

REVIEW

MEGADRIVE

£39.99

BY SEGA

CVG HIT

What's small, blue, spiky, and very, very fast? Sonic the Hedgehog, that's who! Sega's awesome answer to Nintendo's marvellous Mario has arrived - and he's here to stay!

Sonic's a hedgehog with a mission: to free his furry friends from the diabolical clutches of the evil Dr Eggman (a villain so nasty, he makes Al Capone look like Bonnie Langford). Y'see, Eggman's captured all of Sonic's friends, brainwashed them and encased them in biomechanoid armour - programmed to terrorise the world!

To free his friends, Sonic has to race through six zones, each consisting of three horizontally scrolling areas. These zones are packed with hazards and puzzles, not to mention Eggman's forces, out in force to turn Sonic into hedgehog pie! However, Sonic can fight back by curling into a ball and leaping into any enemy, skewering them on his spines.

By collecting the magic rings which lie scattered around, Sonic is further protected - contact with an enemy is neutralised by the rings, but all the rings in Sonic's possession are dropped. Any rings remaining at the end of the level are exchanged for bonus points - if Sonic has more than 50, he'll be transported to the bizarre bonus level!

At the end of each zone, our sky-blue spiky-top is confronted by the doctor himself, armed with various weapons (including a massive ball and chain, a fire-spitting cannon and a large spike), intent on turning Sonic into hedgehog pie.

Sonic puts his look into it!



The spiky one does his balancing

Watch out for the spikes, Sonic!



Sega said this was going to be good - but nobody prepared us for this! Sonic knocked me sideways when he burst forth from the monitor and hasn't let go since, hogging the Megadrive full-time. Sonic may be as cute as hell and play like a dream, but rest

assured this game's as tough as your grandad's old boots. Sega have put a huge amount of thought into this, and it shows. The graphics are something very special - the best you'll see on the Megadrive. Sonic really looks the part as he charges around the screen, rolling into a ball and putting paid to all manner of bad guys as that superb Sonic theme tune blasts forth from the telly. Here's a game which absolutely oozes quality and one you'll return to time and time again. Sonic has thrown down the gauntlet to Mario in a big way and everyone's favourite Italian plumber must be feeling just a little washed out. I won't say he's necessarily better, but Sonic certainly gives the immortal Nintendo hero a run for his money. To sum up in three words - Brilliant! Brilliant! Brilliant!

TIM
BOONE

MONITOR MAYHEM 'N' MALARKEY

Hidden at various points around each area lie computer monitors, which bestow Sonic with a special bonus once busted open:

RING: Gives Sonic an extra 10 rings.

SPARKLE: Encases Sonic in a glittering magic shield, which allows him to race through nasties without getting a scratch! Careful, though, as this is only temporary!

SHIELD: Similar to before, but this surrounds Sonic with a large protective sphere, which vanishes upon contact with anything lethal!

MAGIC SHOES: Makes Sonic even faster than ever (however difficult that may be!). Only temporary, but helps our spiky star reach parts of the level that other hedgehogs cannot reach...

SONIC: Gives Sonic an extra life!

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SONIC v MARIO - WHO'S GOT THE EDGE?

Sega are pushing Sonic the Hedgehog as their answer to Nintendo's Mario. The sheer popularity of the rotund Italian plumber from Brooklyn gives Sonic a hell of a lot of work to do.

Comparing Sonic to Super Mario Bros 4 on the Super Famicom, it's obvious both have exquisite graphics and sound, although Sonic is a lot faster, brighter and more colourful. As far as depth of play is concerned, Mario 4 is a clear-cut winner - but Sonic is just so cute that at the moment you just have to call it a draw.

With these two superstars now in a head-to-head battle for supremacy, it's going to be fascinating to watch them try to top each other in all the exploits to come! As usual, watch this space...

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GIVE ME A RING SOMETIME

If Sonic has collected more than fifty rings before reaching the end of an area, a giant ring will appear at the finish. Leaping through this will whisk our spiky superhero off to the seriously strange bonus round - a rotating maze filled with rings and emeralds! Mastering this maze is no mean feat, and soon your eyes will be spinning with the screen as Sonic strays all over the place!

Points are awarded at the end of this round, depending on how many are collected before Sonic falls into one of the exit portals. If enough rings are collected, Sonic gets a continue for his trouble!

Grabbing
the bonuses
at the end
of the level!

SCORE 88770
TIME 3:51
RINGS 6



LOVELY LEVEL LUNACY!

Sonic's world is split into six levels, each more treacherous and devious than the last.

1 - GREEN HILL ZONE: This may seem like a green and pleasant land, but don't be fooled - hordes of crabs and flying adversaries are out in force to finish Sonic before he can start, as well as crumbling platforms which threaten to drop our hero into deep trouble!



He's finally here! Sonic has at last made it onto the Megadrive - and how! The quality of this cartridge is assured the moment you flick the on switch and are greeted to a quartet of dulcet tones singing out the Sega name! So is this little

blue milk guzzler the Mario beater that everyone suspects? Graphically there's no doubt - Sonic the Hedgehog is awash with lively, but never garish, colour, which compliments the detailed sprites and backdrops perfectly. The animation throughout the game is top-notch, with Sonic's legs going hell for leather the longer you keep him running, and rolling up into a tight ball as only a hedgehog could to bludge those baddies into oblivion. Sound plays an important factor, with stacks of catchy tunes and jingles and some absolutely brilliant spot effects Sonic The Hedgehog is going to be an impossible game to beat, but you're sure going to have fun whilst you attempt it. Better than Mario? I honestly wouldn't like to say. What I will say, however, is that Sonic The Hedgehog is streets ahead of every game of this genre currently available, and I for one am looking forward to the further adventures of this garden-trashing little tinker!

PAUL
RAND

2 - MARBLE ZONE: Above ground, the area is strewn with marble pillars and ruins. Great caution needs to be taken, as the floor as a nasty tendency to disintegrate into a lake of molten lava! Underground, a massive maze has to be negotiated - more lava here, but blocks can be used to create bridges which Sonic can travel over unscathed!

RINGS 17



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4 - LABYRINTH ZONE: A lethal mixture of over and under-water mazes through which Sonic has to avoid mechanical fish and drill-nosed monkeys! The problem is, Sonic's only got small lungs, so can't hold his breath for long - air bubbles which seep up through the floor are his only hope!



TIME 0:38
RING +19

▲ Could Sonic meet with a watery doom?

5 - SPARKLING ZONE: A Las Vegas-style level, filled with flashing neon lights, spinning spikes and sack-loads of nasties all with one thing in common - putting a nasty end to our sonic.



3 - SPRINGYARD ZONE: Here the level becomes a lethal game of pinball, with Sonic being bounced around all over the place on contact with springboards and star-spangled bumpers! Loads of secret rooms can be found, filled to the brim with magic rings and bonus monitors!

TIME 3:11
RINGS 59



6 - CLOCKWORK ZONE: With lots of long drops, tunnels, traps, and finally the not-so-good doctor himself, this is the level to beat the lot! Crack this and you're well on the way to superstar Sonic status.

A defeated Doctor Eggman zips off to Marble Zone!



MEGA DRIVE

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|----------------|-----------|
| GRAPHICS | 96 |
| SOUNDS | 93 |
| PLAYABILITY | 94 |
| LASTABILITY | 91 |
| OVERALL | 94 |