words

*Oraniana: eastern island south of Sariss: X175 - Y058. Must have Elf in party. Word: Kirrak

*Balene: on Island of Wind, X213 - Y058. He wants **Brennix'** Sword as sacrifice. Word: Kimyabin

*Marior: under castle in Oshcrun, second cellar, west side. Word: Ranalamma

*Nefelnes: in Tower of Maratul on Deladorn. Word: Asharim

Rhokan: sleeps in Dorak, beneath Great Diamond. Word: Shadguram

Fronnoxx: in hills northeast of Chasm of Mandarg, X174 - Y059. Must have Somono with you. Word: **Azavaz**

*Senvara: on small island northeast of Pentyne Island. Word: Urumaen

*Ghartel: in Holy **Ruz.** Word: Banishanbat

Teleport combinations

Cyl-pyr-sph: to southern Sariss

Pyr-cyl-pyr: Deladorn Island, need password to get back in; see Tower of Maratul

Pyr-pyr-sph: back to Oshcrun

Pyr-cube-cube: to Rhon, X238 - Y053

Cube-cly-pyr: to Duln Island, X217 - Y019

Cube-cube-cyl: to Blackwood Forest, X1-4 - Y032 (the Throat)

Sph-sph-pyr: to Misor, X056-Y066

Sph-pyr-cyl: to north Krum, X231 - Y009

Cube-cyl-cyl: northern tip of Demonspine

Pyr-sph-cube: north of Northern Tundra, X163 - Y011

Cyl-cube-cyl: Farsum, X198 - Y066

Cube-cube-cube: N. Misor, X053 0 Y023

Cone-cone-cone: north of Gizra Moutains, X140 - X029

Cone-spy-cone: S. Demonspine, X215 - X029

Sph-pyr-cone: Karlomug Swamp, X235 - Y075

Sph-cone-cone: west of Mandarg, X163 - Y053

Cone-cone-pyr: Krum, X240 - X038

Cone-cone-sph: Krum, X215 - Y029

Cone-cube-pyr: Isle of Winds

Pyr-cone-cone: Mandarg X208 - X039

*Oolaun nest: West Gull Island, X062 - X019

C. F. Shaffer

Star Trek

That Old Devil Moon

Orbit. Hail (Uhura). Consult computer about Proxima, Proxtrey, Lucrs, Sofs, Scythe and base numbers. Teleport. Pick up rocks. N. Use Spock on number lock. 10200 (base number for 99). N. Use tricorder on computer terminal. Use Spock on terminal. Use Spock on writing on door. Use Spock on lock. 122 (base number for Scythe). N. Use tricorder on closed door and keypad. E (on screen, N on map).

Drill Room

Use tricorder on drill control panel (twice, programming the drill). Use box. Get wire (in box). Use Spock on control panel. Setting 100. Use rocks on template (carved in stone by drill). Use Spock on control panel. Setting 001. Get keycard (from template). W (on screen, S on map). Use keycard in keypad. N (on screen, W on map). Use tricorder on all three computers. Use Spock on left and right computer. Use wire on left (or right) computer. Use Spock on left computer.

Paul Shaffer

To avoid having to go back to a city to ask people questions about things you didn't know to ask them on your first visit, use save game positions six or seven (and use the eighth as your actual game in progress). With each major town, do a save so that when you later come across a question that must be answered there, you can restart the saved position and get the answer without having to trek all over the world.

If comfortable with DOS, you can save game positions to a floppy disk and delete and erase as needed into the *Magic Candle II* game directory. Your FFSAV.MCI file and the appropriate FFSAVA.MCS through FFSAVH.MCS files are the ones you'll need to copy into the *MC II* director. This also allows you to have more than seven saved games — just don't delete your game in progress.

Gary Miller

West entrance to Dorak is at 87, 207. Whisper: Waharnial

East entrance to Dorak: 95, 267

You'll need a Vannex. See Estefax in Llendora.

Points of interest:

From the west end of Mine 2, you'll find a long narrow hall in Mine 7. Stay on the east wall and then go south to the west wall at 34, 33 and you'll find Rhhokadur.

The route to Mine 4 begins in southeast corner of Mine 3. Path is loaded with teleporters, so use Detect spell and Formation command to take one extra character through with your leader each time (use Stay command on rest of party). On first trip make sure you have a strong Magic-user along, as you need to claim a room to reassemble (use Disappear). In Mine 4, the teleportal to the next area is in the center in the water (use Walkwater).

Vankruh has 2,000 HP and AC 40, but he will let you pass if you sheathe weapons before entering his room in the northwest section of Mine 7.

Past Vankruh, you'll find Rhokar Asleep. Whisper: Snadgurrm.

In the southeast corner of Mine 7 is a teleport chamber. Also the entrance to the new part of Mine 6, where you find a Magic Candle and a Nava (700 HP). Is your scroll filled in?

Dan Donahue

Pools of Darkness

Finale: there are three battles at the end. Throw a dagger or hammer in the first two to create an opportunity to switch weapons and items and for Paladins to use the laying of hands. Begin the battle Hastened and Enlarged. Fighters should have fine Long Bows to attack blue minions and still take advantage of their super strength.

Thorne: cast Dispel Magic to make him vulnerable

Vorpal Swords: these behead opponents at random. You get only two, and they appear as +3 Long Swords when equipped. The Display Magic Effects screen in camp will reveal the difference.

Disk Tricks: remember that anytime the party is empty you return to the game's beginning, and that when you load a saved game, characters in that game who are also in the Hall are erased from the Hall. For extra battle opportunties at the Troll Toss Inn before leaving Phlan, go to the Hall, remove all characters, and add all characters, which restarts the game.

To clone a character with all his stuff: remove him, add him back, remove again but rename rather than overwrite him.

The handiest way to store stuff in Limbo is by cloning each character.

Dave's Place: cheat indiscriminately, bcause this place isn't fair. Rest is limited, so rememorize only essential spells. Consider replacing party members who will lose their spells; use alternate characters, clones or even new Fighters. All spells work for the Thieves Test. Clerics lose all their spells (even Magic if they have both) in the Magic Users Test. Magic Users lose all their spells in the Clerics Test. Clerics and Magic Users lose their spells in the Fighters Test and in the final confrontation. A Cleric/Magic User loses all spells in both the Clerics Test and Magic Users Test.

Best use for Magic Users is to cast spells like Enlarge and Haste prior to entering a room, then saving, rebooting, replacing the Magic Users with Fighters and saving the game. These guys are useless without their spells, but you can't beat the blue minions without Hastened, Enlarged Fighters armed with fine Long Bows.

Wes Irby

Leisure Suit Larry 5

Airports: read the ads carefully for clues on getting a limo

Dentist: use business card to call receptionist from inside dentist's office and make appointment. Give alien ID card to dental assistant.

Patty in studio: to escape, turn up volume on equipment and speak into microphone.

Chris Kelly

Willie Beamish

In Beamish house: put iodine on thumb with bandage after cutting it. Do not hide mail from Mr. Beamish, or you'll be sent to cadet school. To get Nintari key, put Horney in tub with Tiffany. Use hairspray on babysitter, then get moust from Brianna's room and hide behind couch.

In park: Give Horney cola or flies to make him jump farther. Compare jumping distance when Gigi is not there and when she is.

Chris Kelly

Elvira II

You can get the rope from the pool in the Spider Cave by arming only with a knife and killing the creature with magic. Bypass the ghost in the sitting room by using the child's block. Read books in library. Get poison paper.

To activate monster: get copper rod from studio basement after Fireball, then use ladder and Summon Storm spell (be sure not to accidentally cut wires before reactivating).

Kill fish in aquarium with poisoned meat. Get poison from scientist in lab, using poison paper. Get picture of lab assistant from corpse in bedroom. Use makeup kit, etc., note button under bed.

Dennis R. Ewell

Magic Candle II.........from 1

sea or land is shown from this perspective.

These three perspectives enhance the party's strategic awareness at all times. The party and characters are small enough to allow you to orient yourself in your surroundings and to recognize nearby landmarks. Since the characters are small, they are not as pretty as those in other games, but their awareness of what's going on around them is enhanced.

Illustrations are best in the interior view. Here the art displays an original and distinctive style. Too many designers today would rather mimic the look of the latest hit rather than develop a style of their own.

The goods

Combat and treasure includes a variety of items that are magical and marvelously crafted. An assortment of weapons, armor, clothing and other items have been integrated into a holistic approach to adventuring, with day and night, rain and sun, and many other features depicted efficiently and effectively.

If *Magic Candle* does have a flaw, it is its inventory control. A character can easily get overloaded when carrying arrows, magical ingredients, geometric shapes and other items. Reasons for a limited inventory appear illogical and could have been better served by an unlimited inventory or an inventory limited by weight or bulk, rather than the limitations of available slots.

Unfortunately, items do disappear if dropped, and if the characters do not have enough open slots, essential items may be lost forever unless a timely backup was made.

Magic books

There are seven magic books with six spells each, a total of 42 spells. Many can be cast only in the wilderness or in combat, so a perusal of the well-written 74-page players guide is highly recommended. While reading it, take a look at the very useful nine rules of magic. New spells such as glamour,and terrify will expand your magical combat options.

The monsters include new, more powerful and more intelligent foes that are formidable adversaries for your group. Bows and magic seem to be the most effective weapons, since the time needed to close with melee weapons can be devastating to your group. Autocombat is achieved via two mechanisms, where each character can individually be automated, or one character can be used to lead the entire group. I thoroughly enjoyed this new type of auto-combat and look to future Mindcraft innovations.

Special features

Other innovative features are the automapping and automatic note-taking systems, which make it very easy to keep track of all the details without notes or maps.

I did find myself mapping and keeping notes by distilling my notes file after printing it out, but found I was less likely to miss an important detail since notes could be reviewed online, off-line or printed for detailed inspection. You can save only seven games.

Magic Candle II's interface is not what it was meant to be. The mouse control described in the manual was not completed in time, and a note in the box apologizes for the lack of mouse support. Those who prefer keyboard controls will like this game's interface, with its many keypress-controlled commands.

Type: Fantasy role-playing
System: MSDOS (512K required, hard disk, 286 8 MHz or faster & high density drive recommended; EGA, VGA, 16-color Tandy; Ad Lib, Game Blaster, Sound Blaster, Roland)
Planned ports: none

There are many more commands than in some of the older *Ultima* games, where every key on the keyboard is related to a special command. The variety of available actions is astonishing and goes well beyond the usual commands of look, get and use by offering unusual commands such as whisper.Bugs, all non-fatal, abound in the original release. I found that I had to disable my memory managers to prevent the keyboard and game from locking up. Once I configured a clean boot disk, it became manageable on my 486 and ran smoothly without a hitch. The first version of the game was released with bad coordinates for the locations of companions on assignments.

Clues are inaccurate in some cases. A monster in Deadwood needs to be given a ruby, then a topaz to get him to give you the word to open the catacombs under the city. A companion put on an assignment on the "safe" Oshcrun Island was captured by the forces of evil and thrown into a dungeon on Gurtex.

All known bugs have been fixed, and the upgrade — which includes mouse support — is being sent to everyone who returned their registration card. Or you can send in your disks for a replacement. If you don't want to wait for the mouse support, you can get the bug fixes now. (The clue book is also available now.)
Conclusions: With its depth of play, plot and characterization, *Magic Candle II* has my vote for the Best Quest of the Month. It has problems, but like all the best games it transcends the problems and involves the player to the extent that the problems are ignored in the pursuit of the greater goal of total enjoyment. Many games released in the past few years suffer by comparison to the richness of features and options that *Magic Candle II* has given us. I highly recommend this game to all those who truly enjoy role-playing games and look forward to the sequel, which Mindcraft says will be out by Christmas. ��

Difficulty: Intermediate
Company: Mindcraft
Price: *$59*
QuestBusters price: $47

Swap Shop

Trade or sell your old adventures with a free ad. Adventures and original programs only, limit 10 games per ad, one ad per issue. * = cluebook included.

Any system

Well, almost...I want Dr. Dumont's Wild Parti for Apple 2, ST, Mac or IBM. Timothy Walsh, 2155 St. Jaques West, Montreal, Quebec Canada H3J 2T6

Apple

For 2e, slightly older adventures for sale. Send for list. Take any reasonable offers. Harold Heck, 667 Geyser Rd Apts #2, Ballston PA 12020

Amiga & C-64

Sell/trade, many Amiga adventures. Lars Batista, 635 Altara Ave, Coral Gables FL 33146

C64, sell only, 150 titles, send SASE for list. Also C128 system for sale. John Peterson, 4101 S. Sheridan #12, Lennon MI 48449-9412

Sell/trade: *Indiana Jones/Grail (adventure), Bard's Tales, Battletech, *Champions of Krynn, Buck Rogers, *Drakkhen, James Bond, Immortal, Manhunter NY, Shadow of the Beast 1-2, Heroes of the Lance. Send for list. Darren Martinez, 36 Radcliffe Rd, Island Park NY 11558

C-64: $25 @: Ultima Trilogy, *Secret of Silver Blades, Gateway to Savage Frontier. SASE for list. Mike Wilkes, 3189 Haney's Br, Huntington WV 25704

MSDOS & Questalikes

Police Quest 3, $20. *Pools of Darkness, $30. Castles, $15. Battletech 2, $10. Brian Kupfrian

Sell only: M & M 3 5:, $22. Shadowsorcer 5:, $20. Eye 2, $25. More. Jim Pai, 211 Waugh St #D, Columbia MD 65201

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