

#1

The Yearly STING!



Billy Bob

I hate him!!! Stupid idiot!!! He should break his legs and die!!!!!!

I am also on this cover.



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Strange Spotlight 1

French Baker

French Baker is an arcade-style score attack game released for the NES by Active Enterprises in 1991. You play as the titular French Baker, and need to run around your bakery defeating a variety of randomly spawning enemies, mostly sentient confectionery.

This is genius. You can press A to fire a projectile to take out enemies, which may seem too easy at first, but the developers have a revolutionary solution to this: ladders. See, just because you let a projectile loose from your intrepid Baker's hands, that doesn't necessarily mean you'll hit anything. The stage the game takes place on is arranged into many different platforms, each separated by a level of vertical distance, and each accessible via ladder. So, to reach your delectable foes, you'll need to climb "up" and "down" in order to do battle! Wonderful

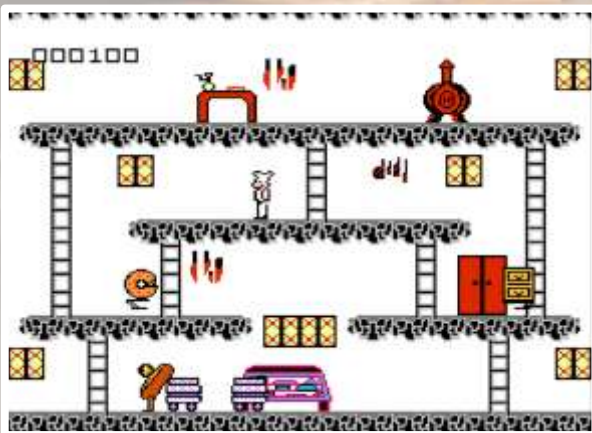


game design, splendid work from Active.

The graphics may leave a bit to be desired, admittedly. The French Baker himself is a delightfully enjoyable individual, but all else? Not so much. French Baking is serious business, what are these biscuits on legs doing here? It's time for games to start taking their subject matter seriously.

French Baker is a sort of game. What? No. French

Baker is a thoroughly enjoyable time. Its unique "ladder" system and wonderfully gooey controls prove that, even now in our modern age, new games like this can still prove that the old-fashioned arcade score attack style of design can be just as fun as it was back in the 60s. It also pushes the boundaries for realistic gaming experiences; if the French Baker jumps off a steep platform, he won't simply land on his feet like a Super Mario or Super Luigi. No, he'll break his legs and die, just as he should. Graphically, its cartoonish depiction of something as serious as French baking leaves something to be desired, but French Baker is still a solid entry to the NES' library.



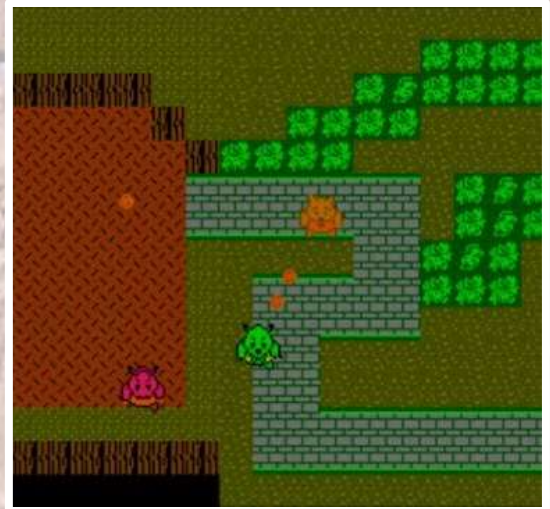
Final Score	
Gameplay - 10	7
Story - 5	
Look/Sound - 3	

Strange Spotlight 2

Dam Busters

Dam Busters is a side-scrolling shoot-em-up released for the NES by Active Enterprises in 1991. You play as the titular Dam Buster, on a mission to fucking. Bust some Dams!!!

This game is even revolutionarier than French Baker. Unlike other side-scrolling shoot-em-ups, Dam Busters is about the characters. Why does Dam Buster want to bust the dam? Who built the dam? We never find out. It all gives the game this air of mystery surrounding everything you do, and it's wonderful. For an example of that sense of mystery, some enemies are green, while others are pink. Unlike Frivolous French Baker, Dam Busters treats its subject matter with the severity it deserves. So, so much win.



Anyway, how does it play? Well, not quite. Dam Busters is a game, yes, and a hard one at that, but it's also got two whole stages! There's nothing I love more than seeing promising new developers like Active Enterprises push the boundaries of what's possible with the medium. Most games like it would only feature one stage, afraid to truly push boundaries, but Dam Busters dared to ask: "what if it was evil?" That's right, Dam Busters features a dark, evil twist; once the player reaches the end, that dam they tried so hard to bust? Yeah, that dam was actually an Austro-Hungarian Dam, and the only thing between the Bullet of Fate and Archduke Franz Ferdinand's delightfully crunchy skull. That's right, you, the player, are now personally responsible for the outbreak of World War 1. How's it feel, huh? Dipshit.

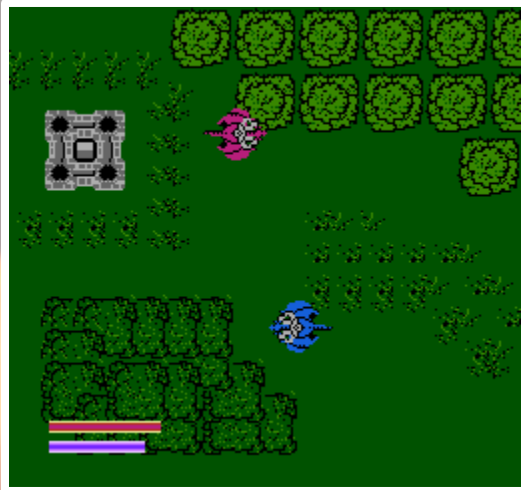


Dam Busters isn't just a game – it's an experience. It's got everything. Dams? Check. Busting? Check. Smokin' hot babes? Check! There's really something for everyone here. Unfortunately, the core gameplay is bad.

Final Score	
Gameplay - 2	7
Story - 10	
Look/Sound - 6	

Kill Your Comrades!

FIRE BREATHERS



Fire Breathers is a dragon-battling simulator released for the NES by Active Enterprises in 1991. You and your friend will both play as either the Red or Blue Dragon, and you have to kill each other! Kill your friends, wahey! This is accomplished by, what else, breathing of “fire”! Fire in this game is interesting. According to in-game lore, “fire” is the rapid “oxidation” of a “fuel” the “exothermic” chemical process of “combustion”, releasing heat, light and various reaction products. “Flames”, the most visible portion the fire, are produced in the combustion reaction

when the fuel its “ignition point” temperature. Flames “hydrocarbon” fuels consist primarily carbon dioxide, water vapor, oxygen, nitrogen, and. If hot enough, the gases may become ionized produce “plasma”. The “colour” and “intensity” of the flame depend on the type of fuel and composition the surrounding gases.

Fire is one the four “classical elements” and has been used humans in “rituals”, in agriculture for clearing land, for cooking, generating heat and light, for signaling, propulsion purposes, smelting, forging, incineration of waste, pee, and as a weapon or mode of destruction.

Various technologies strategies have been devised prevent, manage, mitigate and extinguish fires, with hobbyist “firefighters” playing a leading role. For example, most home fires start from unattended cooking, although cigarettes a major cause. Smoke detectors and sprinkler systems greatly increase harm from home fires.

Overall, Fire Breathers is a solid enough entry in Active Enterprises’ ever-growing library of games, and will surely be fun for the whole family.



Final Score	
Gameplay - 6	7
Story - 8	
Look/Sound - 7	

Easy Simulation

THE CHEETAHMEN

THE CREATION



Cheetahmen is a game released for the NES by Active Enterprises in 1991. The game's story follows the Action Gamemaster, the world's #1 Pro Gamer, as he's dragged into his TV by a robotic hand while Pro Gaming, much like the hit game Persona 4. Inside the TV world, he's greeted by the titular Cheetahmen (his Shadows?), Aries, Hercules and Apollo. Now, if this game were released in current year, the woke left would undoubtedly have turned it into an eroge furry visual novel where you play as the Action Gamemaster and have to choose which

Cheetahman's body you want to explore, but since it was released in the good old 1980s, it's instead a side-scrolling beat-em-up where you control each Cheetahman one after the other over the course of the game. Polygamy win.

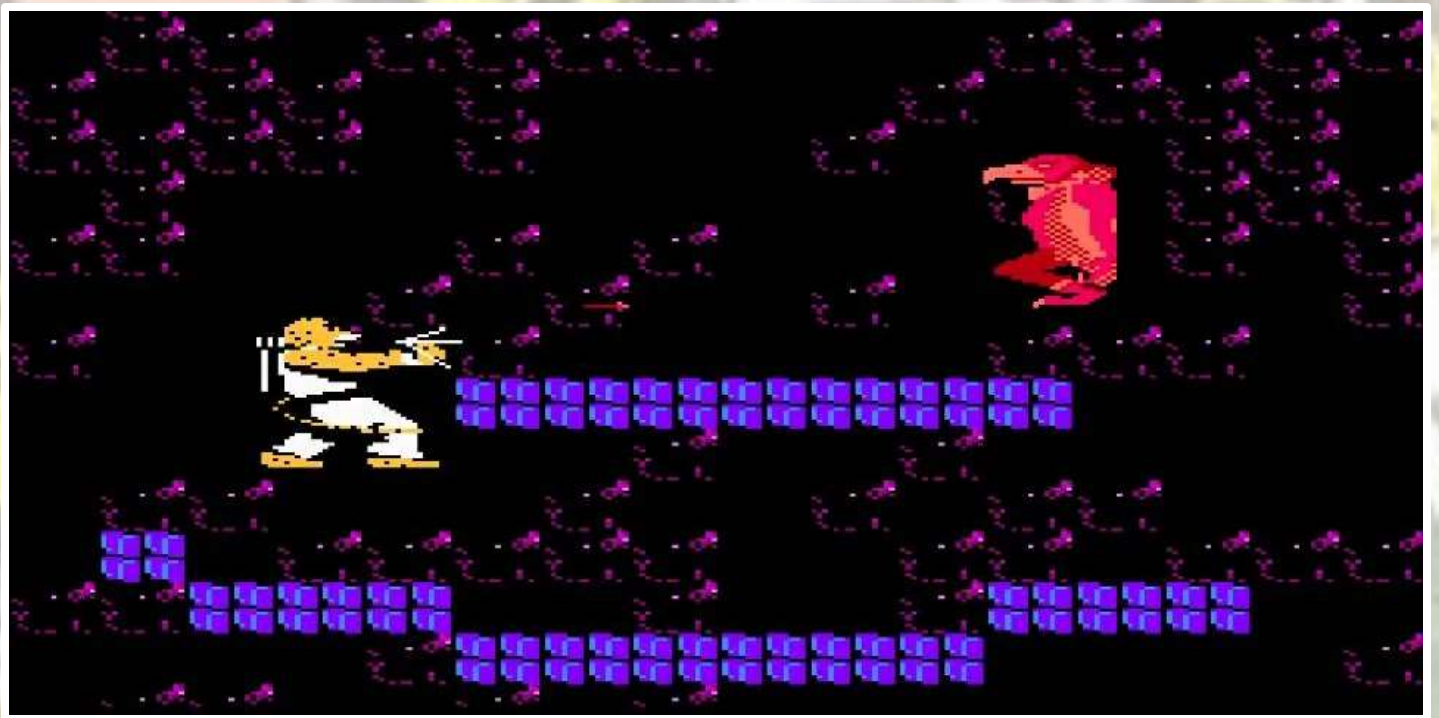
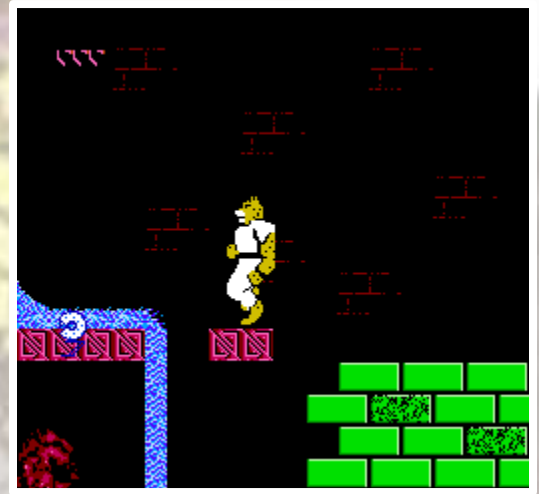
The Cheetahmen is an unprecedentedly ambitious game. Remember Dam Busters, with its two whole unique stages? Pah! Pathetic! Cheetah Men has six! In the first stage, you play as Aries, who comes equipped with a crossbow. This stage is unique for its use of stunning 3D graphics; sadly, though, they ran out of interns' souls to sacrifice after this stage, so the rest are all fully 2D.



Stage 2 also features the club-wielding Aries, although now in fully 2D. The quirky retro indie vibe was fun at first, but really? Full 2D? It's just getting overplayed now. According to the game's wiki, "Some of the enemies that appear in this level are Saddam Hussein, from Active Enterprises' 1991 release [Storm Over the Desert](#)". We reached out to Saddam for comment, but he declined our offer.

The game's third and fourth stages have you playing as Hercules, who forgoes fancy weaponry in favour of his raw martial prowess, much like Chie Satonaka from the hit game Persona 4. Stage 3, oddly enough, also features enemies from Ooze! How ooze-tastic! I'm sure my "loyal friends" (👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤👤) will be ecstatic! Again, though, it's all fully 2D. Do better, Active, do better.

Lastly, the final 2 stages feature Apollo, a crossbow wielding Cheetahman who... oh, this is glorious. Everyone, look at this!



I might pee a little bit. Cheetamen, much like the hit game Persona Q2, New Shadow of the Labyrinth, isn't a game for the faint of heart, but if you can get through its cheesy one-liners, slightly dated controls and deeply subversive sense of sexuality, it's a game that'll no doubt change your life.

Final Score	
Gameplay - 10	6
Story - 10	
Look/Sound - 10	

What Comes Next?

THE CHEETAHMEN II

Cheetahmen 2 is a 2D action platformer by Active Enterprises set to be released for the NES in 1993. Now, as I'm sure you've gathered from this issue, I'm a pretty big fan of Active's work, but I have some... problems with this one.

First, what's with it still being on the NES?

Nintendo's SNES and Sega's Mega Drive have both been pushing the boundaries for home console gaming; Active's mastery of 8-bit hardware is more than clear with their recent releases this year, but it's about time they move onto 16-bit with the rest of us. Second... full 2D, again? Really? I criticized Cheetahmen Beginnings earlier for the majority of

its levels being full 3D, but at least that had the promise of the single first stage with its 3D elements. If I was developing Cheetah Men 2, I'd add a hang-gliding section in the middle that takes inspiration from Pilotwings. 3D is the future!



Even putting the disappointing use of full 2D aside, Cheetahmen II just seems like something of a graphical downgrade compared to its predecessor. The environments lack the sense of life and lustre present in the original Cheetahmen, probably due to lead concept artist George Wood's tragic passing just six weeks before that game's initial release. But even without good old Wood, surely they could have

made it look a bit livelier? Add a peon or two in the background, have them be eternally tortured inside an evil cube, I don't know, anything would be better than this.

Cheetah Men 2 also lacks the cutscenes present in the original CheetahMen. To my good friends at Active, I must ask: is it really a Cheetah Men game if I'm not jorking it a little bit while I play?

Overall, I hate to say it, but I... don't have much hope for this game. All three Cheetahmen being fully playable, unlike how the original restricted you to just using Hermes and not the other two, is a promising new addition to breathe life into the チータメン formula, but visually, the sauce just isn't there. Also, where's the Action Gamemaster? He gained the ability to transform into a new, fourth Cheetah Man himself at the end of Cheetahmen I, shouldn't he be here now? Oh well, not like anyone cared about him anyway.



Regardless, this game doesn't look too promising. My view? They should have sacrificed more interns so it could all be 3D like the original's first stage. You could even add a few of them as peons being tortured in evil cubes in the background as a nod to who made the game possible.