



Castles and burning skyscrapers. Not much for Earth to look forward to.



These folk are just as good at slaughtering their own. Friendly fire?

There's probably only one question you want answered in this review, and that's, 'how is *Doom 2* different to its predecessor?' Well, there are changes, but to what extent is the game a set of extra levels, like the 2,000 or so .WAD files that are currently floating around? Read on, and all will become clear.

The original *Doom* (PCF 29, 92%) ended with our hero conquering Hell, stopping the invasion of the Mars base and returning to Earth, only to find that things hadn't improved in his absence: something was responsible for the horrible crucifixion of lots of people, not to mention the decapitation of an unfortunate rabbit. The action in *Doom 2* starts on Earth, with you trying to stem the tide of devilish invaders, battling your way through the star port and a city, and back into Hell for the final confrontation.

Where *Doom 2* doesn't let players down is in its new range of bad guys



He shouldn't have been looking at me like that then, should he?

Doom 2

James Binns took his chainsaw on a journey through Hell, and brought back this blood-soaked report direct from the front line.



to take on. The original featured nine enemies, and now that number has increased to an impressive sixteen. These enemies range from a cut-down version of the Spider Mastermind, which is called an Arachnotron – a sort of brain thing on eight legs which fires green stuff at you – through to the absolutely horrific Arch-Vile. This guy has to be seen to be believed. He's much taller than all the other characters and runs around the place resurrecting anything you've already

The final level boss is one the most fiendishly designed and hostile concepts to ever crop up in a game

killed. This can really spoil your day, but when you try to stop him he summons up fire from somewhere and burns your sorry ass. Not a nice way to go. The final level boss is one of the most fiendishly designed and hostile concepts to ever crop up in a game. Level 30 starts with you getting every power-up, every weapon and every piece of ammunition you can carry. And that's barely enough!

More disappointing to seasoned *Doomsters* is the addition of only one extra weapon. Sure, all the old

favourites are there – the chainsaw, the plasma-gun etc – but we had hoped for more. That said, the new gun (an updated version of the Shotgun, imaginatively titled the Super Shotgun) is a worthy addition to your arsenal. Rather than just pumping it like the original, this one lets go with both barrels and has to be reloaded every time, costing about a second of downtime for each shot. However, the blast is a sight to behold, with not only a wide spread, but plenty of damage as well.

So what's new?

The graphic engine is largely unchanged, with only a few minor tweaks here and there. The most

NEW KIDS ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

There are seven new enemies to confront in *Doom 2*.



HEAVY WEAPON DUDE
The Heavy Weapon Dude uses a mini-gun to wreak damage on your poor frail form. He's a slow mover, though.



REVENANT
When close to you, the Revenant throws punches. And from a distance he launches double homing rockets.



HELL KNIGHT
The Hell Knight is a cut-down Baron of Hell. He behaves the same way, takes fewer hits to kill, but crops up everywhere.



PAIN ELEMENTAL
Pain Elemental gobs out Screaming Heads. Kill him and a whole cloud of them appear. Use the mini-gun on him.



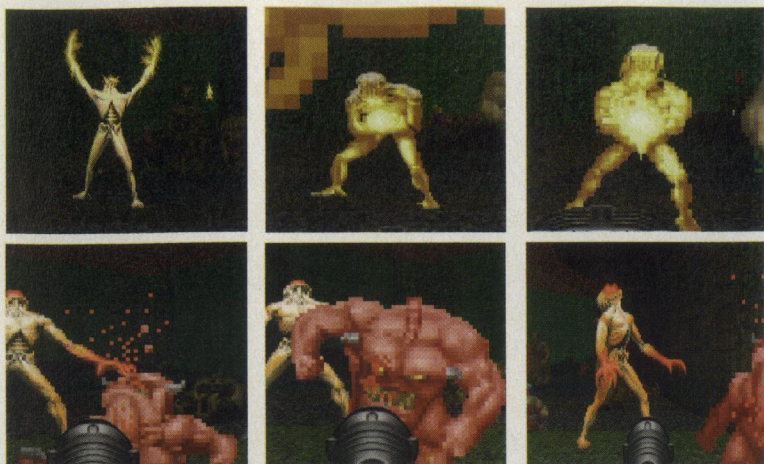
ARACHNOTRON
The Arachnotron is an ugly spider-beast-type-thing who tracks you, constantly shooting green stuff your way.



MANCUBUS
The Mancubus sounds relatively human, and attacks you with two regular rockets at a time. Whip his fat ass.



THE ARCH-VILE
The Arch-Vile is an extremely formidable Prince of Darkness. You are well advised to avoid his fierce gaze.

**THOROUGHLY VILE**

The Arch-Vile is an utterly monstrous monster. Not only does he set you on fire as soon as he looks at you, but to make matters even worse (if they can get worse) he revives beasts you already thought you'd killed.

SHOOTERS!!

Here it is... The double-barrel Super shotgun.



noticeable changes are in the speed at which doors open. Rather than grinding up and down slowly, some doors now open much more quickly – this helps to create a little extra atmosphere – and others can only be opened by firing at them. The graphics themselves have been improved with some new scenery and changed backdrops – the burning skyscrapers are a fairly ominous vision. Existing sound effects are largely unchanged, but the addition of the booming new shotgun sounds and the snarlings of the new beasts are great. The music ranges from bizarre cocktail lounge salsa through to deep chords which wouldn't be out of place in one of the *Halloween* movies.

Willy nilly

It hurts to admit it, but *Doom 2* is a seriously hard game. From the moment the action begins, you're fighting for your life, and the difficulty has been set at a level where you're always on the edge – running out of ammunition, constantly under pressure and drastically outnumbered. But that's part of the joy. Whereas in *Doom* you could romp around quite happily, blasting baddies willy nilly, you now need to plan how you're going to attack every single occupied room. Fights between different breeds of creatures was a common thing in the original game, but now you need to get them fighting more than ever, because alone you don't have the firepower to win.

It feels like Id has had more fun designing the levels this time round. Whereas in the original *Doom* you felt that the installations you were exploring could be part of a working space colony, most of the layouts in the



What, all this? Just for little old me? Excellent. Mmmm. Wonder what's through here...

sequel are designed strictly for playability and range of experience. For example, the level called Barrels 'O' Fun surrounds you with exploding tubs of toxic waste and has you racing away from a chain reaction which is set off by a trigger-happy zombie.

Is it worth it?

Anyone who takes their games seriously will already have a copy of the

Another perspective

Oh, now, I don't know about this 91% business. While Id has always said that *Doom 2* is a sequel, not a reworking, the final result is a disappointment. For a start it's just ridiculously hard, but hard at the expense of clever design. The levels in *Doom* were exquisitely designed, full of subtle traps, unfolding gradually. In *Doom 2* it's more a case of 'Here's a room, here are far too many monsters, here are some weapons, get on with it.' Much like many of the .WADs which appeared for *Doom*, in fact. Methinks that Id is fed up to the back teeth with *Doom*, and knocked this one out so they could get on with *Quake*. Now that'll be worth 91%. This? 78%, tops.

Ed Ricketts

original *Doom*, and, with thousands of patches knocking around for free, is it really worth shelling out an extra £50 for *Doom 2*? Fifty pounds is quite a wad to chuck after a game you've already probably played to death anyway – is it really that different an experience? In a word, yes. Firstly, the extra baddies create a

much more exciting and varied game. Secondly, the new wave of home-made levels will use all these new beasts and features. Thirdly, the level designs come to you direct from Id Software, and beat any amateur efforts hands down. And finally, the boss at the end of the game is worth 50 quid alone! The closing comment of this review comes to you as a sombre word of warning that you'd be

well advised to listen to. Beware. Don't bother buying *Doom 2* unless you have played through the first game pretty thoroughly. Unfortunately, *Doom* virgins simply don't stand a chance. **PCF**

Looking elsewhere

Why would you want to, eh? Oh, all right then, let's mention a few of the many pretenders.

Wolfenstein 3D

£19.99 Mindscape, PCF 33, 75%

Terminator Rampage

£34.99 US Gold, PCF 29, 72%

Corridor 7

£19.99 Gametek, PCF 33, 70%

In Extremis

£37.99 US Gold, PCF 31, 45%

Coming soon

Apogee's *The Rise of the Triad* (see page 54) is looking good, as is the LucasArts game *Dark Forces*. We'll bring you reviews and demos soon.

Doom 2

£49.99 VIE/Id ☎ 0181 960 2255

Minimum system: 4Mb; VGA;

386; hard disk (15Mb)

Optional extras: AdLib; Sound

Blaster; Roland; Gravis UltraSound;

joystick; mouse

For

■ Fantastic graphics

■ Tons of atmosphere

■ Ultra-violent gameplay

■ An unforgettable experience

Against

■ Only one new weapon

■ Um. That's about it, really.

PCF Rating 91%

**DOOM WISH LIST**

There are a few things we'd like to have seen in *Doom 2*, so anyone out there who's already working on a patch, listen up.

■ A FLAME THROWER

For all the obvious reasons – after all, the Arch-Viles have got them.

■ TWO-PISTOL ACTION

Because it looked rock hard in *Reservoir Dogs*.

■ MINES

So that you can cover your back, and plant surprises for the aliens.

■ GRENADES

Just the thing for clearing out hostile alien nests.

■ MORE CLOAKED ALIENS

It's still only the Demons who really dress to kill.

■ BE A DEVIL

The multi-player game would have new angles if you could actually play the aliens too.

Now,
turn the page and
explore the world that
is *Doom 2*, as we take
you through every
single level of this
massive game.