

BAKU BAKU ANIMAL

AM3 drop racing games in favour of furry animals!



Import fans will probably have seen this title gracing the shelves of their local retailer over the last month, although despite being developed by none other than AM3, it's unlikely to appeal to those addicted to technical prowess and show-offery (and let's face it, these are always the types

A FRENZY OF TOP PUZZLE ACTION! A WELCOME CHANGE TO THE USUAL FIGHTING DRIVE!

that you'll find down at the importers). You see, even though this is only AM3's second game for the Saturn, they've decided to hang up their racing helmets for a while, and instead, they've turned their hand to another popular genre of video gaming culture - the puzzle game. Difficult to believe this may be, but AM3 themselves have always said that they wanted to do a puzzler and we suspect that after the heavy-weight work that was put into Rally, the team probably felt like doing something a little more light-hearted, and came up with



this - no doubt when they had a spare hour or two.

Anyway, the result is a rather neat Tetris/Puyo Puyo clone, with a twist or two. The twists come in the form of various animals which are near starving, and need to be fed their chosen food of the day. Both animals and food are dropped on to the screen, and you'll have to match more than one block of food with its respective partner in order for them to disappear off the screen - the aim being to keep the rows of food and animals as close to the bottom of the screen as possible. Once the blocks get to the top, it's game over. Of course, this wouldn't be very interesting if there was no challenge involved, so the screen is split in half, and on the other side is one of seven computerised opponents to play against. Every time you clear a line of fruits they'll drop on to his playing area and vice versa. While this isn't exactly pushing the technical boundaries of the Saturn in any way whatsoever, the result is a surprisingly addictive and challenging game.

Naturally, the real entertainment will be gleaned from playing against another (real) person and although the large part of the game relies on the player's ability to set off chain reactions of animal eaterie, there's an element of chance involved too, so even non-experienced players will get into it very quickly.

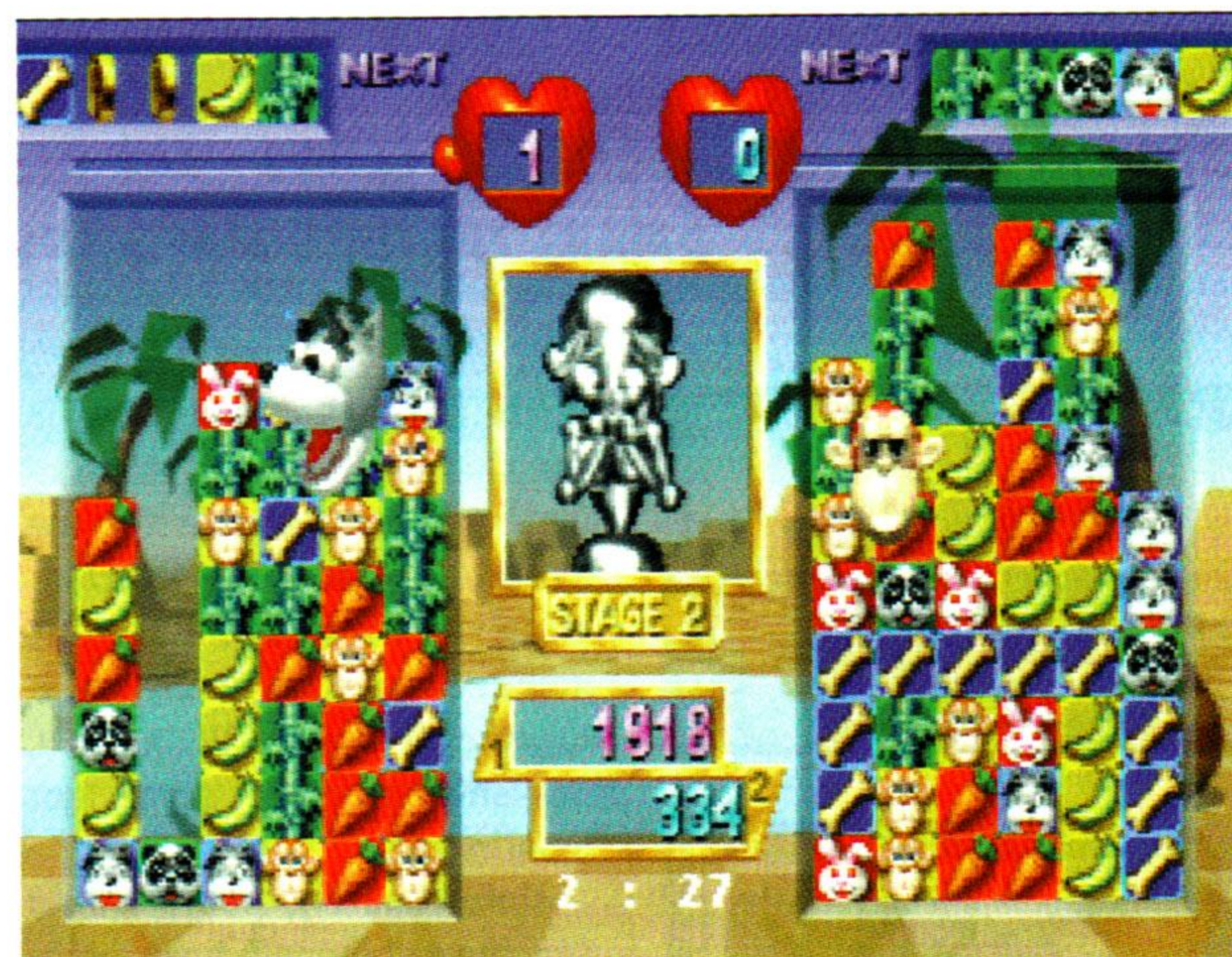
While it's safe to say that no one is going to go crazy over this title (after all, there's been hundreds of games like this in the past) it does have a more light hearted and dare we say, novelty factor than titles such as this seen before. In fact, coupled with the ridiculously jolly tunes and silly sound effects, it

really does provide a nice break from the more "throw your weight around" titles currently doing the rounds on the Saturn.

At the end of the day, anyone expecting an AM style festival of 3D trickery and clever gameplay will be sorely disappointed, but if you're after a bit of fun (which is essentially what games are all about anyway) and some desperately addictive gameplay, Baku Baku Animal is well worth

a look. Most definitely the best "next generation" puzzle game we've seen to date.

★★★★



A PUZZLE FEST WITH CHOMPING TO BOOT!

