

Great Gear, Tapes, Discs

video

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JANUARY 1986

The #1 Magazine of Home Video

Welles On Tape
A Master's Legacy

**Best of
'85**

*Annual Awards
Issue*

Satellite Special
*How To Buy, Install
& Use A Dish*

BERGER-BRAITHWAITE VIDEOTESTS

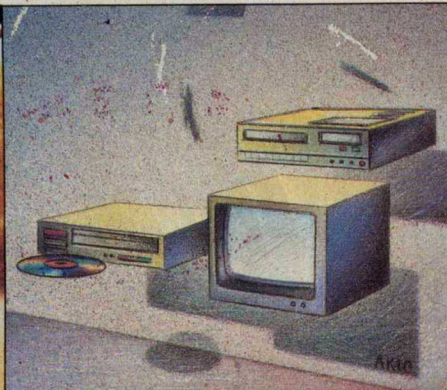
Sony Mini 8 'HandyCam' Camera • Recoton Stereo MTS Decoder

Proton 25-Inch Monitor-Receiver • Hitachi VHS Hi-Fi VCR





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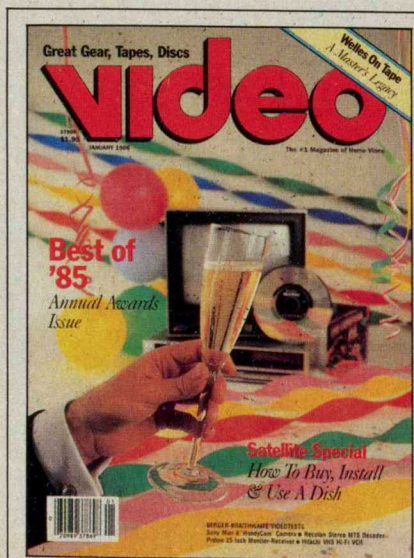
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Random Access

Personal Computers, News, and Games

ROM With A View

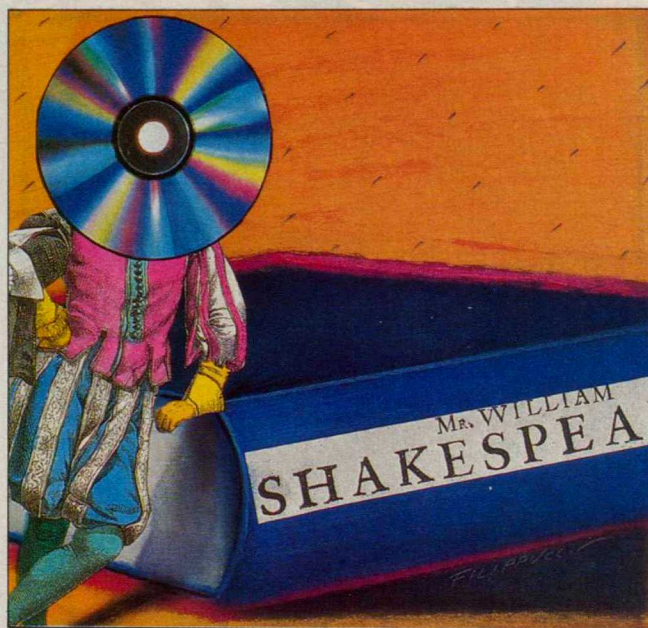
What would you get if you crossed a compact disc player with a microprocessor? A hacker's rock video? An adventure game that talks back using the voices and hi-res images of live actors? A word processor with the unabridged *Oxford English Dictionary* as a spelling checker? Mark all of the above. The machine that can do it is called a CD-ROM, for Compact Disk-Read Only Memory.

CD-ROMs, now available for some computers, are huge data storage drives. Using laser technology, one CD can be crammed with 550 megabytes of information—more than enough for 5000 single-sided floppy disks. Unlike videodisc players that hook up to computers, CD-ROMs already use a digital signal so no analog-to-digital converter is necessary. This increases the speed.

The North American Philips Corporation currently offers a CD-ROM drive for \$1,500. Atari has a CD-ROM for its 520ST computer at \$500. Sony plans to begin production on its version this month, and prices are expected to drop.

Despite its mammoth storage capacity, you can't store your own information on the CD-ROM. While it is possible (some industrial and university models exist), it's super expensive.

Many computer software publishers are already programming for CD-ROMs. Grolier is converting its laser videodisc encyclopedia into a CD-ROM format. Seth Godin, a new product specialist at Spinnaker Software, believes CDs will help revive the stagnating computer in-



dustry. "We've always known that computers are good at manipulating data. But they haven't had enough data to manipulate. Now they will," says Godin.

The cost of all this glory? Godin says most companies are trying to get the CD out "in the neighborhood of \$500." Not bad for a machine that can give you the complete works of Shakespeare on a single disk. It could mean the end of bookcases as we know them.

—Louise Kohl

You Oughta Be In Pixels

With a lot of garbage software still on the shelves, it's refreshing to see an innovative program from a small company. *Camera Simulator* may not be the most refined teaching device, but it uses a computer to do more than generate random numbers.

Much of the information in *Camera Simulator* is of the type you can find in an owner's manual or a how-to book. But the program's big surprise is the way it simu-

lates actually using a camera.

Through the keyboard, you choose the shutter and film speed, set the F stop, focus and shoot both still and animated pictures. The conditions vary depending on light and action. After you shoot, the disk drive whirrs and a message, "Developing," appears on the screen. If any of the settings were wrong for the conditions, you're given the reason (overexposed, out-of-focus, etc.) and told to try again.

The disk is split into sections covering the rangefinder, shutter, aperture, film speed, and light meter. While you're waiting for a lesson to load, photo trivia keeps you entertained.

Two more programs in this three part series will cover the lens in depth and film processing techniques. The programs, priced at \$31.95, run on the Apple II computers. Commodore and IBM versions are planned. *Camera Simulator* is available from Brain Builders, 335 Oser Avenue, Hauppauge, N.Y. 11788.

—Ben Templin

The Real Thing

Truevision isn't another one of those 3-D movie processes from the 1950s. It is the brand name for a group of breakthrough microcomputer video graphic products recently released by AT&T. The circuit boards offer video enthusiasts and independent producers an opportunity to use image processing and complicated special effects at a lower cost than similar equipment.

By using special microchips called RARAMs (for Row-Addressable Random Access Memory), the company's engineers assembled enough memory on a single plug-in board to simulate realistic, full-color video. The results let IBM PC users mix text and video on the same screen or create video files that can be transmitted by telephone lines.

At the heart of AT&T's Truevision products is the VDA/D (\$695), a video display adapter with digital enhancement. This board allows a standard RGB color monitor to display up to 1008 colors simultaneously. The companion Truevision Image Capture Board (\$1295) is a real-time full-color frame grabber that accepts any standard video signal.

Even more exciting, though considerably more expensive, are AT&T's Truevision Advanced Raster Graphics Adapter (TARGA) high-resolution video boards, which give users many of the capabilities of professional video graphic systems at a fraction of the price. Each board shows full video at a resolution of 512 by 480 pixels.

All the TARGA boards (priced between \$3000 and \$5000) include real-time frame grabber hardware that

Illustration by Sandra Filippucci

can pluck a single video frame in 1/30 of a second. Painting system software, by Island Graphics, is also available through AT&T.

—Tim Onosko

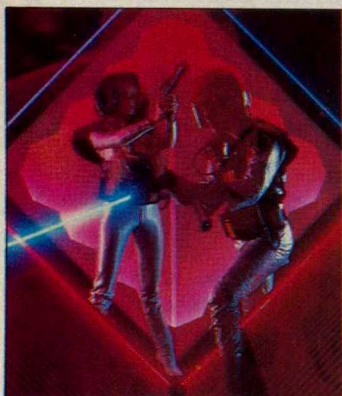
Son of Tron

For me, a shoot-'em-up is the piece de resistance of computerized games. Don't get me wrong—I'm in favor of gun control and sympathetic to whales and baby seals. But when it comes to Photon, hand me a laser pistol, son. It's not a video game. You are the video game in a high-tech version of capture the flag.

Assigned to one of two teams of 10 players each, you shoot opposing team players and their home base with a laser pistol, earning 10 points for hitting an opponent and 200 for the base. The team with the most 'kills' wins and each player is individually ranked. Sick, right? Fun, incredible.

To track the scoring, Photon's developers use two IBM PCs and high-frequency radio transmissions. Each pistol is registered with an individualized FM radio signal. When the signal strikes an image sensor on the harness or helmet every player wears, the comptuer tallies a hit. The maze-like game room crackles with static electricity, some of it generated by the excitement of the players as they compete.

The 10,000-square-foot playing area is catacombed with modular hiding places and obstructions. Two levels reached by ramps help vary the action. There is no safe place. You can sneak up behind every nook and crannie to infiltrate and attack an enemy from the rear, but so



Photon warriors

can the other team. A hit deactivates your gun for five seconds. Electronic music and swirling fog add an otherworldly aura. There is no contact in the game. In fact, two referees monitor the action to make sure no one gets hurt.

Games cost \$3.50 each and last 6-1/2 minutes. Sounds like a lot for a little? When you're running around with 15 pounds of equipment, including a belt-type battery pack, it seems to last much longer. A \$10 registration fee buys a Photon passport good for a year. The two Photon parlors ready for action are in Kennilworth, New Jersey and Dallas, Texas, but the company expects to open 70 more around the country and in Canada by the end of the year.

—Ben Templin

Deja Vu

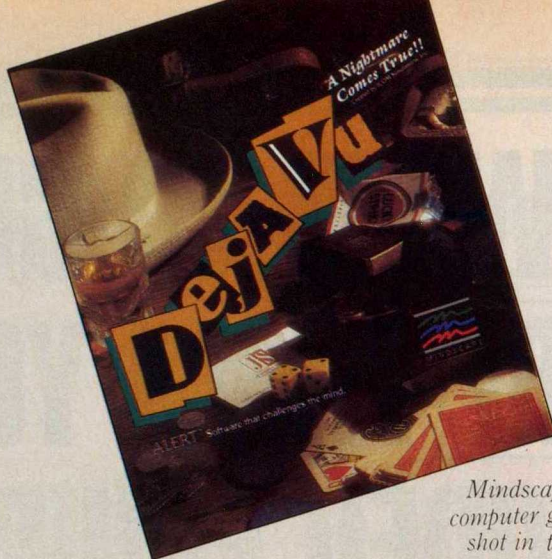
Mindscape/\$54.95

Hey, listen up, chump. You look awful bad lying flat out here in the toilet of this gin joint. Yeah, I know, your head feels like the Cat Club on a Saturday night and your arms look like someone's been using them to practice their needlepoint. What's worse, you don't even remember who you are, do you, palooka? How many fingers?

Close enough. Well, sit up and take a drag of this Lucky, 'cause your day ain't about to get any better. Soon as you step outta the can you're gonna start tripping over dead bodies like they was horse poop after the St. Paddy's Day Parade. So not only do you gotta find out who you are and who slipped you this mickey, you gotta

play shamus and find the killer before the flatfoots pin this rap on you.

Hey, nobody said it was gonna be easy, gumshoe, but this side of town ain't for mama's boys. You gotta think on your feet and learn how to throw a right hook as wicked as Jack Dempsey's. You're gonna run into punks that are meaner than cheap tequila, this dame called Sugar Shack with a body like a four-alarm fire and a temper to match, and...well, don't forget about the alligators.



Mindscape gives computer games a shot in the arm.

Yeah, alligators. Listen, at least you got your trench coat and your heater, not to mention your Macintosh. Naw, that ain't a raincoat, it's a computer. See, your buddies down at Mindscape done set this whole number up on you. They've done a real nifty job, too, using the Mac windows and mouse like nobody's business and making the step-by-step action as simple as zipping your fly (that's a hint, pal).

Some of the commands will seem a little funny, like "opening" up a guy who's just had his brains blown to kingdom come so's you can get his car keys. You'll dope it out, though, and probably be thankful for the limited number of commands. All in all, *Deja Vu* is a fast-paced, but tricky adventure, with clear, good-looking graphics and prose that reads better than a Mickey Spillane paperback.

There ain't quite eight million stories in this Macintosh city—but you oughta check this one out.

—Louis Kesten

BEST SELLERS/HOME

1. **Print Shop.** AP, C64, AT. Broderbund.
2. **Newsroom.** AP, IBM. Springboard.
3. **Print Shop Graphics Library 2.** AP. Broderbund.
4. **Print Shop Graphics Library 1.** AP, C64, AT. Broderbund.
5. **Bank Street Writer.** AP, APc, IBM, C64, AT. Broderbund.
6. **Clip Art Vol. 1 for Newsroom.** AP, IBM. Springboard.
7. **Print Master.** IBM, PCjr. Advanced Product Solutions.
8. **Dollars & Sense.** AP, APc, IBM, MAC, TIP. Monogram.
9. **Print Master Art Gallery 1.** IBM. Advanced Product Solutions.
10. **ClickArt Effects.** MAC. T/Maker.

BEST SELLERS/RECREATION

1. **Jet.** IBM. Sublogic.
2. **Winter Games.** AP, C64. Epyx.
3. **Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.** AP, IBM, MAC, C64, AT, TIP. Infocom.
4. **Microsoft Flight Simulator.** IBM, PCjr. Microsoft.
5. **Gato.** AP, IBM, MAC, PCjr. Spectrum Holobyte.
6. **Flight Simulator II.** AP, C64, AT, DG. Sublogic.
7. **F-15 Strike Eagle.** AP, IBM, C64, AT. Microprose.
8. **Summer Games II.** AP, C64. Epyx.
9. **Karateka.** AP, C64. Broderbund.
10. **King's Quest II.** IBM. Sierra On-Line.

LEGEND: AP = Apple, APc = Apple IIc, APe = Apple IIe, AT = Atari, C64 = Commodore 64, COM = Commodore Pet/CBM, CP/M = 5 1/4" and 8" formats, DEC = DEC Rainbow, DG = Data General, EPS = Epson QX-10, IBM = IBM-PC, MAC = Apple Macintosh, PCjr = IBM PCjr, TIP = Texas Instruments Professional, TRS = TRS-80, VIC = Commodore Vic-20, VTR = Victor 9000, WNG = Wang Personal Computer, ZEN = Zenith 100.

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