James Doohan (Montgomery Scott) has remarked that he and DeForest Kelly (Leonard McCoy) agreed to trade lines during the filming of *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*. As Spock lay dying, it was originally Scotty who was to have warned James Kirk not to open the protective engineering doors. It would then have fallen to Dr. McCoy to utter his trademark show-stopper "He's dead... [Jim]." Rather than risk shattering the drama of the moment with that familiar and often-lampooned expression, each officer was simply made to give advice which reflected the other's area of expertise.

During its original run on network television, 1966 to 1969, *Star Trek* established many such cliches and plot devices which punctuated and often characterized its 79 episodes. In the decade which followed, these cliches became so popular and so instantly recognizable that one can easily forgive the producers of six major *Star Trek* films, and five seasons of an amazingly successful new *Star Trek* series, for being cautious when they have referred their audience back to events that took place in the original series.

Interplay, however, has boldly chosen to return where no man had previously gone before for *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary* (*ST: 25A*). This eagerly-awaited program embraces the original series with all its characteristics in a way which attempts to endear it to those who have loved the show for 25 years.

The question raised in *Computer Gaming World*'s preview of *ST: 25A* concerned the series' followers, many of whom have expressed outrage at the way various authors, artists and filmmakers have depicted the further voyages of their favorite starship. The answer to exactly how the purists are going to react to this product will depend on which part of the game is being played, as well as the individual purist involved and how open-minded he or she is willing to be. There should be no question, however, that this is the most outstanding *Star Trek* yet produced for the computer, as well as a good, solid piece of entertainment from **Interplay**.

ST: 25A is a combination adventure game and space combat simulation, in which the player controls the actions of Captain James T. Kirk during the original five-year outing. The program is divided into seven missions, an arrangement intended to evoke the episodic format of the television show. (One of these is presented in two parts, so that one might argue there are actually eight missions.) Each episode opens on the classic *Enterprise* bridge. At the expected point, Kirk receives a communication from Starfleet that contains his orders. In most cases, the starship will arrive at its destination to find one or more enemies with an attitude problem. A space battle generally follows, though it is possible for Kirk to avoid hostilities through diplomacy in at least one location.

BattleTrek

The space battles are a challenging arcade exercise, but represent that part of the program which is least faithful to *Star Trek* drama. After raising shields and arming weapons, the player uses phasers and photon torpedoes in what amounts to a dogfight in zero gravity. By using a set of cross-hairs(!) and carefully leading the target, Kirk needs to score a dozen or more solid hits on the enemy ship. Torpedoes cause more damage than phasers, but are more difficult to aim and require more time to reset after firing. With further infidelity to the starship concept, neither the
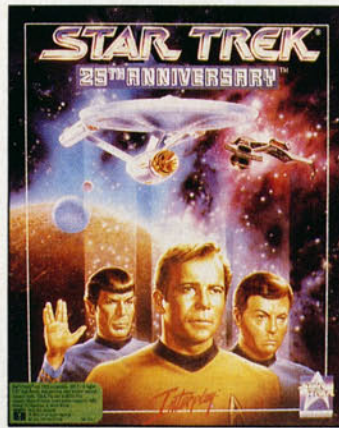
Install Long

Interplay's **Star Trek:**

by Allen

Enterprise nor its enemies are equipped with aft or lateral weaponry and the player is unable to view the action from any point of view other than directly forward. Only a "ship position monitor" — a radar screen in front of the captain's chair gives the player any idea what is happening in areas not displayed by the main view screen. The player has the option of expanding that view screen to the full size of the computer monitor. This makes targeting the enemy much easier, but does not allow the player any greater range of vision nor provide access to the radar screen.

Also on the bridge are top and side views of the Enterprise's exterior, which change color according to which system or section of the ship has taken damage. The player may briefly interrupt a battle long enough to instruct Mr. Scott to concentrate his repairs on a particular system which has been damaged. Normally, Scotty gives shields the highest priority. The player may also switch the display to monitor damage taken by the enemy vessel instead. Enemies include another Federation starship during some mock combat maneuvers, a slippery group of pirates called the Elasi, the familiar Klingon battle cruiser and a Romulan Bird of Prey complete with cloaking device. The Romulan allows ample time after it decloaks before it fires, but some alien-eyed players also claim to have seen that ship even with its cloak in place. Players may wish to consult with the Enterprise's science officer during the battle, who always has something to say, although not necessarily of value.

Possibly due to the budget restrictions of a weekly television show, battles on *Star Trek* have always been pictured mainly as tactical affairs in which the ship's computers were able to lock on their specified targets before firing. For the *Constitution*-class *Enterprise* to suddenly become as maneuverable as one of the small fighters in *Wing Commander* seems extremely unnatural and will likely arch more than a few pseudo-Vulcan eyebrows. On the other hand, the battles are well-designed and very much a satisfying challenge. The three-dimensional view of the enemy ships as they pass the *Enterprise* at different angles is particularly impressive.

The *Enterprise* must survive its battle with the enemy in order for Kirk to continue his mission. The final condition of the enemy ship apparently does not affect the mission which follows, nor does it alter the rating which the player receives at its completion.
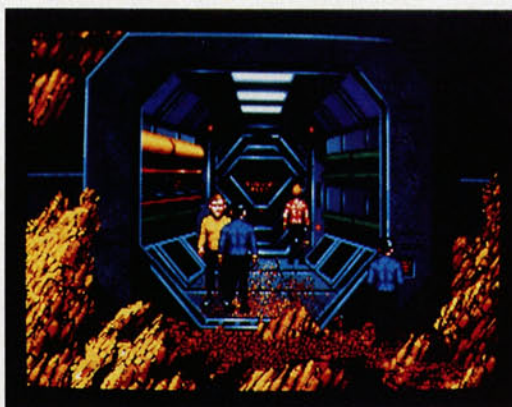
That's *Harry* Mudd to You (Plot)

Following the message from Starfleet, Kirk may access the *Enterprise*'s computer to seek further information about his mission. Joined by Spock, McCoy and a red-shirted security officer, Kirk beams to another ship, space station or alien planet. Once

and Prosper

25th Anniversary

Greenberg

there, the game becomes more of a standard graphic adventure. By manipulating objects, exploring alien devices and interviewing other characters, the player must find the source of various problems and, in the tradition of *Star Trek*, put things to right.

"Demonworld" requires Kirk to stalk some nightmares while "Hijacked Tug" is a hostage rescue mission. "Love's Labor Jeopardized" is an attempt to control a plague aboard a space station and "Another Fine Mess" features the return of Harry Mudd. "The Feathered Serpent" is a two-part episode in which the crew confronts another alien-turned-deity, this one in Klingon space. In "That Old Devil Moon," the group must find and disarm yet one more doomsday device. Much has been said about the security officers ("red shirts," "cannon fodder," "sacrificial lambs") who, in the series, trotted happily to their doom. Once one of them dies in *ST: 25A*, the player may be sure that something has gone wrong. The game does not quite take the "crew that's expendable" approach used by the television series.

In addition to help from the security officer, Kirk may also call on Spock or McCoy. Spock, logically, is at his best when a computer needs attention. McCoy, of course, is a doctor... "I'm just a *doctor*, damn it!" However, all three will give advice when Kirk consults them. Often, this leads to some non-interactive conversation between the senior officers that includes some of the entertaining banter which was a favorite part of the television show. Unfortunately, the remainder of the *Enterprise* crew has even less to do in *ST: 25A* than their flesh-and-blood counterparts had on television.

The puzzles presented become more difficult as the game progresses and few of them are particularly easy. The stories themselves are also interesting and require the player to be familiar with the most commonly known *Trek* trivia. There are also several references to *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*, including a guest appearance by Dr. Carol Marcus, behind whom looms an unfinished, early-model Genesis Device.

Once a mission is completed, the party returns to the *Enterprise* to receive a rating for their mission performance from Starfleet. The player would be well-advised to replay any mission for which he or she has not scored at least 90%, as this score will affect the crew's performance in upcoming space combat sequen-

ces. For the game's final battle, Kirk will need the most adept crew a high score can buy.

Captain to the Bridge (Interface Design)

The interface for these voyages of the starship *Enterprise* is, at times, confusing. For the most part, however, it works reasonably well. The player first selects an action such as "use," "look at" or "walk to," then moves the pointer to an object, location or person. Players should remember that they may use one object on another, even if both objects are in their inventory. There is very little typing required and Kirk's statements to other characters are selected from a menu. The mouse is most strongly recommended for this game, although players using either the mouse or joystick will still need to keep one hand on the keyboard during the space battles. Players may use only a keyboard throughout the game, but will put themselves at a disadvantage, particularly during the space battles, by doing so.

The sounds and graphics for *ST: 25A* are unforgettable. The caricatures of the bridge crew are instantly recognizable and constantly in motion. Kirk glances nervously around when not otherwise busy, while Spock calmly alternates his attention between his surroundings and his tricorder. The various locations are wonderfully imaginative and the *Enterprise* bridge is amazingly detailed and colorful. Only those tiny, important objects which are hidden on such complex screens will cause the player some frustration with the graphics, which support either VGA or EGA modes.

Players who lack a sound card will be missing out on an outstanding music score which features excerpts from the television show. The material is enjoyable to hear and its use is timed perfectly. Similarly, the sound effects aboard the *Enterprise* cannot but awaken feelings of nostalgia. The program supports most major sound cards.

ST: 25A's manual could have used more attention. Most experienced gamers will have little trouble making up for the lack of instructions; however, the subject matter of this program will probably attract many who have never before played an adventure game and it would be a loss if they were to walk away discouraged because of this problem. The manual also contains the game's only copy protection.

ST: 25A requires the use of a hard drive, on which it will require eight megabytes of space. A minimum of 10 MHz of speed is also required. Installation to the drive is a major procedure, the speed of which very much depends on the type of processor being used. Owners of 286 machines may have to wait as long as four hours for the process, while a fast 386 computer will take about 45 minutes. The real crime here is that the user must sit by the computer and switch disks throughout that period.

Star Fleet Evaluation

For this Trek-fanatic-turned-reviewer, *Star Trek: 25th Anniversary*'s major shortcoming is that it is over too soon. As of this writing, the game's developers have no plans for producing further episodes. However, that has yet to stop a *Star Trek* fan. Pencils out, everyone. It worked 23 years ago.... Save Star Trek — Write **Interplay!** *cgw*