

△ Store up the combos and unleash them at the right moment, then watch the devastation pile on to your foe.

# JO JO'S BIZARRE ADVENTURE

2D or not 2D, once again that appears to be the question. **DAN TRENT** grabs another piece of mad Capcom action

**DO ALL-SINGING, ALL-DANCING** 3D graphics come at the expense of gameplay? This was the particular can of worms opened in our March issue's (ODM #5) '3D or not 3D?' feature questioning the assumption that 3D is the be all and end all, and that 2D games have no place on such a powerful console as Dreamcast.

Few would disagree that super-slick graphics have enhanced gaming across the board, but there are those who would argue that people seeking a more 'pure' gaming experience could do worse than to check out the increasing number of 2D games that are heading our way, be they brand new titles ones or revived from past glories. Sonic Team's frenetic *ChuChu Rocket!*

(previewed on page 54) takes the back-to-basics ideal to extremes, but the buzz surrounding this title demonstrates that gameplay can take precedence over graphical prowess and get the juices flowing.

All of which brings us rather neatly to *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure*, the latest warped fighting game from Capcom, ironically the company who brought us the hugely popular and most definitely 3D *Power Stone* (ODM #1, 8/10), a game rarely absent from any top ten list.

## ANIMÉ MANIACS

It doesn't take a degree in gaming (if such a thing exists) to realise that *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure* is a 2D beat 'em

up with an Oriental flava – a quick glance at the screenshots will tell you that – but for the record here's the lowdown.

The game is based on a successful comic/cartoon series in Japan, and follows the fortunes of a bunch of comrades with the ability to project psychically generated extensions of their personality (still with us?) to increase their power in battle. Known as 'stands', they are unique to each character, and enable them to perform all manner of amazing feats and spectacular moves. Ranged against them are a motley collection of rival stand users under the command of the evil Dio, and including comedy rapper Vanilla Ice in their number.

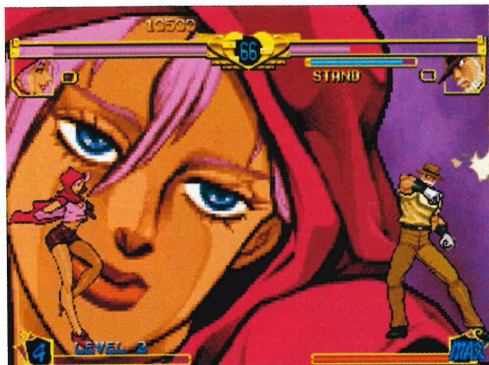
What you have here is actually two games in one; also included on the disc is the confusingly titled *Jo Jo's Venture* that covers the period before Jo Jo's explorations actually became bona fide adventures or, for that matter, bizarre. In practice this means that you get two basically very similar games for the price of one, which should make it something of a bargain.

## STAND BY ME

Without wanting to descend into marketing speak, the unique selling point of *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure* is the stand system, which varies wildly from character to character and makes the fighting extremely varied. For the characters that possess stands (the ones that don't have weapons or other skills to make up for their lack of foresight), activating it is a simple button press away, and opens up all sorts of possibilities of the foe-crushin' combo variety. They don't stop, either: hit all the right buttons and you have the potential to rack up some fearsome 90-plus-hit combos that pile on the damage with lunatic speed.

You won't want to keep your stand on all the time though. Certain moves, such as dodge, can be performed only when the stand is switched off, and

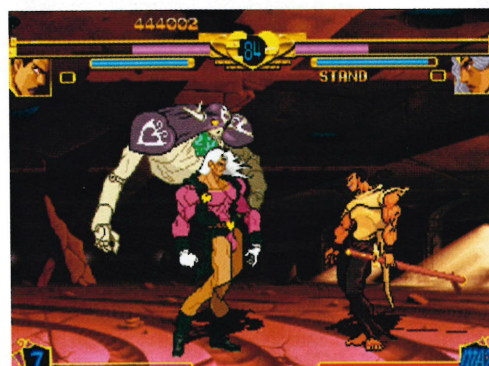
"IN JO JO'S THE COMBO IS KING, AND BUTTON BASHERS AREN'T WELCOME"



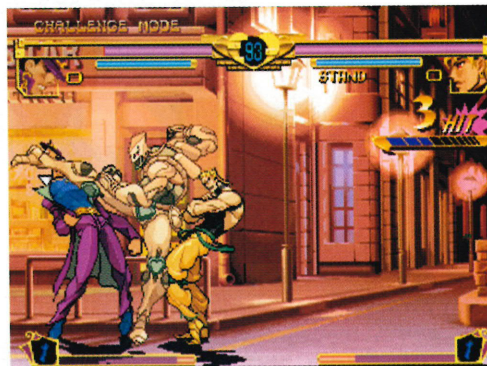
△ The girls in this game play as hard as the boys.



△ Mariah's projectile breasts are as lethal as they are amusing.



△ Switching your stand on is like bringing your big brother along.



△ Dress like that in Barnsley and you deserve to get a kickin'.

from time to time you need to recharge energy by reverting to solo play. If you don't you could end up experiencing the painful-sounding 'stand crush', which temporarily dumps you in the big, wide world on your own and leaves you wide open to your opponent's super-combos.

On the subject of combos, it's important to bear in mind that if you can't combo with the best of them, then you're not going to get very far in this game before you end up using the game disc as a beer mat. In *Jo Jo's* the combo is king, and button bashers aren't welcome. This may come as something of a shock if your fighting game experience doesn't extend much beyond *Soul Calibur* or *Ready 2 Rumble Boxing*, with their ability to flatter the cack-handed beginner and the lightning-thumbed expert alike. There is a choice of easy or normal mode, and selecting the former enables you to unleash super-combos at the push of a single button, but ultimately you're not going to succeed in the game if you can't master the full moves.

#### MOVE ALONG

Other than the stand system, the other distinctive feature of *Jo Jo's* is its very Japanese feel, and the unashamed way in which it wears its comic book and animé heritage on its sleeve. Whether this is a reason to be cheerful or fearful is subjective, but you'd be hard pressed to find someone who'd rave about the game's graphical prowess. What it lacks in polish is certainly makes up for in quirky humour and madcap nature, but whether these will find favour in a world of games like the aforementioned *Soul Calibur* remains to be seen. The storyline is certainly basic, and the subtitles unintentionally amusing in translation, but the sense of knockabout fun is endearing – the chattering teeth that swallow you into the ground and give you a good molar mashing are a particular favourite.

In the end though, *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure* is a little too specialist for its own good. Fighting game purists may love it, but unless you're particularly fleet of finger and determined to master endless combos then you're not going to get the most out of it.

If you like the look of *Jo Jo's* and haven't tried *Power Stone* yet, there's no contest as to which one you should throw your cash at. While *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure* is a harmless bit of fun, it's probably fairly safe to say that most people expect more from a Dreamcast game. ☺

PRICE: £39.99  
PUBLISHER: VIRGIN  
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM

#### VERDICT

**FRENETIC, BUT ULTIMATELY TOO SPECIALIST FOR ITS OWN GOOD**



#### UPPERS

Good clean fun • Stand system adds a new twist • Loopy super-combos • Strongly defined characters



#### DOWNERS

A little tricky to master • Clunky graphics • Limited appeal

**IN ONE HOUR** It was *Ice Ice Baby* for the flat-topped fool of the rap world  
**WEBSITE** www.capcom.com  
**MAX PLAYERS** 2  
**VIDEO MODES** Full-screen  
60Hz option

ODM RATING OUT OF 10

5

#### WALKTHROUGH

#### STAND BY YOUR MAN

To give an idea of the change in pummeling power the stand bestows, check out the run-down of characters' different stands.



1

On his own Iggy can do little more than nip his opponents' ankles, but call up his giant robot dog and you're laughing.



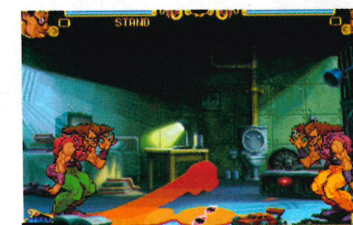
2

Advol's eagle mate is one of the more powerful stands, and is strong and fast-moving – a good choice of character.



3

A wide range of weapons, high-speed combos and being too small to hit makes D'bo's stand a tough opponent.



4

Shrink your opponent with the strange, ghostly grabbing arms, then blast him with a gun. Nice style!



5

Votoaro is one of the main heroes of the game, and has a fearsome stand that can rain down punches with great speed.