

BY	SEGA
PRICE	£TBA
STYLE	RACING
RELEASE	MARCH

Road Rash and **Manx TT SuperBike** prove that when it comes to racing, there's nothing quite like jumping atop a motorbike and giving it some "welly". Joining the **biker frenzy**, Sega has dusted down one of its most ancient coin-ops and given it the "Virtua" treatment - a recipe for success, surely? Well...



Hang On GP '95 was released in late 1995 in Japan to plug the growing gap in the Saturn's portfolio of driving titles - a stop-gap measure if you will, until the almighty Sega Rally Championship came along. The game promised much, with smooth, almost-pop-up free 3D and the arcade heritage of one of the most popular road racers of the eighties. This all sounds pretty great except for one thing: the programming.

It would not be fair to rubbish every single aspect of Hang On from the outset. Although the graphics are distinctly angular (check out those hexagonal wheels!) and somehow lacking in imagination, they do the job in depicting a pretty realistic environment that moves at great speed. Also, unlike the terrible import game Dead Heat, there is a nice degree of variety in the backdrops. A choice of three courses is available from the outset, with three more becoming accessible when the first trio have been completed - and the quality of the graphics certainly makes you want to see these other levels. Unfortunately, the sound doesn't do the ears any favours - the motorbike noises are certainly Flymo-esque and the music is pretty nondescript.

The aural barrage would have been bearable if the gameplay was good - after all, the original Hang On - and most definitely its Super sequel - were excellent coin-ops for their time, crafted by a certain Yu Suzuki no less. Unfortunately, this area of the game is perhaps its weakest. There is absolutely no

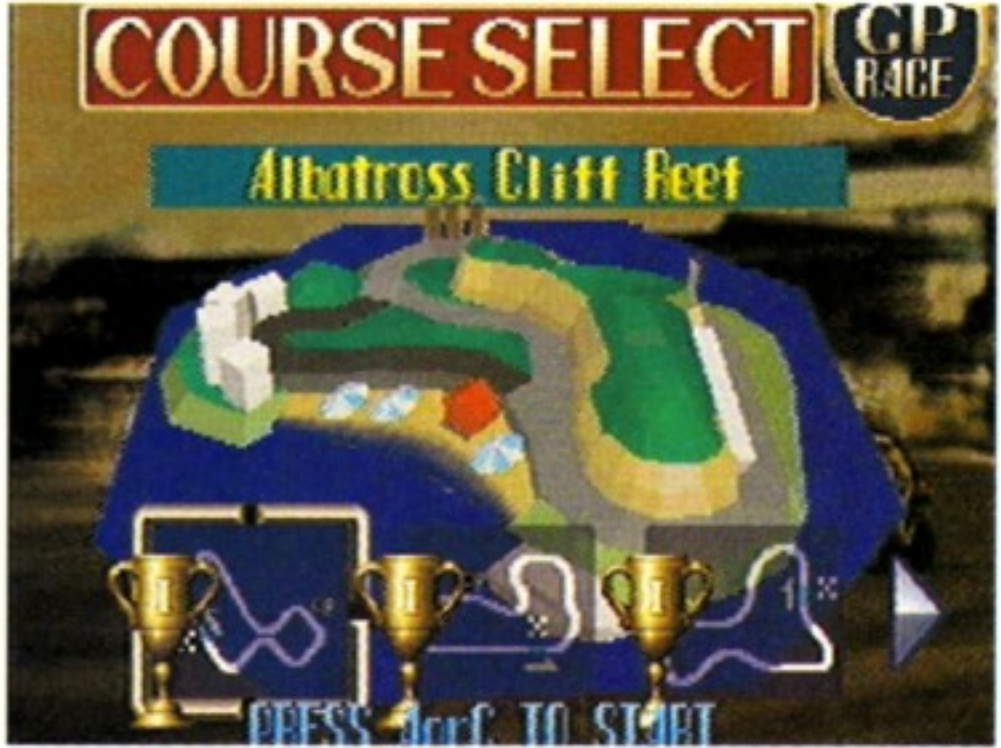
weight to either the bike or the rider, meaning that leaning into corners is totally unrealistic - very fast, with not much drift evident. Just pressing the pad slightly left or right results in a laughable on-screen performance from your biker as he lurches unconvincingly about. This over-leaning makes for a most unsatisfactory experience when playing with the joy-pad.

Hang On GP does have the distinction of being the only Saturn game that actually benefits considerably when used with the Arcade Power Racer - thanks to its analogue capabilities, you have far more control over the leaning prowess of your bike (although why a similar measure of control isn't available with the pad remains a mystery).

With its varied courses and choice of bikes (including some hidden ones, and a bizarre Street Hawk lookalike capable of gargantuan velocities), Hang On GP is initially an attractive game, despite its occasional graphical weirdness and obnoxious sound. However, the handling of the bike is so well, "unbike-like" that the game loses a lot of its attraction.

Of course, the big question has to be - is there really room for another road racer on the Saturn market while Sega Rally Championship rules supreme? My answer is there's always room for a quality alternative, but quite frankly Hang On GP '95 just isn't it. If you haven't got Rally yet, consider yourself a foolish cretin and go forth to your local software emporium and purchase it now. If you see Hang On while you're there, do the decent thing and leave it where it is.

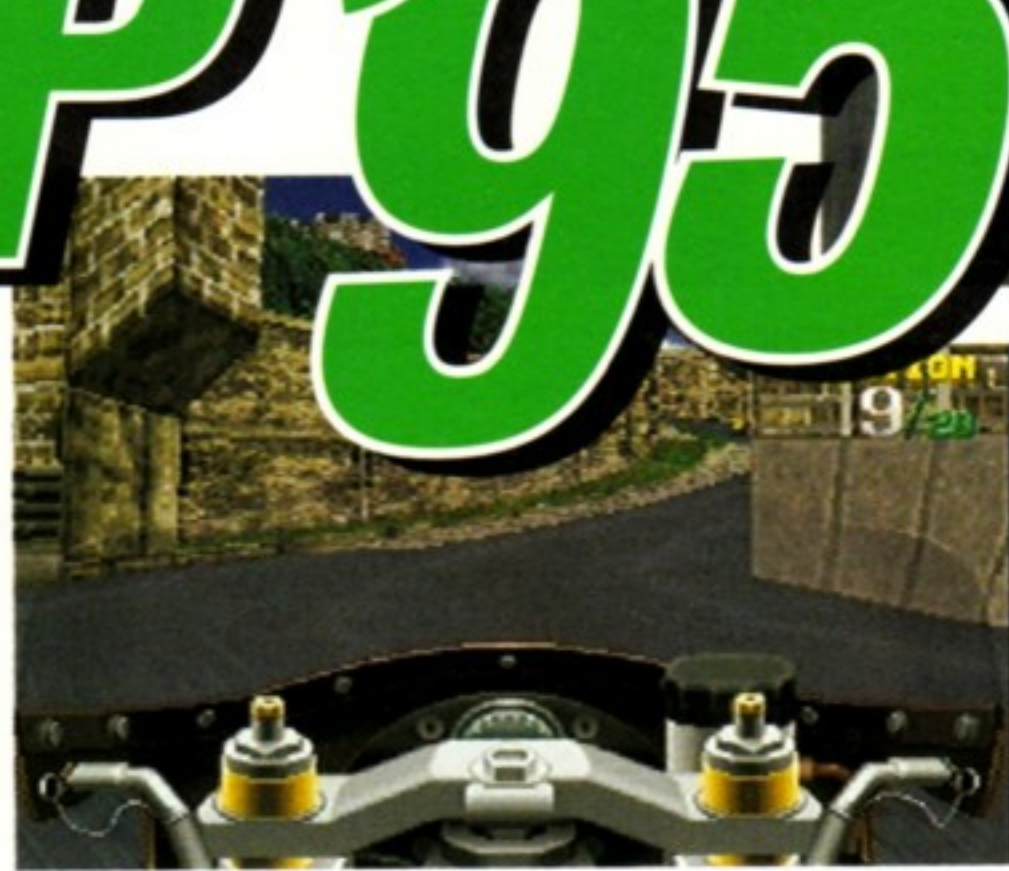
RICHARD LEADBETTER



You know, this game is much better if you use the Analogue Steering Wheel Controller Joypadstick. Honest it is. Although it's still pretty bad.



HANG ON GP'95



Glamorous race drivers must always remember to check their hair before leaving the pits. Here we see one such conscientious pilot at work.



That famous first-person perspective in full.



Oh - he's for the high jump. Ho ho ho.



Rig up the bike of your dreams on this mechani-frenzy screen. Engines! Brakes! Tyres! Not much difference made to the game!

Sega Rally certainly hasn't really got anything to worry about - Hang On is a barely average road racer, lacking the realism and enjoyment we should expect from 3D Saturn produce.

graphics	74	overall
sound	39	
playability	66	
lastability	73	
		67%