

BY	SEGA
PRICE	£39.99
STYLE	PUZZLE
RELEASE	MARCH

You know how life is. It's survival of the fittest in this game buddy. Man against man. **Dog eat dog.** Monkey eat banana, **mouse eat cheese**, rabbit eat carrot and panda eat bamboo shoot. Um, **what exactly is going on here?**



Yep, fur fans it's Sega's very first animal hospital type game where you, Rolf Harris a-like, get to save all the little animals from starvation and a life on the streets! Yes, you *can* make a difference!

Actually, maybe that's taking things a little far. Baku Baku isn't really like animal hospital at all. Not even a little bit. But there is an abundance of small furry creatures in this game, and they all need feeding too. Amazingly enough, this novelty title was developed by AM3, the very same people who were

behind Sega Rally (both in the arcades and on the Saturn conversion), although people looking for an abundance of 3D trickery or astounding special effects will probably be very disappointed.

What Baku Baku animal does offer though, is some of the most addictive puzzle play since Tetris. In fact, the basic premise of the game is very similar to Pajitnov's classic – match up similar shaped objects – in this case vegetables – into some kind of logical form before they reach the top of the screen. More than one veggie along with its respected owner

means that the whole line will disappear (the crying, starving animal will chomp away through the whole lot) and fall on to the opponent's play area. Sounds too simple for a machine such as the Saturn? Well, that's all there is to it – almost. The real skill of Baku Baku is to line up as many rows of fruits as possible and by setting off just one line, all owing a chain reaction of sequences to follow. And yes, that's really all there is to it.

However, despite the title's amazing simplicity, the action is surprisingly addictive, (even though in one player mode, it's very easy to complete). This is mainly because in two-player mode it's probably one of the most competitive games you'll ever come across. There's nothing quite so glee-inducing as activating a whole sequence of fruits on to an unsuspecting opponent, then watching their face drop as they begin to lose control of the proceedings and the blocks become ever closer to the top of the play area. If you're already a fan of these types of games, it's likely that you will have already encountered this in a number of different guises, and nothing much really changes whenever a new one comes along, but at least Baku Baku has an excellent novelty attraction, plenty of silly graphics and brilliant slapstick music. This results in a more atmospheric play than most games of this type, and as usual, the action is hopelessly addictive. There's seven stages to conquer in one player mode and the time it takes to do this simply depends on the degree you become addicted to the gameplay. Play it once a day and it may take a week to complete. Play it continually, and you'll crack it in a couple of hours. But in a way, the point of this title isn't to finish it, as the most enjoyment comes from playing it over and over again against someone else.

At the end of the day, whether or not you'll enjoy Baku Baku largely depends on what type of gamer you are. If you're after a game that boasts technical excellence with moves to learn and secret features to discover, Baku Baku is likely to disappoint. However, if you just want something that's great fun to play which also offers incredibly addictive action, then Baku Baku is about as good as it could ever get.

SAM HICKMAN



Baku Baku Animal

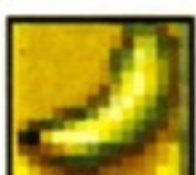


At the beginning of each level, you're treated to a little story, and if you manage to complete the game, there's a special surprise!



DOWN ON THE ANIMAL FARM

There's up to five animals that can be selected for play in Baku Baku Animal, and each one has their own preferred choice of food. Remember, to make lines of fruits disappear, you must match them with their animal owner – but don't be too hasty. If you waste the animals on just one fruit then you'll get into trouble later on in the game, when the animals become more sparse. So for your information...



MONKEY

Obviously, eats bananas. Starts to howl if you don't feed him for a while.



RABBIT

Line up the carrots with the rabbit and he'll chomp his way through the whole lot. Cries when hungry.



DOG

Loves a bone or two. Or ten. However, unlike most dogs, he won't eat anything and everything, preferring to stick to his daily dose of marrowbone.



MOUSE

Really, he should eat little insects. But this is a bit of a veggie peace-loving game so he prefers to chew on cheese. Which is fair enough.



PANDA

Knows bamboo shoots like there's no tomorrow. Another cry-baby when he becomes hungry.



BONUS

If you see any of these coins appear on the screen, try to drop them on your most surplus stock. They'll get rid of the whole lot for you.



As you can see, Player 1 isn't doing too well at the moment, and is about committing gaming hari-kari. However, to get the most out of this title, you really have to play it against a human opponent!



It's like a really cute Dural! Only not as hard.

A brilliantly lighthearted game that will appeal to puzzle and action fans alike.

graphics	80
sound	81
playability	90
lastability	89

overall

90%