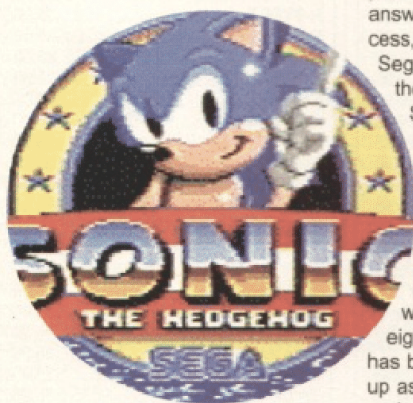


SEGA



CITY

Who the hell does Sonic the Hedgehog think he is?



The hype surrounding *Sonic the Hedgehog* is quite remarkable. No-one seems to care that he looks more like Felix the Cat than a small, prickly thing you run over with your car. But when you consider that this is Sega's answer to the decades of *Mario* success, you start to realise how much Sega are staking on this little fella. If the whole world hasn't heard of Sonic by the end of the year, then it won't be from lack of trying on Sega's part.

The arcade adventure revolves around a blue-rinsed hedgehog, inexplicably called Sonic, who wears a dapper pair of red slippers. As the hog walks, runs and jumps along the eight-way scrolling play area, he has but one aim on his mind: to pick up as many rings as possible. At the end of each of the massive levels, the rings are then exchanged for points. And points a happy hedge-

hog do make.

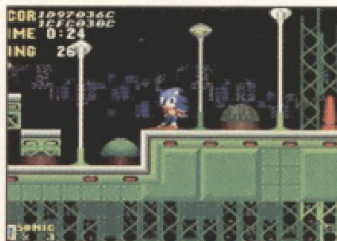
The rings are scattered around the levels at points seemingly just out of reach to Sonic. It is here that the game's main element of playability comes into its own. Sonic is subject to inertia and gravity like the rest of us. Using long run-ups, slopes and ramps, it is possible for you to build up speed and jump to unbelievable heights in the search of the elusive rings.

The only weapon Sonic has at his disposal are the spikes of his haircut. But these can only be used efficiently while Sonic is spinning through the air. If any of the



Every level is made up of three stages, each of which has a strange being which must be overcome at the end. Like that other great Sega arcade adventure, *Mickey Mouse*, each level has its own graphical theme. The demo cart that I received started in Green Hill, then progressed to Marble World and finished up in Star City. But I would hope that the finished 8Mb cart will have a few more levels in it.

This game is probably going to be heralded as the best game yet on the Mega Drive, which it surely is. If *Sonic the Hedgehog* doesn't become the first Sega game to get to the top of the charts



rodents or other wildlife manage to touch Sonic, they will send all his rings to the four winds. However, the rings will all remain about the screen for around five seconds, giving you a chance to retrieve a few, but never all, of them.

Bumping into the creatures won't ever kill you though – losing all your rings is bad enough. The only way you will actually die is by either

falling off the screen – e.g., down a ravine – or by bouncing more than once on deadly metal spikes.

Throughout the levels you will come across different items which can help you overcome certain obstacles and generally make life much easier. For instance, large stone balls can be pushed on switches to hold them down; powered springs will help you leap to colossal heights; and television sets contain various points and power boosts.



The many faces of Sega's soon-to-be-released *Sonic the Hedgehog*. The game's destined to be an instant blockbuster with its vast range of levels, humour, astounding audio visuals and compelling gameplay. Move over *Mario*, move over *Alex Kidd*... there's a new guy in town.

(*Mickey Mouse* managed to get to number two!), then I'll eat my Power Stick.

But the big question is, will it sell more than *Super Mario Bros 3*, also released in September?

