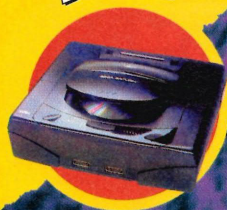


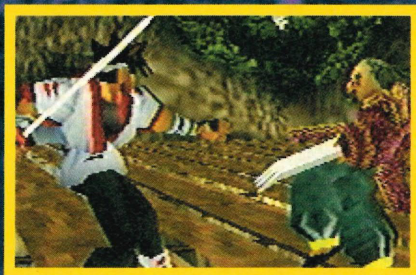
Saturn

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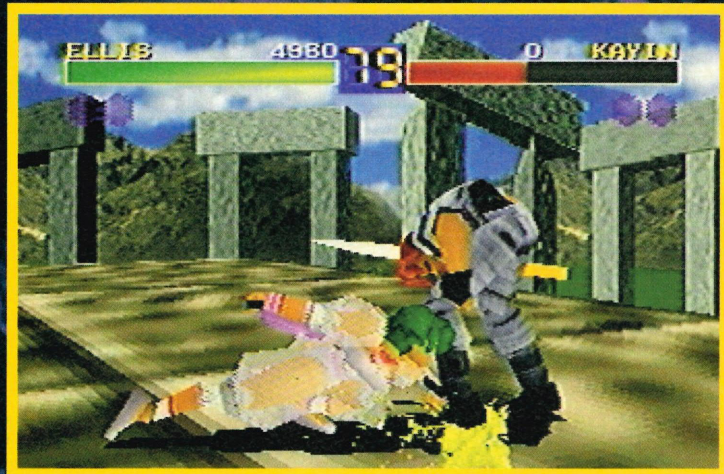
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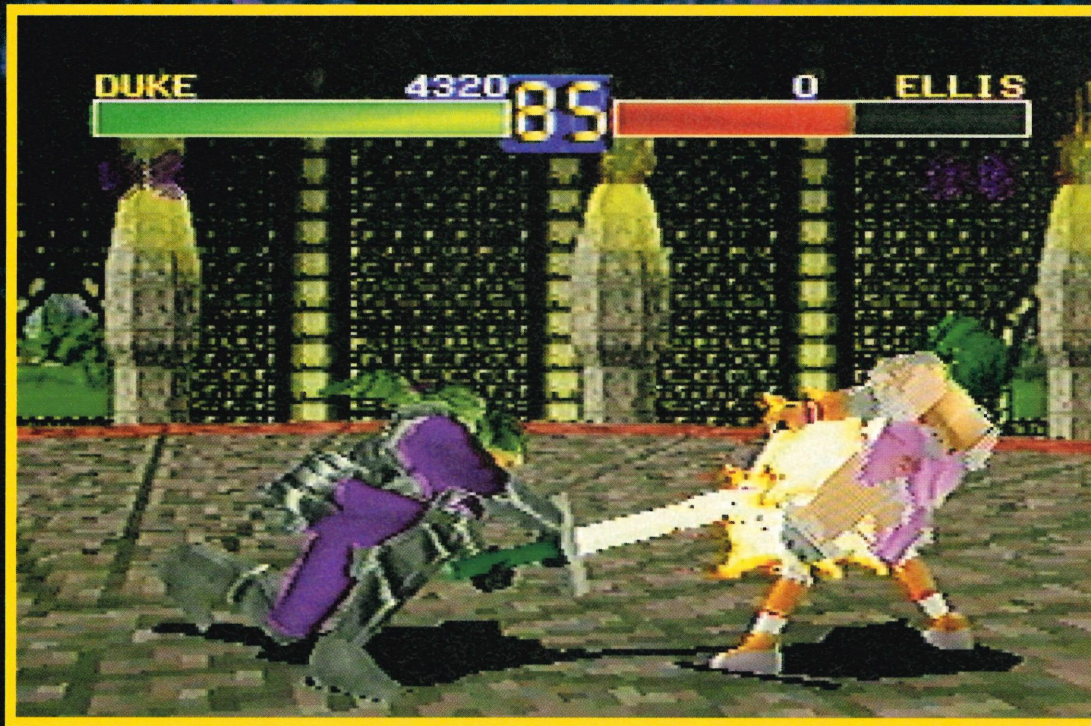
• Ellis is a tough little character. She's small, fast and uses two sharp daggers to slice up her opponents. You wouldn't want to meet her on a dark night!



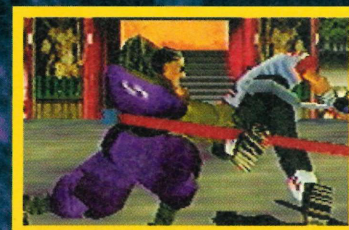
• Nice! The elderly gent whose name I can't remember (it's Fo you fool!) unleashes a huge fireball. Just look at those blades he uses!



• It's a little raunchy of Ellis to fight with nothing but her silk pyjamas on, there might be kids watching!



• That pole is useful for tripping up the opposition, and causes much damage when placed between the legs and lifted upwards.



• The lovely Sofia has some tasty fireball moves at her disposal.



Ready to rumble

Characters in Japanese beat-'em-ups are always a little strange. There's always a scantily clad woman and an old man - work it out! The ones in this aren't any different. And in case you were wondering, the S stands for special!



The standard sword-wielding bloke, Eiji is agile, strong, and a dab-hand at power punches.



Don't make remarks about this geezer's ginger hair or he'll frazzle you with one of his fireballs.



Wey-heh! This leather-clad vixen soon whips opponents into shape and then laughs hysterically.



The biggest of the fighters, Run Go likes to bash enemies with his massive stone club.

Contact: The Video Game Centre on 01202 527314.

Toh Shin Den S

One of the first beat-'em-ups to use the new technique of multiple viewing angles was *Toh Shin Den* on the PlayStation, and pretty good it was too. Can the Saturn version stand the heat?

In case you're wondering, the 'S' stands for 'special' apparently – and this is a pretty special game too. A moody but undoubtedly impressive intro introduces all the characters, including my particular favourite: the massive Run Go, who fights with a club. Then there's the pouting Sofia who fights with a whip and the armoured Duke who wields a gigantic broadsword. Each character has their own distinctive abilities and can unleash a barrage of firepower and special moves. There's even a hidden special character in this version that was lacking from the PlayStation effort.

Each fight takes place within a beautifully put together arena. The backdrops look good, but the objects closer to the screen seem blocky and rather basic. A shame. However, the characters look fantastic, it has to be said. The control pad enables your chosen character to circle his or her opponent around the arena. This looks very effective, and yet doesn't affect the gameplay or the player's concentration one bit. There's no glitching, and each character can execute some spectacular special moves like fireballs and sword slashes, which are good for finishing off opponents.

As with all games of this type, some characters are better for fighting with than others. Sofia, Ellis and Kayin are good all-round fighters with matching strength and speed, whereas Run Go and Duke are heavier and therefore slower, although their massive weapons do give them an advantage. So, you have to choose carefully.

Yes, you know I'm going to say it, but *Toh Shin Den S* is better in two-player mode, but then most games like this are. Still, a one-player game is still a hell of a lot of fun, and *Toh Shin Den S* certainly gives *Virtua Fighter 2* a run for its money, but doesn't quite reach its high standard.

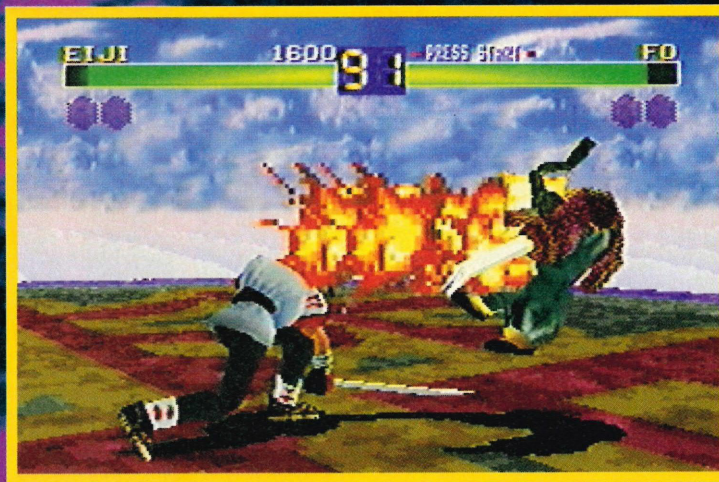
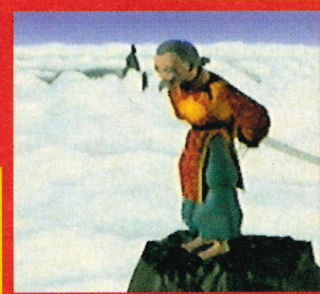
● Steve Hardy

*gives
Virtua
Fighter 2
a run for
its money*

Pro MOTION

What Saturn game would be complete without a great intro sequence to set the scene.

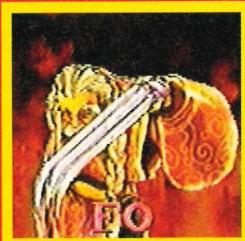
This one in *Toh Shin Den S* wasn't in the PlayStation version – another reason why your PSX owning mate is a fool! Laugh at him whenever you get the chance!



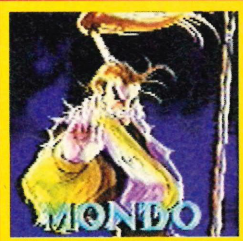
● Eiji launches a flaming attack on that poor defenceless old man. *Toh Shin Den S* is full of impressive special moves like these. They're a refreshing change from the physical strength moves in *VF2*.

Proscore
87

Although it offers nothing drastically new, *Toh Shin Den S* puts up a good fight, offering plenty of moves and some neat looking visuals.



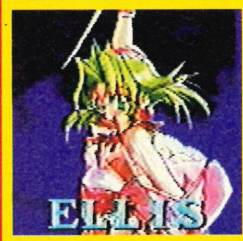
Old he may be, but Fo is a sprightly chap and can really hurt opponents with his magic bubble.



Armed with a very long pole, Mondo really believes in giving opponents some stick.



Armour-clad Duke looks like a knight in shining armour, but his sword will really cut you up.



The green-haired girl with a see-through skirt, Ellis uses acrobatic expertise and sharp daggers.