

WE ARE THE FUTURE

Snippets of information on the Ultra 64 continue to bubble through: here's a round-up of the latest news on the next wave of videogaming.

We may not like the name, and we admit we've been sceptical in the past, but the Ultra 64 continues to make its presence felt long before it has even been born. Its release date is tentatively pencilled in for Autumn of next year.

American based developer ID Software has confirmed its status as a game designer for Nintendo's Ultra. Famous for its violent and adrenaline-charged first-person perspective PC shoot-'em-ups like *Wolfenstein* and *Doom*, ID has said that it will help to produce an advanced version of *Doom* for the Ultra 64.

The actual development will be by Williams Entertainment, with creative support offered by ID. This game will probably mix elements of *Doom* and *Doom II*, as well as some special levels and new enemies created especially for the 64-bit console. 'We have given Williams immediate access to access to Nintendo Ultra 64 game development information so that the new *Doom* game will be available to game players - and especially *Doom* fans - when our new 64 bit system is launched,' said Howard Lincoln, chairman of Nintendo of America. It seems old Howie knows a lucrative game when he sees one. Ultra *Doom* should appear in autumn '95, coinciding with the release of the console itself.

Another piece of news causing some controversy is that *Mortal Kombat III* will appear on the Sony Playstation but not the Ultra 64. Whilst the conversion of MKIII split its fabled entrails into homes all over the world last month, a new *Kombat* coin-op was in development for arcade release in April '95. Because of

the Ultra 64 deal between Nintendo and Nintendo/Midway, it was assumed that a unique 64-bit conversion of MKIII would be a dead cert. But no! Nothing is certain in the video games industry, and it seems that the coin-op will utilise Midway's new 32-bit PS-X arcade hardware - hence the easy conversion. At this particular point the software doesn't seem to be licensed exclusively to Sony, however, so we can guess that NoA is currently pulling out all the stops to reverse the decision.



... of the *Cruis'n USA* coin-op! Upright cabinets and networked 2- or 4-player machines have also been designed for larger entertainment complexes.

Not to worry: a SNES version of *Mortal Kombat III* is definitely planned for another Mortal Release Day in September '95, so we won't miss out regardless of what transpires.

As it appears to rely on the same digitised graphics and fatalities as its predecessors, we at *Super Play* wonder if MKIII shouldn't come in for the sort of ribbing that's so far been reserved for *Super Street Fighter II* and not-'X'-no-not-Turbo-not-me-giv.

Cruis'n USA

Conflicting stories and sober descriptions from the Summer CES in Chicago may have given the impression that *Rare's* first racer for the Ultra wasn't the exhilarating drive-a-thon Howard Lincoln might have led us to expect.

Having experienced the game in action, we can understand the noncommittal reactions of many industry pundits seeing the game in the company of the likes of *Ridge Racer 2* or a networked multi-player Daytona USA. Compare *Cruis'n USA* with *Ridge Racer* and you'll see that the latter is easily much faster. However, the graphics of *Cruis'n* are not only more ambitious, more varied but they achieve an incredible smoothness that more than makes up for their relative lack of speed. When you see the texture of palm-tree trunks become clearer as you approach, and you notice the realistic fixtures added to a simple roadside barrier, you begin to appreciate the game's sophistication.

What's important to note is that Midway's Ultra-based coin-op unit is only 32-bit (NB: this Nintendo/WMS hardware is not to be confused with the 32-bit Williams/Sony Playstation-based coin-op unit, mentioned above in the context of MKIII, Er, bear with us). In other words, the machine you'll see running *Cruis'n USA* in your local video-game kiosk won't be a genuine Ultra 64, and the software will need to be upgraded for home conversions! A bizarre situation, admittedly, but it bodes well if the game will run much faster on the home-based Ultra 64 than it will in the arcades. Doesn't it strike you as odd that

Nintendo hopes to advertise their new 64-bit console on the back of some 32-bit software? Well, the reason would seem to be that, at present, the specialised graphics chip being developed for the Ultra hasn't been completely designed and built. It probably won't appear until mid-'95 at the earliest, so current software and hardware is using the basic CPU without assistance. Try to imagine *Starfox* or *Stunt Race FX* running on a SNES without an FX chip and you'll have an idea of the gulf between Ultra hardware now and the Ultra that will be sitting proudly in front of your telly come 1996.



See those city graphics? No wonder *Cruis'n USA* takes up 78 megabits.



STOP PRESS

A colour Game Boy has long been rumoured to be in development at Nintendo's Japanese HQ, but in relation to our VR32 piece comes the news that a Virtual Game Boy has been completed and will go on sale in Japan later this month. The Virtual Boy still has a monochrome screen, but it will achieve a truly stereographic image through the use of goggles that incorporate 'mirror oscillating display technology'. We've all made speculations about the scientific principles involved, but it's probably best to wait for a better explanation in next month's issue.

In a surprise announcement, Konami have revealed plans for a SNES conversion of the PC Engine Super CD-ROM title, *Dracula X*, set for release in early '95.

The Engine version of *Dracula X: Devil's Castle* (to give it its full title), a hit in Japan last year, plays rather more similarly to the crusty NES games than the SNES hit version, however. It seems likely, therefore, that although the level structure will be carried over to a degree, Simon Belmont's abilities will be upgraded to at least match the standards of which SNES owners are accustomed. Expect to see a host of huge end-of-level bosses, a myriad of secret passages and rooms, and music upgraded from the disappointingly bland Engine version.

Eager gamers waiting for a true sequel to *Super Castlevania IV* are going to have

to wait a bit longer, though, as Christmas '95 is the proposed date for *Super Castlevania V*. Details are obviously sketchy at present, but we do know it's planned to appear on a 32 Mbit cart (!) and will pick up the quest from where *Simon* killed *Dracula* in the last game. It's a title which thousands of gamers have been crying out for and its mere announcement is further evidence of Konami's customer awareness. More info when we get it.

And finally, more information on *Goemon 3* has filtered through to the *Super Play* offices. It appears that a new character, a girl ninja named Yae, is set to join the fray and that at least some of the action will be viewed from an overhead view, *Kikikaikai*-style. We'll review it here upon its December release in Japan; until then cast your eyes across the new shots which we've hunted down.



GANBARE GOEMON 3

Like the previous game, *Goemon 3* features Mode 7 giant robot battles.



Familiar side-on platform battles are still very much in evidence.

New girl Yae favours the Edo period shoulder-mounted rocket launcher as her preferred choice of weapon.



These shots are from the PC Engine CD-ROM version - expect the SNES to be similar.



VR32 REVEALED SOON!

'The Super Famicom', a Japanese games journal recently featured this artist's impression of the VR32. Note how they've assumed a variation on the 8-button SNES pad.



Months of speculation will finally be brought to an end at the Shoshinkai Festival in Tokyo's Harumi Centre this November, when the 32VR is unveiled to the press and public for the very first time.

Nintendo of Japan's mysterious announcement regarding a 32-bit system (SP21) caused much surprise earlier this year, seeming quite at odds with its American subsidiary's development of the Ultra 64 machine (Project Reality, as it was known at the time). Supposedly bringing Virtual Reality to the home at an affordable price - a figure of 20,000 Yen, around £110, was suggested - the scarcity of details and specifications revealed led to some pretty wild interpretations on the part of consumers and industry figures alike. Concrete facts have evaded even *Super Play*'s dogged investigators, but we can still dispel a few myths that have been spawned by more innocent sources.

The VR32 is expected to be a portable unit, hand-held and operated by batteries. Despite the denial in the original press release that the unit would not feature an HMD (Head-Mounted Display), it is now generally accepted that the user will be required to wear special goggles containing a screen display. An unnamed American company is behind the development of the projection technology, and at the moment it's not even known if the result will be truly stereoscopic. To increase its portability the system's software will come on compact cartridges.

Our roving Japanese correspondent will have more information in a couple of weeks, so see next month's *Super Play* for the full report on this new hardware.