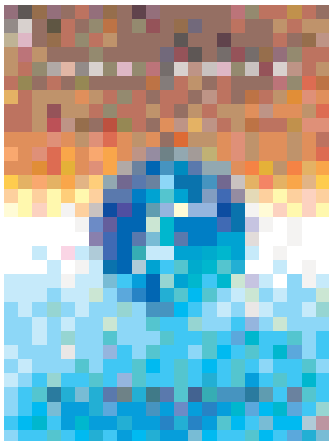


Linux game on!

DESCENT 3

FIONN BEHRENS



Why do Descent Clones exist at all? The only one worth mentioning has been forgotten and the rest are unmentionably bad. This is due to the high quality of the first two Descent games. Now Outrage/Interplay and Loki introduce the third edition of the classic (which also operates under Linux).

Who remembers Descent 1 and 2 – games that inspired the phrase “video game-sick”? A pilot of a small one-man spaceship had to fight his way through mines filled with rebelling robots and blow up reactors. The first part of the game was a milestone in 3D technique. Indeed, Descent was around for a long time before Quake and Consorts brought genuine 3D rendering.

After the smooth installation of Descent 3 you’ll see a furious, computer-generated introductory film. The hero in his damaged spaceship drives unconscious into the sun. He is saved from the smoking wreck at the last minute by a fascinating machine.

Fig. 1:
The start-up screen.

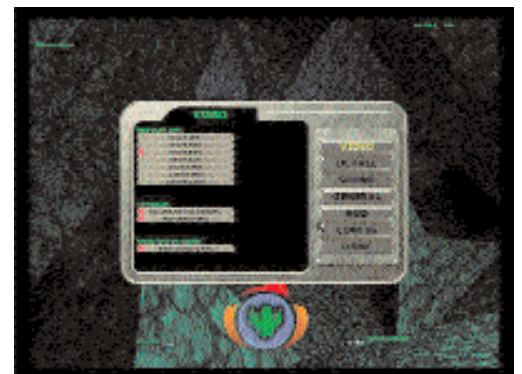
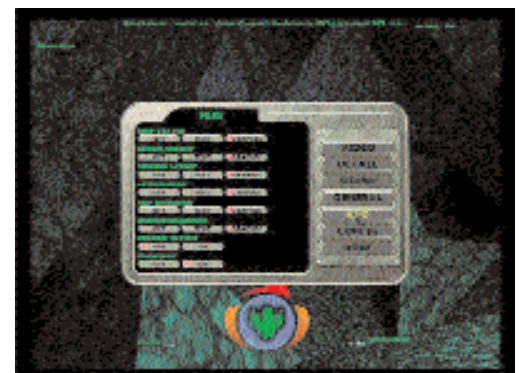


Fig. 2: Many options can be changed.



write games" manual for this one and added a few original extras of their own! Lots of various opponents cross the player's path. The range extends from the lowly vacuum cleaning robot to monsters who'll send you into the hereafter in a New York minute. The AI waits with quality expected in Descent 2, plus improvements. Instead of simply going for you en masse, they take cover, pull back and even set ambushes.

The arsenal of weapons has also grown. Aside from the familiar quad laser or the vulcan, there's also the new Railgun-like Mass Driver. In addition, three ships are available for selection - a light, nippy one, a heavy, strongly armoured one and one that's in between.

In contrast to the wildly angled designs of older generations, the new levels are gigantic and have a logical structure. The cartography function is built-in and better than ever. The instrument displays can be changed in size, display and position so that every player could probably find his optimal gaming solution.

The sound is atmospheric and dynamic, droning at times, but bearable. Explosions are loud and crisp. Debris flies through the region and contorted lighting streaks across the room. All in all, the effect section is absolutely satisfying.

The multiplayer mode offers an astonishing plethora of variants. You'll be confronted with no less than nine different types of games, from the simple D'Match to cooperative campaign games. In one variant the participants even play football (seriously!). Some of the modes, however, are quite sparsely documented.

The game is strong on plot, which is sustained by excellently crafted intermediate scenes and a theme beautifully drawn through the game. For new players there is a practice level in which the principles of control and the game are explained in audibly and in text. Descent 3 beginners need more time for learning the control than with other 3D games. But after learning Descent 3, other games will be a piece of cake.

One of the few things that grates is the inclusion of the robot thief from D2 - together with his new, big brother - the Superthief. The old one got on my nerves quite a lot, the new one is a real nightmare. It's faster and more cunning than ever before and capable of stealing your weapon mid-fight. Although a thief in some missions is quite funny, he's used to overkill in this game.

This game has fantastic graphics, good sound, detailed mission structure, a real storyline, interesting weapons and opponents as well as a successful multiplayer division. Nowadays it is becoming increasingly difficult to find real weak points in the new editions of tried and tested games.

Rating:

Long-term game fun:	70%
Graphics:	90%
Sound:	75%
Control:	85%
Multiplayer:	90%
Overall rating:	85%

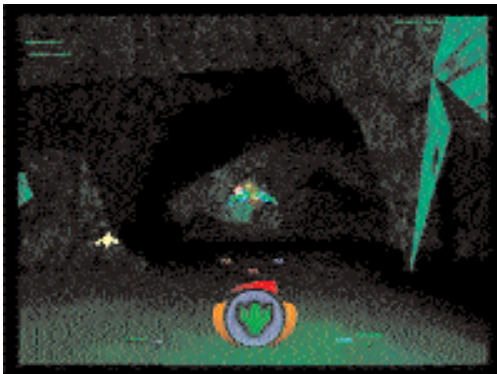


Fig. 3: Dark caves...

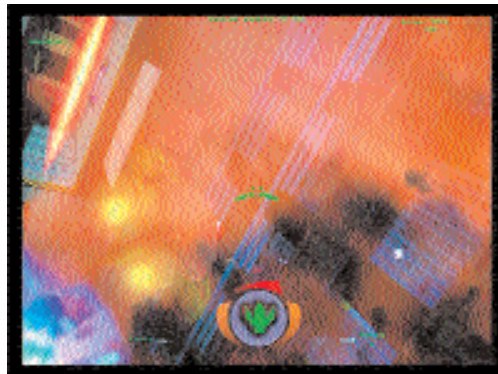


Fig. 4: ... fantastic explosions ...

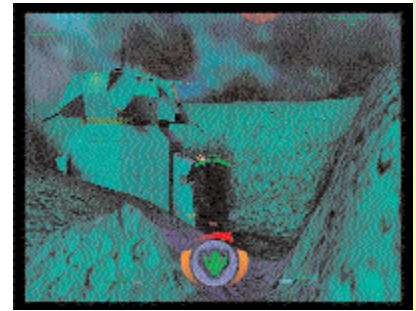
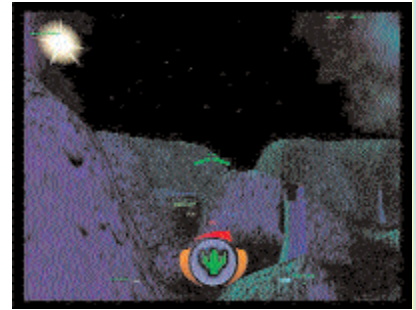
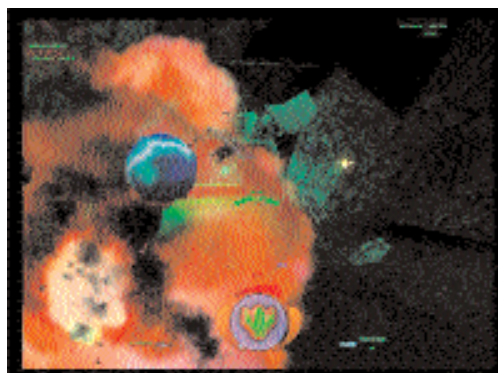
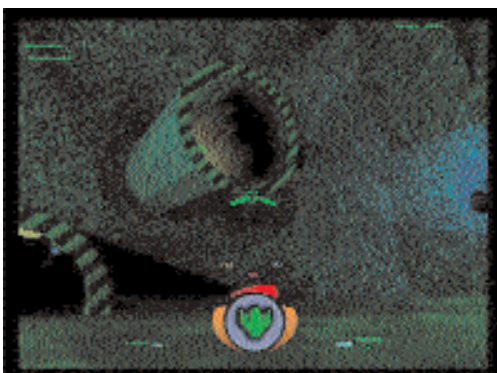


Fig. 5: ... and impressive outside scenarios.

AI: Artificial intelligence, the attempt to program machines so that their reactions mimic those of humans.
