

The BUZZ

Industry News You Can Trust

Sega just had a bit of good news. Its Sega Saturn version of *VIRTUA FIGHTER 2* arrived in Japanese stores to a rapturous reception. Japanese kids are utterly bonkers for anything to do with *VIRTUA FIGHTER* and, more importantly, *VIRTUA FIGHTER 2*. Our Japanese correspondent noted literally thousands of kids lining up outside Japanese stores on the day of launch. By the time sales had stopped at around eight that evening, a roughly estimated 600,000 copies of the game were being played in homes the length and breadth of Japan.

However, there should be no such worries over here, since *VIRTUA FIGHTER* is nowhere near as popular and Sega has been careful to keep plentiful supplies arriving at stores.

Sony still reckons it is doing better business than Sega, and the company's own estimates put it ahead by margins varying from 6 to 1 all the way to 10 to 1. If those figures are true, then Sega has a lot of catching up to do, but it's (still) way too early to judge, since Christmas sales figures have yet to be properly tallied and analyzed.

SIXTEEN BIT STILL KILLER

Nintendo's biggest seller over the Christmas period appears to have been *KILLER INSTINCT*, largely thanks to the fact that the game appears on both Super NES and Game Boy. On Super NES alone however, it looks like *DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2*—DIDDY'S KONGQUEST, stole the show. It didn't sell quite as many as last year's *DONKEY KONG COUNTRY*, but it did put to rest the greatly exaggerated and premature rumors of 16-bit's demise. Nintendo has pledged to support the Super NES for years to come and are in fact promising price reductions to coincide with

the launch of the Ultra 64 next year. To be fair to Sega, things also look cool for the Genesis, with the launch of *VECTORMAN* and *TOY STORY* (a game which looked good and sold very well).

OH DEAR, WHAT A DISASTER

Nintendo's bright red foray into the world of 32-bit virtual reality has met with a very cool response in Japan. The machine is currently on sale in some Japanese game stores for as little as (the Yen equivalent) of 60 dollars. This is less than half the price the machine was originally launched at less than a year ago. Software support has been poor and public awareness limited.

The problem with producing a Virtual Reality game system is that you can't show people what the games look like on television or in press advertising. Basically, people don't really know what the machine is, or what it's for.

Hiroshi Yamauchi, Nintendo of Japan's chairman, blamed the machine's downfall on a lack of quality games. It was suggested that software companies didn't know how to fully exploit the potential of the machine. Nintendo has promised to fight to save the Virtual Boy with a whole new wave of software and, hopefully, a more ingenious way of promoting the darned thing.

MARIO RELATED MIRTH

Currently on sale at street markets all over South east Asia, is an illegal NES cartridge called "SARIO". Yes, you guessed it, SARIO is a cross between MARIO and SONIC and features the little fat Italian plumber in a world that looks suspiciously like the first levels of *SONIC THE HEDGEHOG*. Amusing as it is, it's a pirated game and will probably never show up in the US.

BIG FRANK'S FANTASTIC TALES

After consuming huge quantities of his favorite breakfast cereal (Chocolate Frosted Sugar Bombs), Frank often loses track of reality. Here are just some of the news items he dreamed up. Please note that very little of the following information is grounded in reality, never mind true.

PROJECT DUALITY

Atari looks set to announce that the Jaguar is set to receive a new upgrade. The Vacutron 2000 is a vacuum-cleaner attachment for the Jag. It slots into the back of the machine and can be used to suck up things that live behind the refrigerator. It's a well known scientific fact that stuff from behind the fridge is lethal when exposed to regular environments. It is also known that the back of the fridge has exactly the same atmospheric conditions as the Bermuda Triangle. Where people disappear, at least according to '70s pop icon Barry Manilow.

M3

Not content with a 64-bit upgrade, the 3DO company is currently hard at work on a new 5-liter upgrade which effectively transforms your 3DO into a large family car. Featuring twin airbags and higher ground clearance, this add-on also improves the level of safety. Concerned parents take note. Although no 3DO-related injuries have been reported, it is well known that in a head-on collision with a vehicle of more than two tons, a 3DO will effectively be knackered. The M3 should help alleviate this danger if and when it ever appears.

WHERE'S THE MAP?

It's about time a video-game version of hit movie *TIME BANDITS* was released. Featuring the ironic antics of a band of thieving dwarves, *TIME BANDITS* helped establish the movie style we now refer to as "Movies about bands of thieving dwarves". If they do a game, it should be Full-Motion Video and directed by Woody Allen.