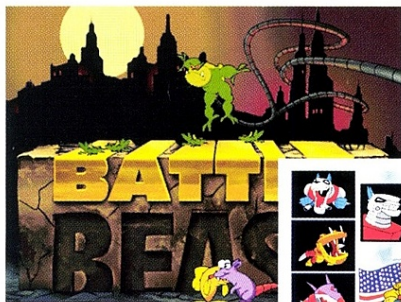


capsule reviews

by Kevin J. McCann

Battle Beast



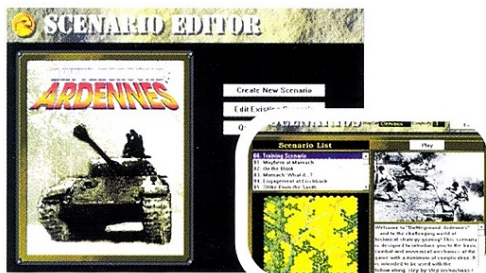
Price: **\$49.95** Genre: **Fighter** Publisher: **7th Level**
Telephone: **214.437.4858** System: **IBM PC** Overall Rating: **6**

The problem is that *Battle Beast* starts off on the wrong foot by proclaiming "spectacular game play that blows away *Mortal Kombat*, *Street Fighter* and *Primal Rage*." In comparison, *Battle Beast*'s graphics are very cartoony, and most fighting fans won't be able to accept the comparison. While there are lots of moves and the graphics are SVGA, the actual character animation is rough, making it hard to see what move your opponent is pulling off before it knocks the living daylight out of you. There's a great deal of humor and even modem/network play, but, as a fighting game, *Battle Beast* manages only a meow where it should have roared.

BattleGround Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge

Price: **\$49.95** Genre: **Strategy** Publisher: **Talon**
Soft/Empire Interactive Telephone: **301.916.9302**
System: **IBM PC** Overall Rating: **8**

Now you can take control of either Peiper's infamous SS or the American counterattack to retake Stoumont. Composed of several historical scenarios, a full-featured scenario editor and modem-to-modem play, *BattleGround Ardennes* is a solid war game. The only drawback—and it's the same drawback that virtually all war games suffer—is the interface, which, while being the standard point-and-click, takes considerable time learning before you can master the game at any level. While experienced war gamers will get into play faster, novices may find themselves being stomped on repeatedly before really gaining a clue. Still, experienced war gamers will want to don their combat boots and dive into this game.



AD&D 2nd Edition Masterpiece Collection

Price: **\$59.95** Genre: **Fantasy Role-Playing** Publisher: **SSI**
Telephone: **408.737.6800**
System: **IBM PC CD** Overall Rating: **9**

Unless you can't stand fantasy role-playing or already have most of SSI's role-playing games, the *AD&D 2nd Edition Masterpiece Collection* is well worth picking up. The *Masterpiece Collection* comprises six AD&D games. The only drawback is that, to keep costs down, the printed manuals aren't included. Instead, the manuals have been transferred into document files, which you can either view through your monitor or print out. Not quite as convenient as having the actual game manuals, but this is only a very slight detraction from the overall quality of the *Masterpiece Collection*.



3D Ultimate Pinball

Price: **\$49.95** Genre: **Pinball**
Publisher: **Sierra On-Line** Telephone: **209.683.4468**
System: **IBM PC CD** Overall Rating: **8**

Unlike other pinball games that zoom in on the pinball, scrolling to follow it as it moves about, *3D Ultimate Pinball* shows the entire table in detailed SVGA. This also presents the game with its most inherent problem, which is, if you don't have a large monitor, you're going to need to lean in close to make out all the action. The sound effects and music are comparable to regular pinball games, while *3D Ultimate Pinball*'s special effects are clearly better. More pinball tables would have been nice, but, fortunately, the three included tables are well-designed. And for those who miss tilting, they've even included that.



Table Sports

Price: **N/A** Genre: **Sports Bar Games**
 Publisher: **Time-Warner Interactive**
 Telephone: **408.434.3700**
 System: **IBM PC CD** Overall Rating: **5**

If your only purpose in life has been to frequent sports bars, playing Slam Hockey, then *Table Sports* is the game for you. But if you're one of the other 99.9% of people out there, then you might just find yourself asking, "Why?" And that's a good question. While sports games down to pinball have made their way successfully to computers and consoles, are table sports computer games really necessary? These are the games that you play with your buddies at a bar after a few drinks, not at home against a teetotaling computer. While the graphics and animation are detailed, these table sports games are hands-on, reflex games, not the type meant to be played tapping at a keyboard.

SET

Price: **N/A** Genre: **Puzzle** Publisher: **Set Enterprises**
 Telephone: **602.837.3628** System: **IBM PC**
 Overall Rating: **9**

The object of the game is to identify "sets" of three cards, in which they either share varying attributes or are completely different. Variations included are dancing cards, beat the clock, continuation and solitaire. While that really tells you nothing about the game unless you already know how to play it, *SET* is a good deal of fun and easy to learn. It also has the necessary ingredients of a solid puzzle game—a simple point-and-click interface, varying degrees of challenge and a helping of frustration when the computer is cleaning your clock. What really puts *SET* above other puzzle challengers is that you can play via modem against a friend, adding to the replay value considerably.

Fun 'N Games

Price: **\$39.95** Genre: **Educational** Publisher: **Williams/Good Times Interactive** Telephone: **N/A**
 System: **IBM PC CD** Overall Rating: **9**

Williams' *Fun 'N Games* allows your children to test their artistic stroke painting, orchestrate music, increase their mental reflexes within five games and mix and match styles. Easy to use, children will have no trouble learning *Fun 'N Games*, and they'll probably be fairly surprised when they find out just how much fun it is. Both the Paint and Music programs come with samples as well, either for coloring in Paint with a myriad of colors and patterns, or various music styles in the Music program. A stripped-down Kid's Paint is also included for the very young, letting them dabble on your computer instead of on your wall. Just don't let your kids know it's educational.

Ultimate Football

Price: **\$49.95** Genre: **Football Simulation**
 Publisher: **MicroProse** Telephone: **410.771.0440**
 System: **IBM PC CD** Overall Rating: **8**

Sick of your team? Thinking even you would make a better coach? Then test your strategy mettle with *Ultimate Football '95*, in which you can work with your favorite football players, choosing the lineup and setting the plays to be used. For those who want to go the duration, league play is also included. Rounding everything off is modem play, where you and a friend can see just who is the better coach. Gamers looking to control the actual individual football players during the plays will be disappointed—this simulation puts you in the coach's spot, where you set everything up just the way you want it, then hold your breath and watch helplessly as your mighty troops make it succeed or unravel. Just slip the trademark frown on your face at the virtual sidelines and let the action begin.

