

BY	SEGA
STYLE	RPG
RELEASE	TBA

The original Shining Force team return for an all-new adventure! There's a rather **glaring lack** of RPGs on the Saturn, so it's a good job that **Climax**, the team behind the Shining Force series on the Megadrive, have returned to cause **chaos on the Saturn!**

Shining Force was easily the best RPG on the Megadrive. With its intricate storylines and brilliant battle mode it was one of the most in-depth and appealing series of games ever released on the system. And now, in these days of 32-bit glorydom, everyone seems to have gone a bit mad. The 2D game has been pushed aside somewhat, and in its favour, 3D adventures with superlative graphics, gruesome plots and none of the old style RPG-ness about them at all. But what's happened to the gameplay? Where has it all gone?

Yep, I remember when this was all pixelly. None of your 3D rubbish, just tiny little sprites with no detail and bad taste in colour. But, the gameplay was

FROM THIS PRETTY MUNDANE BEGINNING A MONSTROUS QUEST GROWS. THE PRINCESS SATERA IS SPELLBOUND! AND THEN KIDNAPPED! BY A DARK ELF! A LEGENDARY GIANT IS AWOKEN, CAUSING TERROR AND THE POSSIBLE END OF THE WORLD!

damned good. even though the environments looked nothing like the castles or ships that they were supposed to represent. It's all changed now though, and it's not all for the better. Why, we haven't seen a decent RPG on the Saturn in months. The ones that are around at the moment are just too fussy (Virtual Hydlide) or too damned clever for their own good (D).

So it's with plenty of back-slapping and cheering that we welcome the Shining Force team back into the fold this month. Naturally, there's not much life left in the Megadrive anymore (especially not as far as RPGs go), so the team have decided to upgrade themselves and develop for the Saturn. The result is still reminiscent of a 16-bit game, offering not much at all in the way of 3D trickery or fancy effects, but as you'd expect from the crew, the adventure is of top class quality.

Set once again in the scenic territory of Parmecia, Shining Wisdom casts you as the new young guardlet, son of a great hero, starting out on his first day as a soldier. Just like our Rad you've got a bit of trouble getting out of bed and are already late for your big day. Your grandfather doesn't exactly help matters by refusing to allow you to leave for the office until you've decked him. From this pretty mundane beginning a monstrous quest grows. The princess Satera is spellbound! And then kidnapped! By a dark elf! A legendary giant is awoken, causing terror and the possible end of the world! You have to fight loads of monsters! And, in a bit of a departure from the usual Shining Force routine, there's no cumbersome rounds-based combat. Your little warrior wields his sword under your direct command, swiping at the many roaming beasties and boss-type monsters.



This might look like CG artwork – and it is! But it's also a screenshot of the lovely Shining Wisdom title screen. Not just a mock-up or anything.



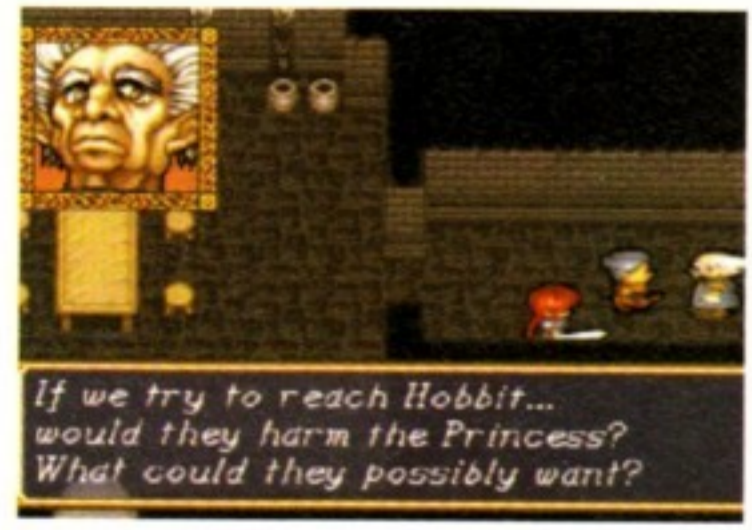
And in fact we were lying about the lack of visual effects earlier. Sure enough, Shining Wisdom isn't in the league of Panzer Dragoon or Sega Rally when it comes to feeding the eyes, but the sprites are all now traced in 3D, the levels are equally solid-looking and – shock horror – recognisable. The monsters are scary. There's even some scaling and rotation and stuff. It's pretty nice looking for an isometric adventure game, we'd have to say.

In fact, nice looking could be applied in several terms, as Shining Wisdom is shaping up to be one of the best examples of the genre to hit a Sega platform. We all know how ace the Shining Forces were, and given the amount of time this latest installment has been in production it should be cracking. Look out for a full review and Showcase in our very next issue. We can hardly wait to give you all our juicy info and opinions. Honest.



Shining Wisdom

Are you getting wise with me, sonny jim?



The beautifully-rendered intro tells the basic story of Shining Wisdom. But don't watch it before playing the first twenty minutes of the game, or you'll spoil the surprise for yourself. Because you don't know what's happening to start with.

Knock down your grandad before leaving home. This is absolutely true.



Check out the amazing sprite-scaling on this large-eared troll. It's the best you'll see on a Next Generation format.