

AMSTERDOOM

Go Dutch to cut the price of your first-person fun.

■ Publisher **Davilex** ■ Developer **In-house** ■ Price **£15**

Purple headed monster found lurking in Dutch magazine shop!



A FIRST-person shooter with *Doom* in the title? That can't be bad... and it's not. Set on the streets and in the buildings and sewers of contemporary Amsterdam, *AmsterdooM* is a fantastically fun – if undemanding – romp, with a decent 3D engine that keeps a high number of the alien horde on screen in a good variety of realistic environments such as airports and art galleries.

The intro movie sets the tone in an adrenal but witty Paul Verhoeven style; a mixture of faked news footage filmed in Amsterdam and interlaced animations of the alien Grubber invasion. Only one man can infiltrate the green gaseous bubble which has enveloped the city and threatens to wipe out life on Earth: predictably, that's you. In the style of the game's demi-namesake *Doom*, it's your simple but rewarding mission to wipe out the purple peril of the Grubbers.

If you discount the groundbreaking nature of *Doom*, *AmsterdooM* is similar in many ways. The level progression is ultimately dependent on the discovery of coloured keys and their matching doors. Switches open doors to access more switches and there are significant



Giant disco-biscuits boost health even further. Just say no, kids.



arcade and platform features in almost every level: jumping between sinking plinths in an acidic sewer, or fending off galleries of laser fire from a slowly rising open lift. Exploding barrels of green slime and more brown crates than the Lost Ark warehouse heap still more tribute upon the Id altar.

"Easy as a lady of the Amsterdam night."

Some will undoubtedly find these ageing tricks of the trade tiresome, but if you're in the mood for some retro action, *AmsterdooM* is the perfect fix and an enjoyably self-deprecating homage. Levels are short enough that you can leave it at satisfactory points when you've had enough. Unlike *Doom*, though, the game is easy as a lady of the Amsterdam night (er, apparently), with more health and ammo than you could ever pick up. As with said lady, you'll have to go to Amsterdam to get it; but if you're ever in a position to pick up a copy, you'd be mad not to. It could easily become a cult classic of the not-too-distant future, and what else are you going to spend £15 on in Amsterdam, anyway?

STEVE BROWN

PC GAMER

Easy fragging action that'll take you on an old-school high in a cultural city.

66%

NANCY DREW: STAY TUNED FOR DANGER

■ Publisher **HerInteractive**

■ Developer **In-house**

■ Price **£20**

"Watson. Something is definitely up." There's something suspect about a game designed specifically for girls, by a company making games specifically for girls, that is actually half-decent. Whatever next?

This is the second in the series of *Nancy Drew* adventure games, based on the popular teenage-targeted detective novels. The hard-core (well, compared to *Sweet Valley High*) *Nancy Drew* novels have been around since the early 1900s and were written by various male ghostwriters (who presumably turned up to signings in drag).

Developers HerInteractive carry the slogan that their games are "For Girls Who Aren't Afraid of a Mouse." I abhor this psychological packaging and sociological determination, but admit it's a welcome change, especially since the game is not actually any more girly than any other adventure game. At no point do they all give up the adventure, get into pyjamas and start discussing tampons and boys. In fact, it feels more like *Cluedo*, only the characters are 'real' people and Colonel Mustard doesn't even make a guest appearance.

The story is this. Nancy investigates as TV's hottest soap heart-throb Rick Arlen is receiving death threats. You play Nancy, and will find that the only way to solve the mystery is to go undercover as an extra on the show and expose the wicked perpetrator. There's the usual array of puzzles and hidden messages to solve before getting to the bottom of these dastardly shenanigans. It's graphically bearable, and somehow manages to evoke a mysterious air of suspense; which is impressive considering it is aimed at an early teenage market.

I have to say that I like this. I shall be visiting the HerInteractive Web site regularly in anticipation of their future titles. I'm confident that once they get over their self-righteous frenzy of sexist stereotype-martyrdom they will start producing some 'excellent' as opposed to 'good' stuff.

KATE LITTLE

60%

