

# Video Review

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SHOULD YOU BUY PROJECTION TV?  
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**Test Report**  
JVC GX-77U Camera



**Test Report**  
RCA Selectavision



**Test Report**  
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**Test Report**  
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**PREMIER ISSUE**

# Video Review



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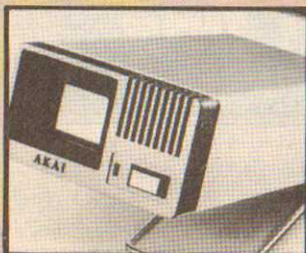
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# Move over, Pong: Video games grow up

Video game manufacturers who have faced the question of what's left after competitive sports, word, logic and memory games have found an answer in the often unnoticed spectrum of fantasy role-playing games, exemplified by TSR Hobbies' *Dungeons & Dragons*. This type of game involves imagining yourself an inhabitant of a fantasy world in which you face dragons, slay all sorts of repulsive creatures, avoid demons and protect yourself from magical spells—meanwhile searching through a multileveled maze of secret tunnels, rooms and caves for unknown and hidden treasures.

First to adapt role-playing games to the video screen was Atari, the company that sells more video game hardware and software than all other companies combined. The 1980 lineup of software for Atari's VCS (Video Computer System) includes *Adventure*, a role-playing game in which a single player directs his imaginary character through the maze of the dungeon represented in full color on the screen. The game has no instructions other than finding your way from one end of the program to the other, retrieving a chalice and returning with it the way you came. There is no time limit, no way to be eliminated, no other players—you alone must solve puzzles and find objects that will open doors, defend against monsters, etc.

The increase in memory capacity from 2K to 4K required by the *Adventure* program points out the capability of electronic game technology. But Dennis Koble, manager of software for Atari, emphasizes the breakthrough in sophistication of play. "Competitive games are fun," he says. "But *Adventure* and similar role-playing cartridges under development represent an entirely new concept for Atari to explore. Our Video Computer System has been on the market for more than two years, and was designed to be current for at least another three."

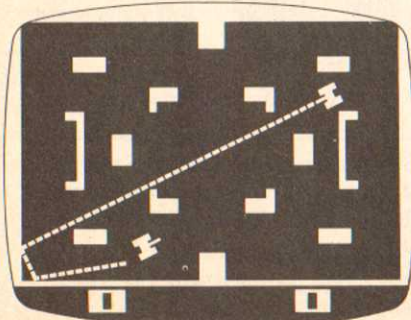
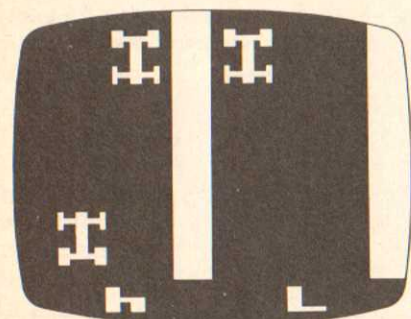
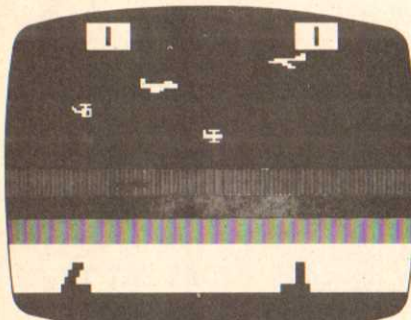
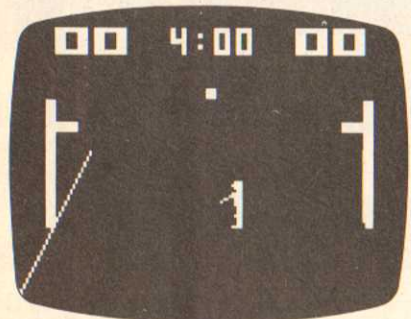
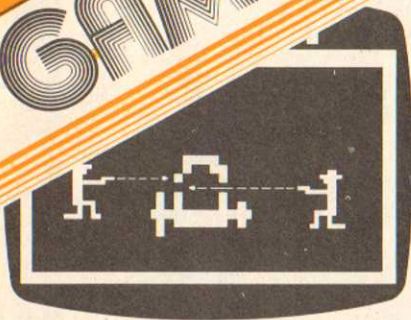
However, this fact remains: no matter how advanced the technology of a program, players will be able to do only what the programmer has allowed for—the opposite of role-playing theory. Brian Blume, VP of TSR Hobbies, Inc., one of the largest producers of role-playing games, feels the main disadvantages of a video game like *Adventure* are that "the computer *Dungeon Master* or referee is unable to extrapolate information from the rules and adapt it for play; and video games are designed for a solitary experience, while the point of *Dungeons & Dragons* is for many players to achieve fantasy as a group. I expect these disadvantages will soon be taken care of—in fact, we are investigating the field of noncompetitive video games with the thought of entering the market ourselves."

## Group Fantasy

Last year Bally introduced a BASIC keyboard that attaches to its Professional Arcade, yielding enough usable RAM (random access memory) for an owner to program a role-playing game and store it for future play. Several subscribers to a group of Bally BASIC users known as the Arcadians—who create, swap and sell game cassettes—have developed programs mapping the layouts for various dungeon scenarios. Bally users agree that 256 hues, three octaves of sound and a total memory of 12K make it fairly easy to create sophisticated games from scratch—particularly non-competitive ones.

Perhaps animation is what will have greatest appeal in adapting fantasy games to the video format. Present technology can deliver the same high quality graphic display available with many personal computers; allowing fantasy players visual representation of traditionally non-visual games. □

Phil Wiswell is Associate Editor of Games magazine.





**HITACHI VCR  
VT-5800A \$1,350**

If you can't resist taping *Fantasy Island* while on your Asbury Park vacation, Hitachi has something for you.

The firm's latest 2/4/6-hour programmable VCR incorporates a 10-digit calculator keyboard that can be preset and programmed to record five different programs in one week, five different programs in one day or the same program every day or week as often as the tape allows.

In addition, the unit includes triple speed review, automatic speed selector on playback and video enhancer circuit.

**FUJI Video Head Cleaner  
VCL-30/BCL-30  
\$25.00 (VHS) \$18.50 (Beta)**

The usual method of cleaning VCR heads is getting in there with a cotton swab and some alcohol, but the sensitive and complicated inner workings of VCRs intimidates most of us so much that we learn to live with a less-than-perfect image.

Fuji is offering a simple video head-cleaning cassette. A 10-second pass at the video heads removes all residue, Fuji says.

The company claims that its VHS cleaner can be used up to 270 times, the Beta version 135 times.



**JVC Color Video Camera  
GX-77U \$1,050**

If you're having trouble with that close-up miniature work for your homemade video version of *Star Wars*, this new color camera may help.

JVC's latest camera offers an



ordinary mode for capturing subjects from 4.3 feet away, but if you want to blow up your own two-foot-high Death Star, the unit's macro mode can shoot as near as one inch from the lens surface. The result, the company says, "is an ultra close-up of tiny subjects that can add drama and novelty to video production."

The camera also includes automatic aperture adjustment, iris control for fades, five-power zoom

lens, two-position switchable filter, and a vidicon shutter that protects the tube and prevents light from entering when the camera is not in use.

**APF Personal Computer  
Imagination Machine \$599**

What APF did for the pocket calculator it hopes to do for the home computer. The mass-market manufacturer credited with selling over one million calculators has finally hit the market with a home computer.

The Imagination Machine displays keyboard-programmed data in color and features 10K ROM and 9K RAM memory, six-function cassette deck and two game-style controllers.

Software programs include educational and other game cartridges.

