

WHY IS PAC-MAN GRINNING? HE'S SHARING HIS QUARTERS

By PATRICK GOLDSTEIN

No man is an island—Adam had Eve, Antony his Cleopatra, Batman his Batwoman, and now the king of the video games, Pac-Man, has a queen, Ms. Pac-Man.

Dubbed the first lady of video

games, Ms. Pac-Man made her debut Wednesday in typical show-business style at a press conference at the Castle Park Entertainment Center in Sherman Oaks. The game is expected to appear in many video arcades during the next few weeks.

Video games have so far attracted a predominantly male clientele, but what's the fun of having the guys without the dolls?

"We've noticed a recent trend in our game pavilions that indicates a tremendous female acceptance of the Pac-Man game," says Castle Park marketing chief Michael Leone. "I guess it was only natural for Midway, the manufacturer of the game, to introduce a Ms. Pac-Man."

To woo the potential female video addict, Ms. Pac-Man is outfitted with more fashion wrinkles than a new Halston. Pac-Man is a homely little yellow critter on a screen, but his female video counterpart is resplendent in red lips and eyelashes, with a bow above her brow.

And there's even more to the Pac-Persons.

If you win at Ms. Pac-Man by wiping out two or more mazes of

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yellow dots on the video screen, she rewards you with a three-act cartoon. Video novices beware—you have to continually beat the game to see each new episode.

Like Hollywood lovers of yore, Mr. and Ms. Pac-Man meet and fall in love in the first-act cartoon, chase each other across the screen in the second, and for the finale, entitled "Junior," a stork presents the happy family with a Pac-Baby.

Is it a boy or a girl? Ah, that's a question that can't be answered—yet. Not even with a fat roll of quarters and a fast set of fingers.