

REVIEW



24 MEG

BY:  
SEGA

PRICE:  
£59.99

RELEASE:  
JANUARY

STYLE:  
BEAT 'EM UP

PLAYERS:  
1-2

CONTROL:  
6 BUTTON PAD

CONTINUES:  
INFINITE

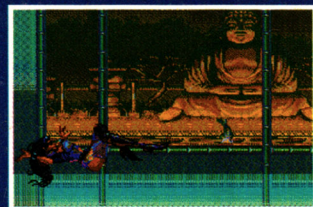
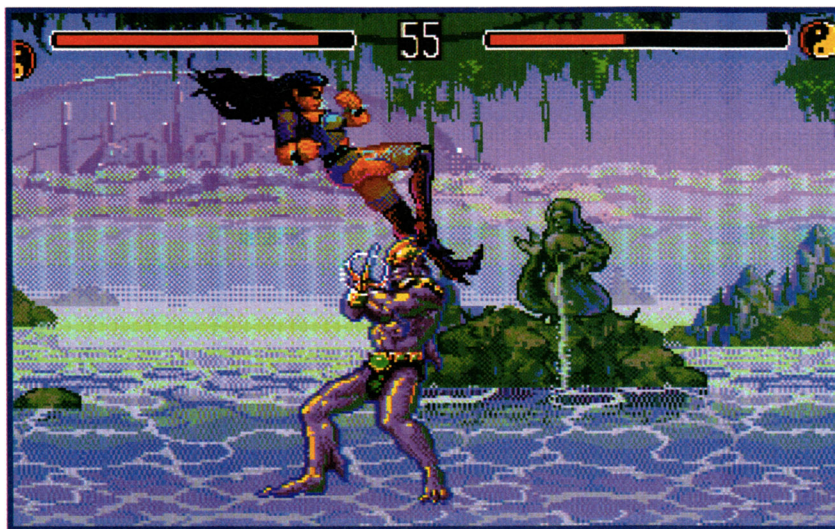


**E**ternal Champions was designed and programmed with one aim in mind - to be the ultimate beat 'em up available for a home computer system.

What's more, Sega of America's crack programming team have just about done it - creating a product that almost matches Street Fighter II in terms of gameplay and totally outstrips it in terms of presentation. The storyline is rather novel. The Eternal Champion presides over the balance of good and evil, but has made a grave miscalculation. Now evil is winning big time. He decides to resurrect key figures in Earth's history who were killed prematurely before instigating a major coup for world good. With just one of them alive, the predicament the Champion faces would be over before it even began! The eleven challengers must be whittled down to one contender who must defeat the Eternal Champion in battle in order to get their life back. The player(s) chooses a character and then must face up to the others in a series of Street Fighter-esque battles. However, the real fun of Eternal Champions is in exploring the vast options on offer which radically alter the gameplay. We've covered just about the lot in our showcase earlier in the issue - but believe us when we say that this game is the most flexible fighting game in existence. Eternal Champions is as much a landmark product as Street Fighter II and recommended without even a nanosecond's hesitation.



▼ The range of original special moves in Eternal Champions is very impressive.



▲ Eternal Champions boasts loads of training modes - including battles against holographic representations of other characters, dexterity spheres (designed to test reflexes) as well a battle room, where the player is pitted against a whole host of lethal unknowns.



▲ The game is tough - a lot more difficult than Street Fighter II in one-player mode. Although the game has infinite continues, you have to defeat the last two opponents again should you lose - a subtle, but very effective lastability booster.



▲ The manual gives you some of the special moves in the game, the others you have to work out - an ingenious touch. For example, Shadow's disappearing act can be player controlled. You've got to work out how to do it.



▲ Larcen's grappling hook has multiple uses.



▼ Availability of special moves depends on how much inner strength you have. Special moves use up different quantities of inner strength which is symbolised by the ying-yang icons in the corner. Opponents can also drain inner strength by insulting you!



▼ Add a bit of spice to the action in the Battle Room. Sawblades, spiked balls, stunbolts - in fact there 20 different hazards you can introduce to the environment. In Eternal Champions, the environment as well your opponent must be defeated!



COMMENT



RICHARD LEADBETTER

If someone told me that a beat 'em up had been created to compare with the mighty Street Fighter II, I'd have laughed in their faces.

However, here it is. Eternal Champions is utterly superb - the characters are great and learning them all takes ages. The vast range of practice options (all of them useful) and the brilliant battle room add even more value to the package. The action is fast, fluid and compelling - right up there with SFII. The only thing that isn't so good is the music - the effects are great though. Overall, this is a superlative product - better than SFII in one-player mode and compares favourably with two players at the console.



COMMENT



JULIAN RIGNALL

As soon as any new one-on-one beat 'em up comes along, you immediately ask the question, is it better than Street Fighter II? Well, in

this case the answer is that Eternal Champions isn't better than SFII - but it's easily just as good! Surprised? Well, I was pretty taken aback myself, but since it came in a few weeks ago I've been playing it solidly! It's not just the fabulous new characters, each a true, highly original individual, the massive amount of innovative special moves to master (all of which are refreshingly new and not just sad SFII rip-offs) or even the excellent combo potential that make this a classic. It's also the fantastic presentation, multiple play modes and incredibly challenging gameplay. Eternal Champions is a fabulous game that oozes class and is the first beat 'em up ever that is a real alternative to Street Fighter II. Check them both out and see which one you prefer...



98

Presentation:

An enormous range of options and great storylines - check out the showcase in this issue.

93

Graphics:

Superb. The animation, backdrops and sprites are all amazing.

70

Sound:

The music is lacking, but the sound effects are excellent.

77

Originality:

The basic action is very SFII - the battle room and practice options are ingenious touches.

96

Playability:

Awesome. Immediately addictive and immensely compelling.

95

Challenge:

The hardest beat 'em up available for the Megadrive.

95

Lastability:

Complete the game AND explore all the options? Months at least.

OVERALL:

An utterly stunning product, incorporating EVERYTHING a beat 'em up fan could possibly desire.

95

