

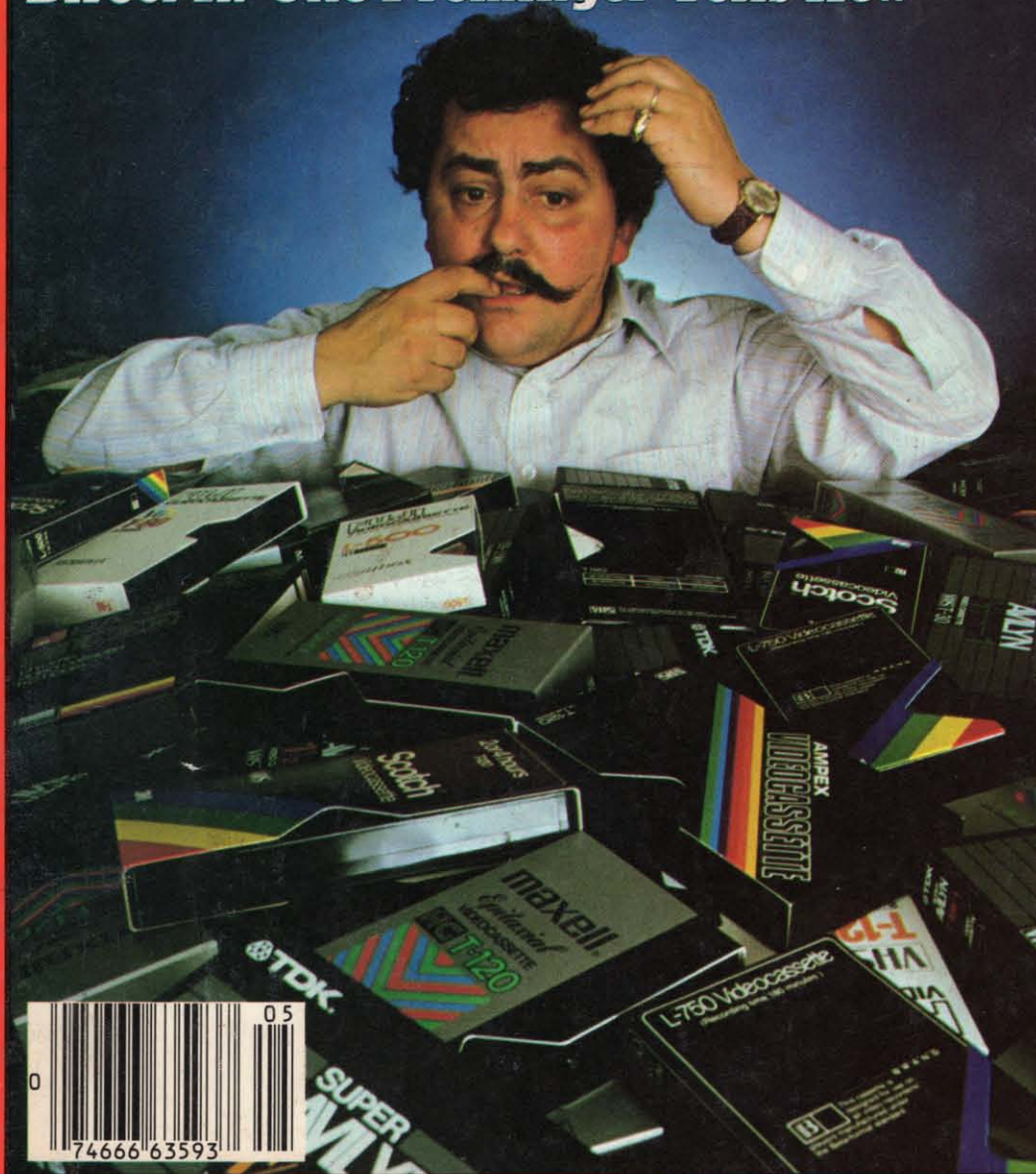
# Video Review

250  
Reviews-  
New Every  
Issue

\$1.75

THE WORLD AUTHORITY ON HOME VIDEO

**WHICH TAPE IS BEST FOR YOU?**  
**Make Money With Your Video Recorder**  
**Direct It: Otto Preminger Tells How**



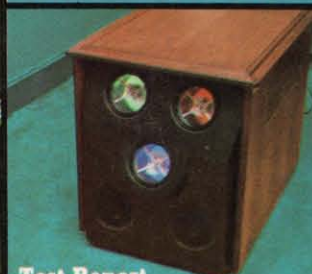
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Panasonic PV-1650  
Videocassette Recorder



**Test Report:**  
Magnavox 4245  
Touch Tune Color TV



**Test Report**  
Toshiba V-5425  
Videocassette Recorder



**Test Report**  
Mitsubishi VS/VE-700U  
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# Video Review®



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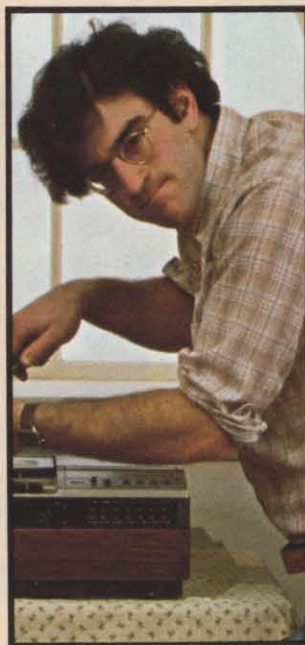
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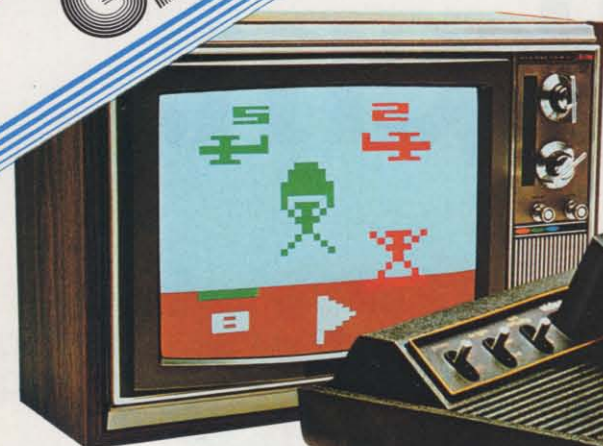


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# Baskin-Robbins has nothing on Atari

From *Space Invaders* to *Basketball*, Atari offers the broadest and most exotic line of games this side of the Olympics. Following is a rundown of some of the company's most unique offerings, including how they work and some expert tips for play.



Atari has become something like the Baskin-Robbins of the video game software business, with 38 flavors of cartridge. Each year the company introduces new games for its VCS (Video Computer System), the variations on which now total nearly 1,500. This month we'll take a close look at the remarkable variety Atari has to offer videogamers—and we'll do the same with other video systems in future issues.

Atari, formed in 1972, now controls the lion's share of the home videogame market, and we can count on recently introduced competition by APF's *Imagination Machine* and Mattel's *Intellivision* to help keep Atari growing. (Follow future issues for reviews of these other video systems.)

## Space Invaders

But for those players who want nothing more than a durable if not outstanding home unit, you can't beat Atari's price (\$180 for the VCS; cartridges range from \$19.95 to \$39.95). If you shop around—a wise idea for this kind of investment—you may find the VCS for as low as \$140.

One of Atari's newest programs, *Space Invaders*, is a faithful simulation of the coin-operated machine by the same name. For those who've never seen *Space Invaders* in the arcade (there can't be too many of you left), we can accurately

ly describe everything but the intensity of the action. You should feel what that does to you for yourself.

It's a solo game with the sci-fi premise that creatures from outer space are threatening to invade Earth. If you can't destroy them all



Superman (top) and *Space Invaders*.

with the rapid fire of your laser cannon then we are all doomed to their invasion. You control a laser cannon at the bottom of the screen and can hide it behind one of three barricades.

## Shoot 'Em Up

Phalanxes of invaders begin to descend from the top of the screen, occasionally firing their weapons and destroying pieces of your barricades each time they hit. You must try to shoot them all down, at which time a new phalanx appears and begins to descend a bit faster, followed by another and another! And that's the challenge—no matter how good you become, there is always another phalanx of even faster aliens ready to descend to destroy your powers. All this comes on a videocartridge for \$29.95—I know people who spend that much in quarters on arcade-version *Space Invaders* every week.

Another new cartridge modeled after a popular arcade game is *Circus Atari*. Although it seems like a simple test of reflexes, it isn't easy to master when you actually hold

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# THE LATEST IN NEW PRODUCTS

## This month's newest hardware



### **MATTEL** **Home Computer Software** **Intellivision \$30**

The Olympics have come home. Here are a computerized home skiing game cartridge sanctioned by the U.S. Ski Team, a soccer game licensed through the North American Soccer League and a golf game approved by the Professional Golf Association.

Other cartridges for Mattel's Intellivision home computer include boxing and tennis games and Sea Battle.

All the games are played with two 12-button handheld controls, utilizing the system's 16-bit microprocessor to deliver a full range of simulated sound effects, three-part harmony and sharp resolution.

### **NORTRONICS** **VCR Maintenance Kit** **VCR-95 \$14.80**

The first VCR maintenance kit, from Nortronics, includes a dust cloth for cleaning the outside of the machine and a spray bottle of head cleaner for blowing away dust, dirt and other mire that can accumulate on videotape heads.

The kit, which comes with an instruction booklet, a screwdriver and 18 foam swabs, should be used after every 10 hours of viewing, according to Nortronics.



The cleaning procedure is designed to take less than 15 minutes.



### **QUASAR Portable VCR** **VH 5300 \$1,150**

Quasar's latest portable VCR, available earlier than expected, weighs less than 11 pounds, with outside dimensions smaller than 12x10x5 inches. The VHS unit features 2/4/6-hour record/play-back capability. A single battery charge will power an optional

### **TRANSVISION Projection TV** **Models 750/760 \$1,595**

TransVision has developed a new Vidimax large-screen TV as a self-contained unit which offers a full 150-degree window. According to the company, the screen provides increased viewing area because of a new reflective material developed by 3M.

The unit, which can be outfitted with a 50-inch or 60-inch screen, stands six feet tall, has optional remote control and comes in a lightweight solid-walnut cabinet. The set works on a 95 percent efficient single-tube mirror system.

The unit is designed for easy transport, and requires a minimum of set-up. Once in place, a simple movement opens the console and readies it for use.



camera for over an hour.

The unit also includes slow-motion, freeze-frame and frame-advance features. It comes with an AC power supply and two tuners—an electronic tuner for preprogramming one show up to 24 hours in advance, and a varactor tuner recording for two weeks in advance.

# CREATIVE VIDEO-

## ADDING A HOME COMPUTER

by Hope Heyman

Are you bored with your video-cassette recorder? Do you feel as if you've gone the distance with your remote-controlled, electronically tuned TV set; two-piece, three-tube projection TV; and videodisc player? Well, the next frontier for the restless video pioneer lies in the home computer—the exciting new medium which can transform the video viewer into a video creator.

The painter's easel of the electronic age—the personal computer—is attracting growing attention from more than just students of physics. A new generation of video artists is working with a wizard's closetful of space-age consumer products such as computers, synthesizers and video equipment to conjure video art of compelling power.

Many home video enthusiasts are still too confused or intimidated to buy a home computer despite the equipment's amazing capabilities. For those addicted to video arcade games but who prefer to keep their coins in their pockets, computers can generate a wide range of complex video games that crash, destroy, intercept, bang, hit and sock with all the vigor of their poolhall cousins.

Of course, computers can also store concrete, complex, technical or financial information entered via a keyboard. Users can develop graphs showing profit and loss for a household budget or small business (in

black or red as the case warrants) or outlining in different colors the wiring patterns of their houses, all stored in the computer's memory.





## GUIDE TO PERSONAL COMPUTERS

| MANUFACTURER      | TRADEMARK           | PRICE                        | MONITOR      | MEMORY              | RESOLUTION* | COLORS | SIMULT.        |
|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|--------------|---------------------|-------------|--------|----------------|
| APF               | Imagination         | <b>\$599.95</b>              | RF Modulator | 8K, exp. to 32 K    | 64x32       | 8      | 8              |
| Apple             | Machine/IM-1        | <b>\$1.195</b>               | No           | 16K, 32K, 48K fixed | 40x24       | 6      | 6              |
|                   | Apple II/III        | <b>\$1.495</b>               |              |                     | 40x24       | 16     | 4              |
| Atari             | 400                 | <b>\$599.95</b>              | RF Modulator | 8K, exp. to 16K     | 40x24       | 16     | 4              |
|                   | 800                 | <b>\$999.95</b>              | RF Modulator | 8K, exp. to 48K     |             |        |                |
| Commodore         | PET 2001/8N/16N/32N | <b>\$795</b><br><b>\$995</b> | Yes          | 8K, 16K exp. to 32K | 20x25       | B&W    | —              |
|                   | CompuColor II-3     | <b>\$1.895</b>               |              | 8K, exp. to 16K     | 32x64       | 8      | 8              |
| Exidy             | Sorcerer/DP-1000-2  | <b>\$1.295</b>               | No           | 16K, exp. to 48K    | 64x30       | B&W    | —              |
| Heath             | WH-89               | <b>\$2.895</b>               | Yes          | 48K fixed           | 25x80       | B&W    | —              |
| Ohio Scientific   | Superboard II       | <b>\$279</b>                 | No           | 4K, exp. to 8K      | 30x30       | B&W    | —              |
|                   | Challenger/C1P      | <b>\$399</b>                 | No           | 8K fixed 12K        | 30x30       | B&W    | —              |
|                   | Challenger/C1PMF    | <b>\$995</b>                 | No           |                     | 30x30       | B&W    | 16 exp. to 32K |
|                   | Challenger/C4P      | <b>\$698</b>                 | No           | 8K, exp. to 32K     | 32x64       | 16     | 16             |
|                   | Challenger/8PDF     | <b>\$2.597</b>               | No           | 32K                 | 32x64       | 16     | — exp. to 48K  |
| Radio Shack       | TRS-80              | <b>\$499</b>                 | Yes          | 4K, exp. to 16K     | 16x64       | B&W    | —              |
| Texas Instruments | TI 99/4             | <b>\$1.150</b>               | Yes          | 16K fixed           | 24x32       | 16     | 16             |

\* in RAM \*\*in characters

Most personal computers cost from about \$500 to above \$1,000—often less than the price of a top-quality color TV set. Although a knowledge of BASIC computer language doesn't hurt, it's not necessary for many of the new personal computers that purport to be almost turnkey systems.

But let the buyer beware when choosing a personal computer for its graphic capabilities. Not all computer systems deliver the same graphics performance. And, as with most products, there's a trade-off in performance or price.

The first choice the new computer shopper faces is whether to buy a computer with a built-in monitor (display medium) or not. Again, much of it comes down to money. A built-in monitor costs \$200 to \$300 more than units that hook up with an ordinary color TV.

Many computer manufacturers—notably those of computers with built-in monitors—contend that a specially designed built-in monitor offers a better, clearer, sharper image. Computers that connect to TV sets with a built-in RF modulator, or one purchased

separately, are generally but not always cheaper. They have the added advantage of freeing your home TV for normal viewing rather than tying up the set for hours.

### Systems Vary

Systems also vary. Some computers can display four or five colors on the screen at the same time with a very high degree of resolution; others can't. The ability to show a sequence of graphic displays—creating the feeling of motion—is not universal. And some built-in monitors do not have color.

It's important to know what you really want your personal computer to do. Graphics capabilities eat up a large amount of memory (measured in RAMs). Sometimes you have to borrow from Peter to pay Paul; that is, if you want good graphics you'll have to accept somewhat shorter, or less memory-demanding, programs.

With this in mind, it's important to know how much memory you actually need, and if the computer can easily accommodate additional bytes of memory. As a general rule, a 16K memory barely feeds a computer's graphics appetite; a 32K system is somewhat better; and if using a disc drive with your computer, you'd better have a 48K system.

Following is a comprehensive guide to the major manufacturers' home computers. □

**There's a wizard's closetful of computer products to expand your video equipment. You can play elaborate video games, log your tape collection, and even create dynamic synthesized video art.**

*Hope Heyman covers computers for Consumer Electronics monthly.*

## GAMES...

Continued from page 22

the controller in your hand—and the program has the quality of drawing you back to play again and again. Basically, three rows of different-colored balloons hang from the ceiling (top of the screen) and you control two circus performers on a diving board with a fulcrum in the middle.

The men each alternately land on their own end of the board, sending the other high into the air popping balloons with his head. The fun part—and it's a bit tricky—is trying to move the board back and forth along the bottom of the screen without going too far and losing one of your acrobats. It's as addictive as Breakout, but the challenge is a whole other ball park.

Two cartridges that represent a new direction for Atari games are Adventure, which is new, and Superman, introduced late last year. Both games are fantasies for one player. The experience is noncompetitive—in Superman you race (somewhat) against a clock to perform your tasks; in Adventure there isn't even a clock.

Adventure takes place in a dungeon with a myriad of rooms, hallways, secret doors and passageways. They are all represented on the screen by different-colored shapes and openings, the configurations of which you had better memorize if you have any hope of finding your way through and back out of the maze! Other than that, your only objective is to find a chalice (for which you will first need to find a key) hidden somewhere in the dungeon. It turns into quite a good logic puzzle.

For those who like strategy games, Surround and Basketball are both a lot of fun to play. In Surround, you and an opponent face moving walls of blocks that can change direction at any time but also leave trails behind them which neither you nor your opponent can cross or hit. The first player to get boxed in and be forced to hit a wall loses.

Basketball is also a great one-on-one game in which each of two players controls one man and alternately the ball in a full-court game. You can dribble, steal the ball from the other fellow (which

makes for a nice rough game), shoot for baskets and jump into the air for rebounds. On defense you can be pressing or cautious. The Atari machine provides difficult switches for each player, making for an even match between a tall pro and a short neophyte.

## Coordination And Reflex

Three of Atari's best games of coordination and reflex are Breakout, an excellent version of the coin-operated game it is named for, Air-Sea Battle with its wonderful graphics and game variations, and Sky Diver. Breakout is nothing more than hitting a ball against a wall of blocks and knocking them down. But after you've played Breakout it becomes much more than that. Otherwise it wouldn't be so difficult to stop hitting "reset".

In Air-Sea Battle, you and a friend can choose to be antiaircraft guns, bomber planes or torpedo boats in 27 variations of moving target games. Points are scored for marksmanship.

Sky Diver, by far one of my favorites and a truly novel idea for a game of video reflex, is just what it sounds like. You control when your figure jumps out of its moving plane and then, according to the speed and direction of the wind (accurately represented by a wind sock), you release the parachute and hope to land your man on the pad for some points. But here's the finesse: The longer you wait before opening your parachute, the more points you score—but if you wait too long, your diver may go "blat!"

Those are a few of Atari's 38 flavors that we've found tastiest. But tastes vary, so here is a list of some of the games left out. The names alone will tell you a lot about them. Basic Programming, Blackjack, Bowling, Brain Games, Canyon Bomber, Casino, Code Breaker, Combat, Concentration, Flag Capture, Football, Fun With Numbers, Golf, Hangman, Home Run, Human Cannonball, Indy 500, Miniature Golf, Night Driver, Outlaw, Slot Machine, Slot Racers, Space War, Star Ship, Street Racer and Video Chess. And that's not counting Pong. □

Phil Wiswell is Games Editor of Video Review.

## ALTMAN...

Continued from page 34

**contemporaries because the elite audience is saying "Oh!" So they see that color and it means something to them. But that color won't mean anything 100 years from now.**

SARRIS: You seem to remain resolutely a modernist. You're always looking forward, you're not looking back. Is it because you feel that you are changing or growing, or that the world changes and that this is a medium that is always reflecting the new reality of the world and has to keep going in that way?

**ALTMAN: Well, I have a job, and I love all my films. I look back at them and I run them quite often. I go over here and we run everything because we have nothing else to do. And I sit and look at them with this new audience every time, and they're all terrific. But I don't think they mean a goddam thing.**

SARRIS: If you were suddenly out of the theatrical field altogether, and began working exclusively in video, would you become a different type of artist, perhaps less freewheeling, more precise?

**ALTMAN: Probably quite the opposite. I think the whole thing that interests me is that suddenly I've got an area that nobody's ever been allowed to go into before. And I can listen to some fool who'll say, "Why don't we shoot his thing in a curved mirror?" It's exciting.**

SARRIS: Whom do you see in your ultimate audience? Do you see a crowded theater, a small theater, two people sitting in front of a TV set playing a cassette?

**ALTMAN: The only audience to me is the people who worked on the project that day who sit and look at the dailies the next day or whenever they can, and cheer for each other. That's the full movie to me.**

SARRIS: And the rest of the audience is sort of incidental to that?

**ALTMAN: I love it when they like it, and I'm disappointed when they don't. As for the video venture, I'm excited about it or I wouldn't do it. I hope it is very successful. □**