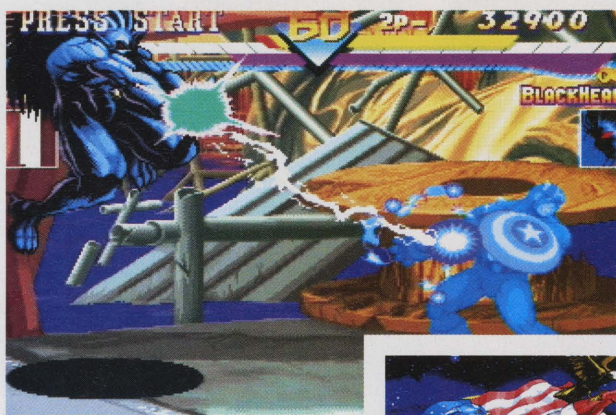
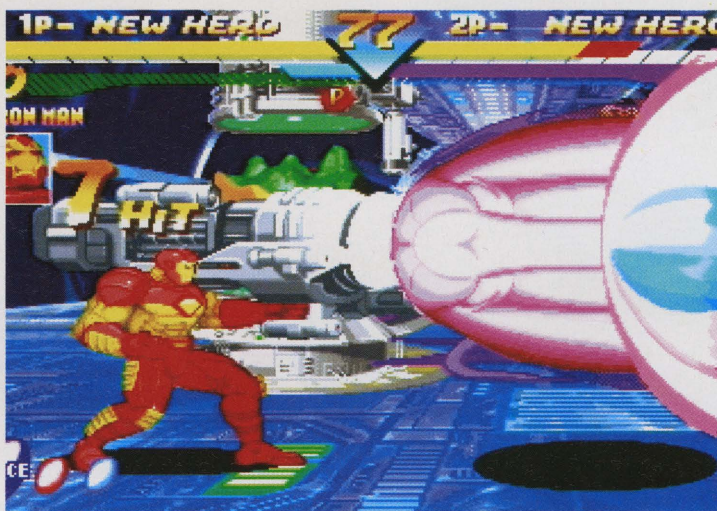


Marvel Super Heroes



Capcom's addition of playfields which scroll vertically as well as horizontally allows for aerial assault manoeuvres



Reflecting the colourful nature of the comic-book characters it features, *Marvel Super Heroes* is a heady cocktail of pyrotechnic effects and outlandish special moves. Iron Man fires screen-long blasts of photon cannon; Blackheart summons strange apparitions to overwhelm opponents; ultimate 'boss' character Thanos engulfs assailants in flames

While basic moves are accessed by familiar stock-in-trade pad combinations, the more outlandish attacks can only be utilised through moderately complex sequences, something *SF Alpha* aficionados will grasp with ease. With some assaults filling virtually the entire display, mastering a character is particularly satisfying.

To counter the potential imbalance such wild attacks could create, Capcom has increased introduced vertical scrolling to complement the horizontal. Traditional jumps (and the assorted attacks they support) are present as ever, but by pressing down followed by up or tapping the left shoulder button, players can launch their character skyward. An indicator appears, revealing the off-screen foe's position and, by judging descent in accordance with this, accurate falling attacks are possible

Marvel Super Heroes' airborne brawls are a great feature, and one beat 'em up fans will find surprisingly easy to master. With players able to use special moves and throws while aloft, it allows the smaller characters lacking large-scale projectile moves to compete on level terms. It also prevents play from degenerating into a tit-for-tat exchange of arbitrary long-range specials.

Another key addition is the ability for players to collect and use power-up gems. There are five in all, each capable of boosting abilities such as speed and damage resistance. Purists may find the concept distasteful, but it's a novel aspect that doesn't intrude upon core gameplay.

MSH also supports another type of power-up – the Saturn RAM cart. Launched in Japan as a package, the two combine to offer a stunning, near arcade-perfect experience. Shorter loading times and additional frames of animation are the principle benefits, but some players claim an actual increase in gameplay speed. If such an



The size of the larger characters in *MSH* is particularly impressive. Naturally, though, their strength is offset by their comparative lack of speed

increase exists, however, its bearing on play is negligible.

Along with the lack of *Alphaesque* refinement of character-vs-character balance, it's noteworthy that *MSH* occasionally hiccups in its efforts to maintain a steady frame rate. When two of the larger characters do battle, the occasional judder is an unfortunate side effect of large-scale sprite manipulation. But, again, gameplay remains unaffected, and it's unlikely any other than die-hard fans of the arcade original will find it a distraction.

Loading times are *MSH's* main weakness, while – unsurprisingly – its twoplayer mode is its strength. An option is provided to replace front-end presentation screens with simple text, thus cutting disc access, but the delay is still just long enough to irritate. Without the RAM cart, Virgin's November UK release could be a disappointment. Even without such peripheral enhancement, though, *MSH* remains a very fine beat 'em up.



Edge rating:

Eight out of ten



As in previous Capcom beat 'em ups, throws form a large part of close-quarters combat that larger, less agile characters excel at

EDGE	Format: Saturn Developer: In-house	Publisher: Capcom Price: ¥5,800 (£30)	Release: Out now (Japan)
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