

BY	TEAM ANDROMEDIA		
RELEASE	APRIL		PLAYERS
HARDWARE	PRICE	£49.99	
 	STYLE	ACTION RPG	

The single most beautiful adventure you're ever likely to see for the UK Saturn, **Panzer Dragoon Saga** astounds from the word go! It's unbelievable! Could we already be witnessing the game of the year?



▲ Look. You really need to buy this game, you know.



▲ Amazing graphics: a Panzer hallmark!

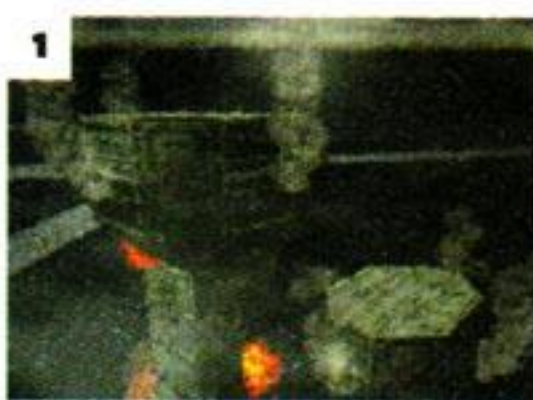
# Panzer Dragoon Saga

It's a sad fact of videogaming life that some games are rushed to the shops. It's perhaps an even sadder fact that a fair few Saturn titles are rushed because some people see the machine as having a very short life-span. Some titles aren't duly affected by the short development span (eg Sonic R), others clearly are (witness the SWWS 98 speech debacle). But when a class videogame finally appears that the develop-

ment team are fully happy with, you know that you're getting the Finished Article. And when it's a superior coding team doing the business, you know that Something Special this way comes.

Such is the case with Panzer Dragoon Saga. This game has been in development for years - ever since the coding conclusion of Panzer Zwei actually. But playing this game, it's clear that this is the Finished Article - a game that gleams under the vast amounts

Andromeda's **epic adventure** astounds and entertains **from start to finish!**



▲ The cut-scenes in the game are just astounding...



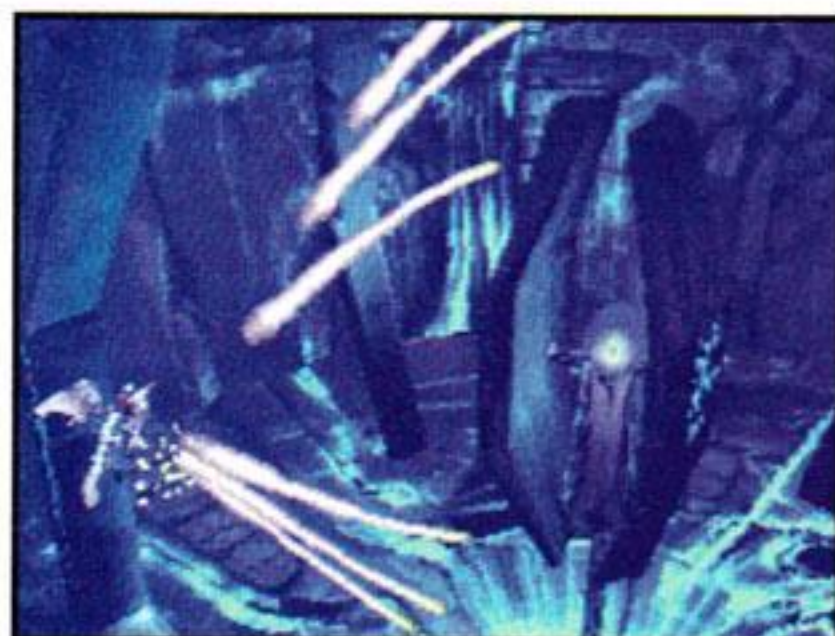
▲ This is the dragon-induced destruction of a base!



## AWESOME GRAPHICAL CAPABILITIES

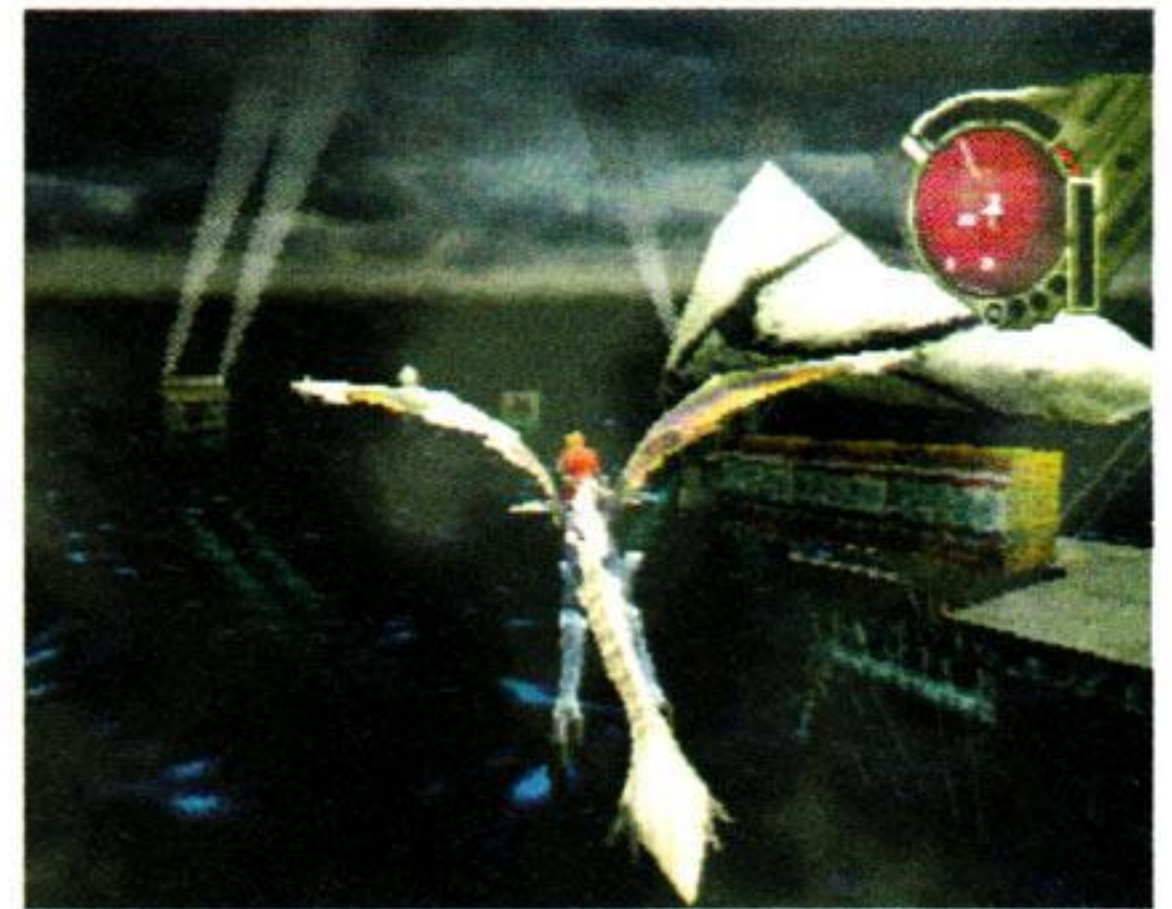
Think the Saturn can't match the graphical excesses of N64 and PlayStation? You'd better think again. Team Andromeda have a history of pulling tricks with the Saturn hardware that even the mighty AM departments can't match. Well the lads have done good once again with Panzer Dragoon Saga.

Every area in the game benefits from some of the most stunning visual effects the Sega Saturn has ever witnessed. This alone is worth the price of admission, but coupled with one of the most compelling gameplay experiences the Saturn has ever seen, it makes Panzer Dragoon Saga completely unmissable!



▲ Taking down behemoth enemy craft becomes a matter of routine in this stunning game!



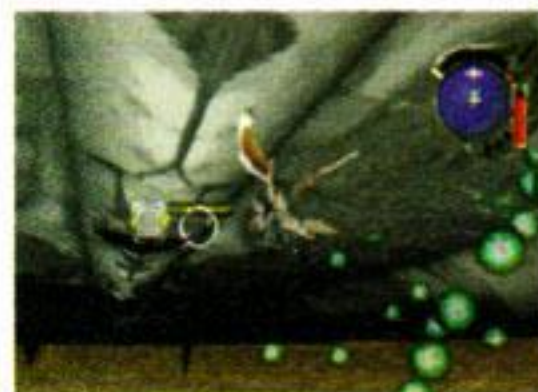


## METAMORPHOSIS

One of the more interesting things you can do with your dragon is alter its very genetic make-up, allowing to exaggerate certain characteristics. On this screen it's possible to increase speed, defence and attacking prowess. However, increasing one attribute decreases another, so for example pushing up your attacking capabilities reduces your defending powers. It's all swings and roundabouts, but there are certain advantages to switching attributes in certain situations. For example, ramping up the defense against a tough boss is a wise move. One thing to note is that the berserker spells you have access to change according to the configuration of your dragon - a nice touch.

of polish and attention Team Andromeda have given it. It's a monumental effort, a work of art, and quite clearly a labour of love.

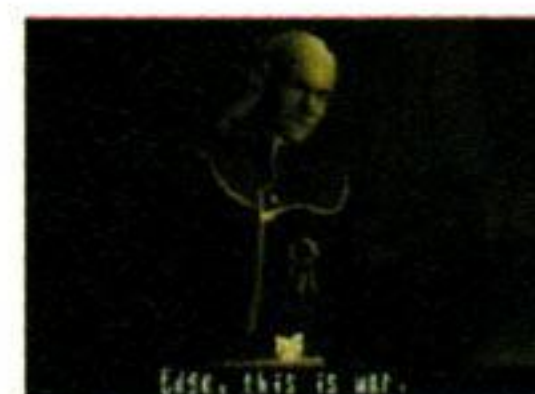
Games like Grandia and Final Fantasy VII have taken role-playing games out of the crappy graphics ghetto, but I guarantee you that nothing will prepare you for the effects you'll witness in Panzer Dragoon



Saga. Andromeda have looked at the tech specs for the Saturn and discarded them, overcoming any and all graphical limitations the Sega machine might have in their own inimitable ways.

Graphically speaking, Andromeda were always the greatest. With Panzer Saga, the team have taken their craft to its ultimate conclusion with the greatest visuals the Saturn has ever seen. Graphically speaking, things look cool when you start the game, but when it comes to the wonders seen from the second CD onwards, it's clear that it's in a class all of its own. You saw the pics in the showcases we've produced over the last two issues - well, check out these babies on this review!

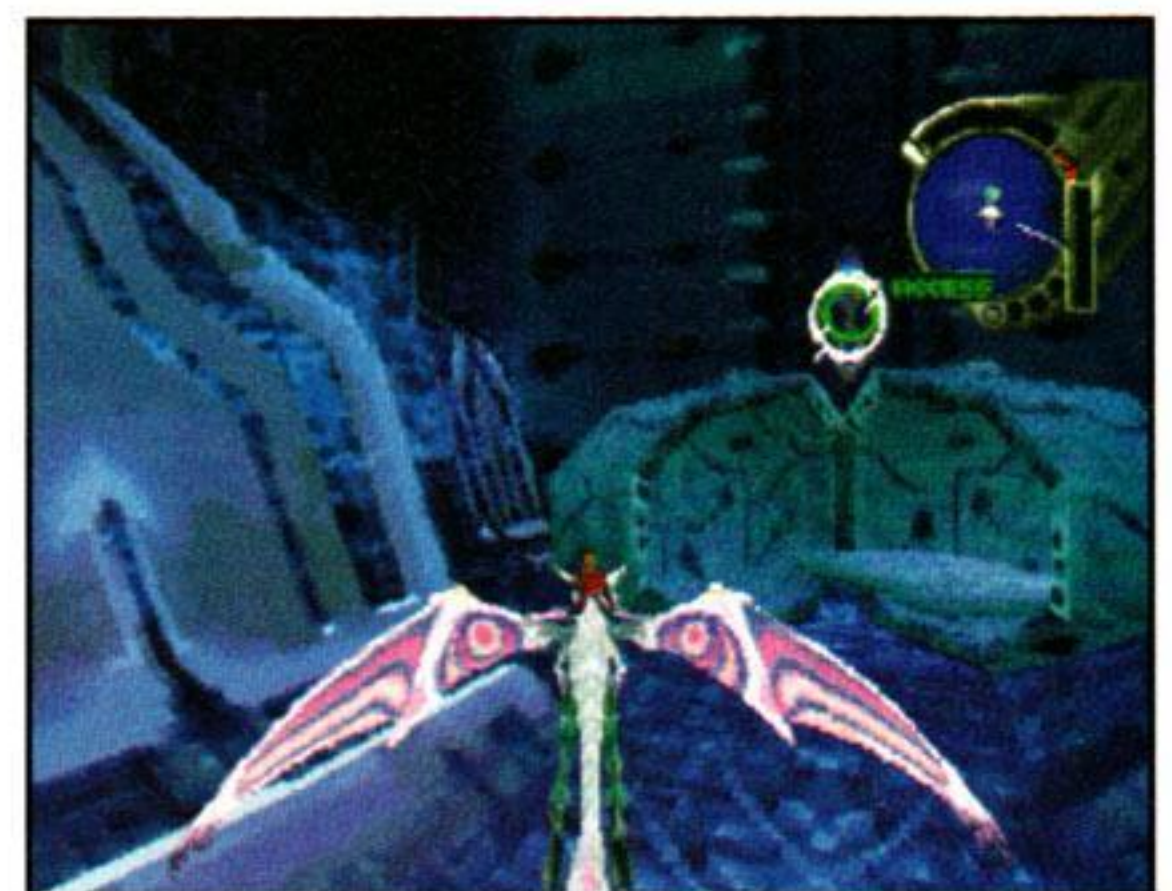
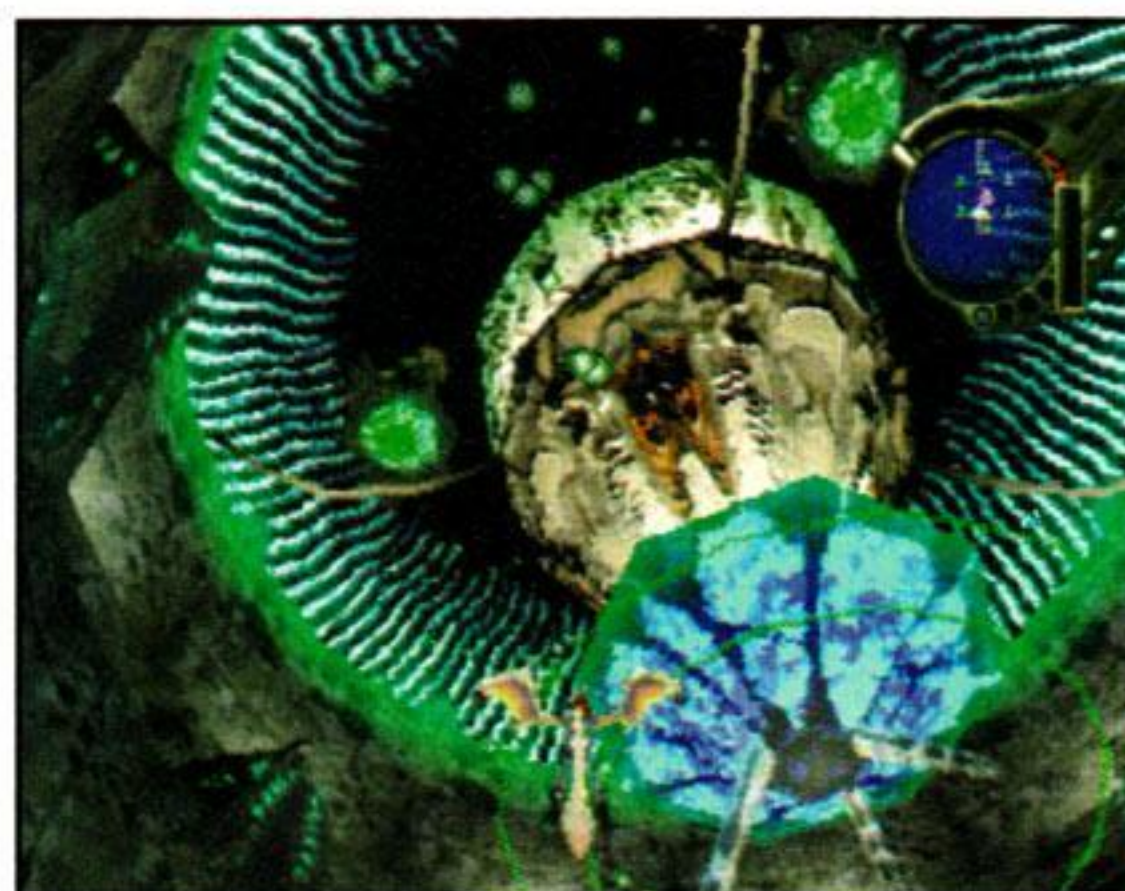
Andromeda have taken a novel approach to gameplay as well. The dragon sections of the game are >>



▲ The FMV story sections are absolutely riveting.

## A MATTER OF LOGIC

The field sections of Panzer Dragoon Saga are very similar in look and feel to previous Panzer epics. The big difference is that the shooting is kept to a minimum, with more logic based puzzle solving taking place instead of rampant shooting. Combat occurs pretty randomly where you're instantly teleported to the fight scenes (see the Battle Royale box). The other main differences of Panzers past is the ability for you to move anywhere in three dimensions, as opposed to the old "on-rails" gameplay seen before. These sections of the game are where the majority of the game takes place.







>> where the most work is done, with exploration and simple logic puzzles the order of the day. The lock-on system used for blasting multiple meanies in previous Panzers is here used to check out objects and enter new areas. Perhaps the only criticism of the game is that these sections are fairly easy to complete - you won't need a genius intellect to overcome the puzzles. No, it's the combat that causes the most worries.

The combat system is cool. It's turns-based as in the Shining games and Grandia, but with big modifications. Your dragon is the most powerful thing in the land, but it's how you decide to use its power (and the many artifacts on offer) that determines success. Can you achieve an "Excellent!" rank against all the creatures in the game? That's the challenge. There's even an in-game display allowing you to review your performance against every type of creature in the game you've faced!

And that includes bosses.

Ah yes, the bosses. As Panzer fans should know, Team Andromeda are capable of producing bosses like no other... and they haven't let their fans down - this huge game is packed with them, and none of them are disappointing. The cool thing about them is that they all have a big weakness. Some are easy to locate, others require a bit more cunning. Massive pitched fights take place, but there's nothing more satisfying than learning how to dodge its attacks and exploiting its weak area. The Sniper customisation for your gun inflicts critical damage on these areas,

**The last Saturn Panzer is amazing - It simply must be bought immediately!**

## BATTLE ROYALE!

The Panzer fighting system is turns-based, just like Grandia and the Shining series. Typically you take your shot and then the enemies take theirs (although some meanies are faster or slower than you, meaning you get in more or less hits). You're able to flank around the enemy (typically you take more damage from behind or in front), and use artifacts such as shields and poison cures. But what attacks are available? Here's what exactly.

### 1. SHOT

The laser pistol carried by Edge is best for targeting a specific enemy or a cer-

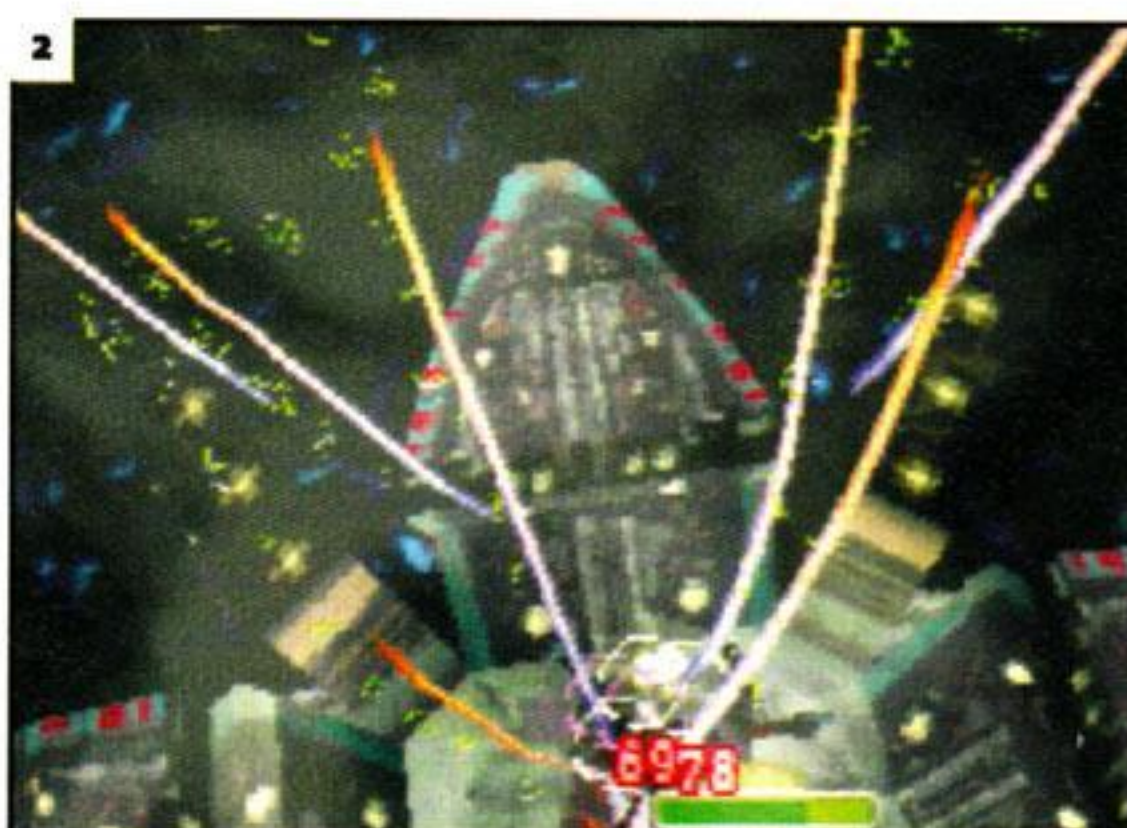
tain weak spot on a boss. You can customise it with three-way fire, sniper add-ons and other power-ups.

### 2. LOCK-ON

The dragoon automatically locks on to several targets and fires concussive missiles. This is great for all-round damage, not so cool when individual targeting's required.

### 3. BERSERKER

A vast amount of different berserker effects can be selected - aggressive, defensive, agility and healing - all look spectacular, all (bar the healing) inflict huge damage.



▲ Concentrate fire on weak areas.



▲ Here we're smashing up a reactor.





## CAN YOU BE THE BOSSES? NO

The Panzer Dragoon series has always been rightly applauded for its incredible series of bosses. Never once have Team Andromeda disappointed with a poorly designed, crappy old end-of-level critter. Oh no. The



and it's a great feeling to watch the boss energy bar plummet before the inevitable spectacular explosion as the big guys bite the dust.

The only problem I really have with combat is that it's too difficult to die. True, getting the "Excellent" ranks is the real test, but for gamers just ploughing on through the game, it's clear that this area of the game won't cause too many problems.

Another area of consternation was the speed in which I completed the first two CDs of the game. Disc One took me a morning, and I reckon that the second CD would probably last the rest of the day. But trust me, this is because they merely set the stage for what



▲ Take down a vast ship, blasting it inside and out!

good news is that Saga's efforts are not only superior to all that have come before, but there is also tons more of them spread across Panzer's stunning four CDs! Don't believe us? Check out these enormous bastards!

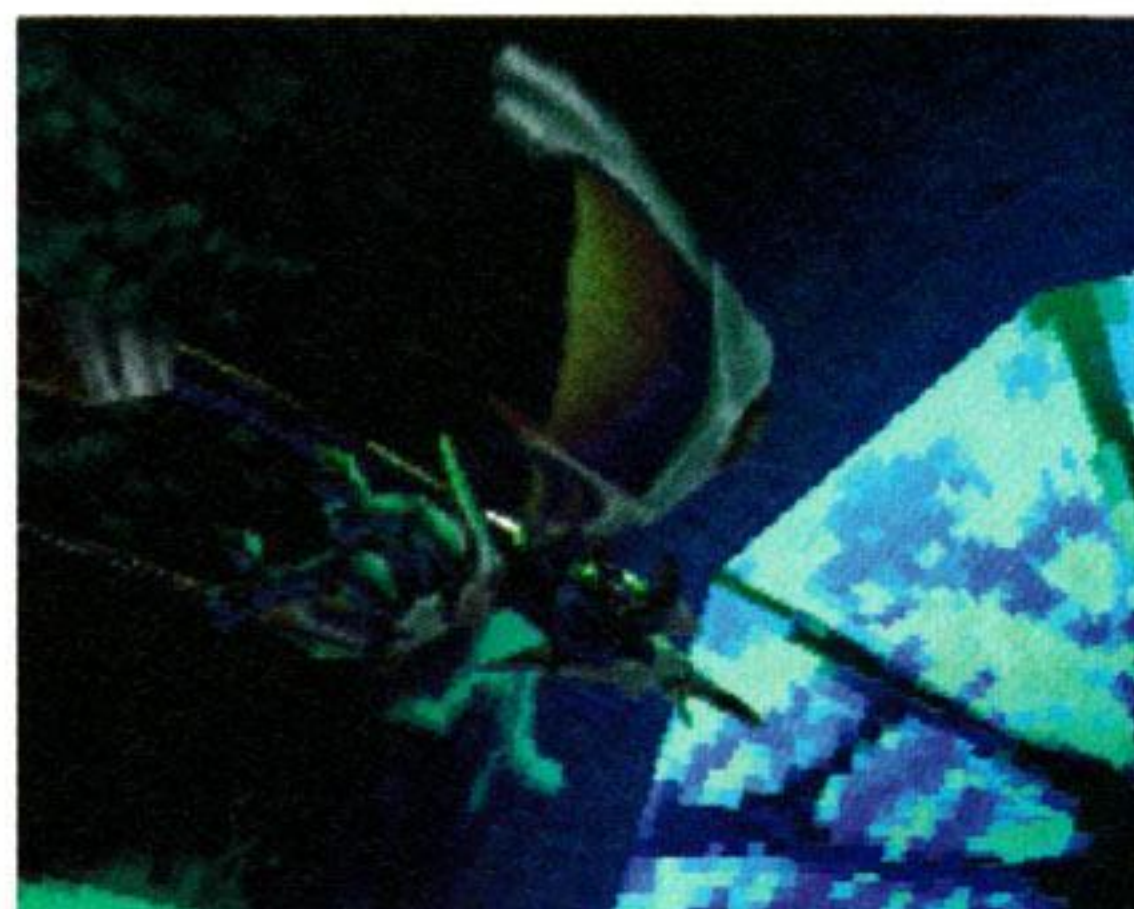


happens in the concluding half of the game. Disc Three is far more challenging and a departure from what went on before - this disc is 70% combat as Edge and his dragon take on the entirety of the evil Imperial Fleet. You're guaranteed spectacle on a grand scale as your steed acquires more experience and more powerful berserker attacks. As for the concluding disc... well, let's leave something to surprise you.

SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE is probably the last magazine to review this game, but we're also the first to test out the English language version. It's all very well rating an import title like Grandia which is unlikely to ever get a translation, but unless you can read Japanese, you're missing out on a vast amount that Panzer Saga has to offer. I blundered through to the mid-point of CD3 not knowing what most of my objects did and what weapons power-ups were available. The plot was also pretty much incomprehensible. That being the case, I'm glad I waited on this particular review, because having played both versions extensively, I know I missed out on a hell of a lot of the game's enjoyment when playing the import game. Those who've waited for the official version are in for a real treat.

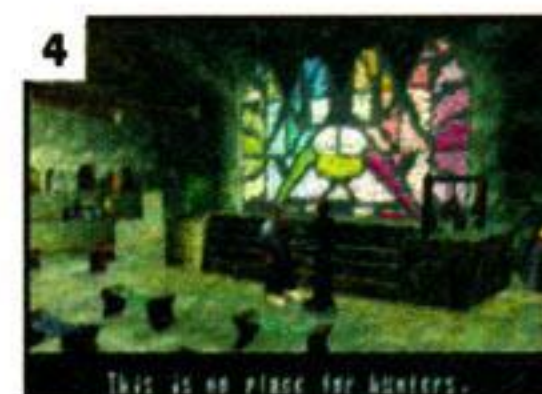
The bottom line is that this game is very special. It's just wonderful in every conceivable sense, and I already believe that this is going to be the best Saturn title of 1998... and it's only March!

**RICH LEADBETTER**



## ON THE EDGE

One tiny disappointment about the game is the fact that Edge and the dragon are very much one entity. The one area of the game where this isn't true is in the town sections where Edge is on his own. Although these parts of Panzer Dragoon Saga look absolutely spectacular, it's basically an excuse for more story exposition and powering up your steed for the next part of the adventure.



## SO MUCH IN IT!

In the last two issues of SEGA SATURN MAGAZINE, we've revealed the wonders seen in the first two discs of Panzer Dragoon Saga (which covered 14 pages of this fine publication in total). Well, on this four page review we can certify 100% that every shot comes from the stunning third CD. We've never shown even one pic from Disc Four! So not only is Panzer Dragoon Saga incredible to look at (and indeed play), it's vast as well.

### GRAPHICS

It starts out looking absolutely stunning... it believe us, it just gets better and better as the game progresses. Astounding.

**98%**

### SOUND

Brilliant sound effects coupled with chip-generated music that creates a brilliant atmosphere. Rather excellent all-round.

**95%**

### PLAYABILITY

Every aspect of playability has been tweaked and refined to near-perfection. Even action fans should dig this.

**97%**

### LASTABILITY

Once it's over there's little to get you back, but the ride while it lasts (which is a fair old time) you'll be utterly mesmerised.

**92%**

### OVERALL

Quite simply the best looking, best playing adventure UK Saturn owners will ever experience. Buy it or consider yourself foolish.

**96%**

▼ Notice the reflected searchlights in the water, the translucent fog effects... Panzer Saga is just stunning.

