

Issue 8



June 2021

Hi there and welcome to issue 8. More on all things shoot-em-up. Some interesting reviews and news in, this month. The Developer Focus has been replaced by a look at Extra Content Corner, for those who like to pimp there shmup rides. Thankyou to all who send in positive comments to us, they are much appreciated. Happy gaming.

### SHOOTER NEWS

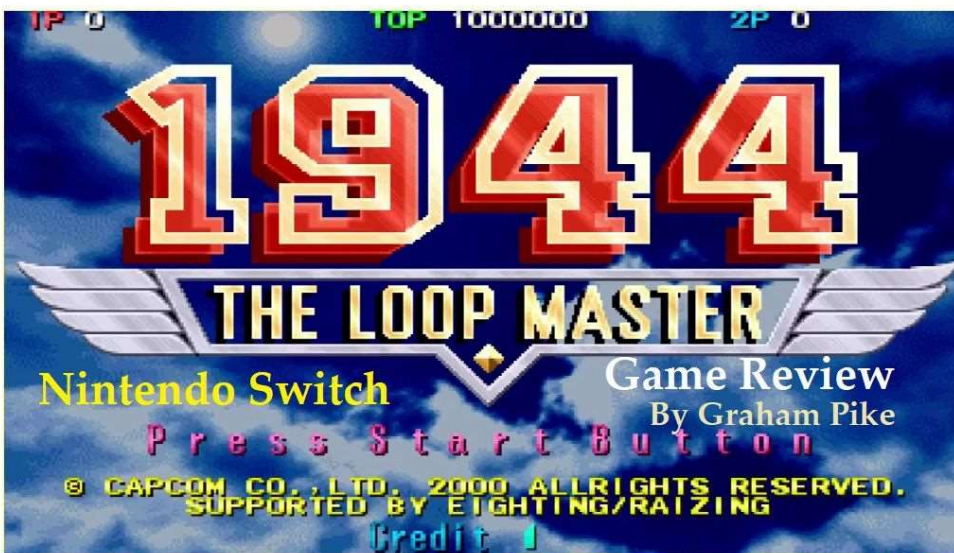
Developed by PlatinumGames, and in partnership with none other than Haster, **Sol Cresta** is a digital only release, coming to PC, Switch, and PSN in 2021. In terms of description, the game is a tip of the hat to Moon Cresta and Terra Cresta. A 2D Vertical scroller, the game boasts some interesting mechanics in the trailer and has very detailed backgrounds. In the trailer, there appears to be three ships that can merge into one to change attack type.



Going from bullets to beams, and even special attacks (hyper beam similar to DoDonPachi games). Little else is shown in the trailer, other than it being a space based shooter, showing a couple of planetary and space environments. The trailer and post first appeared to be some kind of April Fools post, but PlatinumGames have now gone on to state that this is real and happening. The game is currently still in development, so expect a late 2021 release for this one. However, you know it is a going to be rather tastier, if Hamster have attached themselves to the project.

For anyone not familiar, we covered **Razion Ex** in a recent issue, and during the Shoot You Sir Podcast #3 on Sunaru gamings website (also available on Podbean). **Razion Ex** is an indie horizontal shoot-em-up made for the Neo Geo and recently NG Dev have advertised that they will be selling two batches of 700 limited edition hard copies of the game. The first was on the 15th May, and the second will be on the 5th June. Sales went live on the 15th May at 7pm CEST time (6pm in GMT), with many people having problems with the website, and not being able to purchase the game. Anyone not familiar with this set up should know if you have not already signed up with the website - something it makes you do- then you will not have enough time to purchase the game because you will be making your account and following the confirmation e-mail to activate it. If you have not already signed in to paypal prior to the sale, you will also waste time signing in. There are other payment methods, but of course this will slow you down. So my personal experience was: signing in, adding the smaller package of the game to my basket, going to the check out, putting in my address, going to pay - and oh, the website is now telling me they do not ship to the UK. I check the shipping section of the website, clearly stating they ship to the UK. So I send off an e-mail to the NG-Devl then see on twitter that people are posting that they are having problems and they are recommending that people buy several versions of the game when they get to the check out. By this time, when I go back to go through the process of buying it all again - very much in a 4/5 minute period, the website was locked to sold out. A rather frustrating and pointless exercise, weeks in the anticipation, but disheartening at the point of ordering. Okay, so I resolve myself to be better ready for the 5th June. Ultimately, you see a lot of limited edition game companies have several weeks of preorder before putting a run to production - and this is the best policy for gamers. Even though the wait time is much longer. However, allowing people to buy more than one copy, and making them jump through several hoops, only helps the scalpers.





This arcade shooter was released on June 20th 2000, being developed by Raizing-Eighting and published by Capcom. The port I am using for this review, is part of Capcom's Arcade Stadium, Pack 3 collection. Over the years, I have been well aware of the 1942 series of arcade shooters, that have appeared on home consoles.

The previous games in the series are 1942, 1943: The Battle of Midway, 1941: Counter Attack and 19XX: The War Against Destiny. But to be honest, I have given them scant attention. Not sure why. I think it goes back to my Neo Geo days and their WW2 style shooter was Ghost Pilots, which really didn't do it



for me. Must have turned me off the era or something. Anyway, when I got this Capcom Arcade Stadium pack 3, I got it for two games; Gigawing and Progear. But like you do, I had to have a quick go on all the other games in the pack. Well 1944: The Loop Master actually impressed me. Not a tour de force in advanced graphics or original gameplay, it did however have a real old school,

arcade charm, with a big bold intro and some nice in-game touches. All the games in this collection have a very comprehensive range of options, to adjust all manner of graphical, sound and challenge related features. One of my favourites is choosing how to view the game, which takes you from watching it, as if you are looking at an arcade machine, moving through various



other choices, up to full screen. Which is of course, was the one I went for. Sorry traditionalists but I love full screen, as long as it doesn't super distort the playing area. So this is a 2D, vertical scroller, that takes place in 1944, with two super aces, piloting a P-38 Lightning and Mitsubishi A6M Zero. Control wise, you have a main fire button, that can be tapped for your main weapon or held down for a powered up shot. By holding down that fire button, a charge bar will fill. When full the plane flies up, toward the



screen, rains hell down on your foes and you become temporarily invincible. The bomb does similar but has limited availability and is more powerful. Unfortunately the 2 airplanes available, play pretty much identically. You only have one life per continue but you have a health meter and can take a few knocks before your pilot heads for the great hall of heroes, in the sky.

This old school shooter is no bullet hell game but there is a lot of enemy craft and firepower, coming from all directions. And using your own range of firepower and dodging skills, is actually a lot of fun. I was surprised at how quickly this game pulled me in, especially as the series had never interested me before. There are plenty of power-ups to be used and you can even pick up wingmen. A small golden airplane flies down the side of the screen at times, which drops a wingmen icon. Wingmen add some extra firepower and take hits separately from your main plane, which is really cool. From stage 8 onwards, the wingmen change from firing bullets to laser shots. Both enemies and power-ups will only stay on screen for a limited time, after which they move down and off the bottom of the screen. So keep working and moving, at all times.

Graphically this game has nowhere near the sophistication seen in some games, from the earlier, 1990s. But what it lacks in artistic depth, it makes up for in strong colouring, sharp detail and a real charisma to it's presentation. Like wise, the rather dated, rock based music, is done well and accompanies the game very nicely. The controls are simple but very effective and I forgot



to mention that there is a rapid fire button, if your tapping makes you weary. But like in most of the best in this genre, there has to be tactical awareness, to get the best out of your airplane. Your main sprite moves smoothly and quickly and it'll need to, to avoid the enemy and grab all the power-ups and points tokens, spread across the screen. Overall, I really like the way this game is presented and how it plays. It definitely calls me back for more and is no push over. The vintage quality of this classic shooter, with all it's nice touches, to all aspects, makes me smile in appreciation. There are 15 stages here, each with a boss. During boss battles there's an unseen time limit. If you haven't completely destroyed the boss within that time limit, the mission fails. Mission failure won't halt progress, but will prevent you getting a stage clear bonus. After downing the final (stage 15) boss, "Appare Toride", you learn why you are "The Loop Master", as the game starts back at Stage one again. But of course it all gets a little tougher. So there are plenty of reasons to keep coming back.

## SCORES

**Graphics: 16    Sound: 16    Control: 18**  
**Fun: 18    Lastability: 18    OVERALL: 86%**



# Game Review

by Graham Pike

PS4

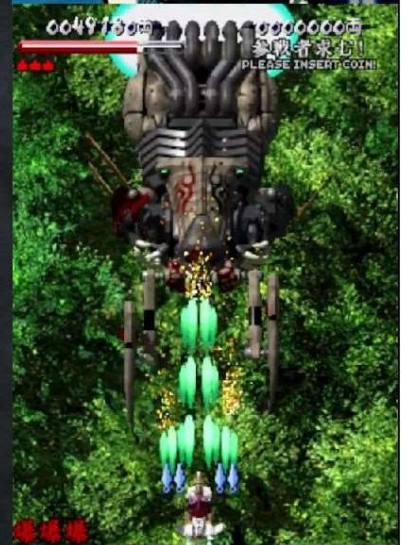
Vasara is a vertically scrolling, TATE screen shoot-em-up, that features almost super-human, samurai characters, flying about on futuristic hover bikes, zapping folk with missiles and lasers. It was originally an arcade game, produced by old favourites Visco, in 2000. This is the port/emulation by Qubyte, for the PS4, as part of a Vasara Collection.

The Controls are fairly standard. With X for the main, forward firing weapon and also, if you hold the X down, it quickly powers up a Melee Attack, that destroys enemies and their fire-power (very handy). Square causes a Vasara Attack, which requires the Vasara meter to be on full, to do a more powerful version of the Melee Attack. Circle operates Rapid Fire. The Triangle lets loose one of your limited supply of bombs. There are power-ups to collect, to beef up your main weapon, which can go from one up to four times firepower. There are also extra bombs to be had but not many.

The game's intro story tells of the falling of Osaka Castle, as it goes up in flames. The game demo shows you this is an old school, 2D shooter, with nicely detailed sprites and backgrounds. There are three characters for you to choose from. A young man and woman and an older man. Get started and it's soon obvious that this game is no push over. It's not a bullet hell shooter but the screen does get pretty full.

The 3 heroes play differently enough to give you some replayability. Your main shot is impressive, especially when powered up, as it has homing missiles as well as the straight ahead blasting. The woman has homing pink fans, which is in keeping with the game's mix of traditional and futuristic themes. When you destroy foes, many of them drop red jewels that need collecting for points. But these gems fall straight down and out of the bottom of the screen. This adds to the challenge because your desire to collect could seriously damage your ability to stay whole, with so much enemy fire whizzing around. As a respite, some ground based foes, when destroyed, leave small golden nuggets, in a stationary position, to be collected, when convenient.

The short range Melee attack is very powerful and fun to pull off. Obviously not being able to fire whilst you charge up, is dangerous but the attack's





ability to kill enemy firepower, makes it well worth it and this tactic becomes more and more crucial as you get further into the game. The stage bosses, as is often the case, transform after having taken a requisite amount of damage, changing their attack patterns. And I do like the way that if you run into a large foe, instead of dying you rebound off, with a buzz to your controller. The down side is that they can stop you getting where you want to go, at times.



I would say that Vasara is quite a tough game, especially when you take on bosses that produce over lapping firepower, that is next to impossible to avoid and you have to use one of your precious bombs. Also here is when the Melee attack can save your bacon. This is one of those games where you just have to rely on your automatic reflexes and tuning into the game. If you are too cautious or let your concentration slip, you are dead.



I like the graphics in Vasarva both in style and execution. They are not spectacular but are well detailed and have a sharp, bright look to them, with strong colouring. The sound effects are OK, with the explosions being good but the hero firepower lacks sonic oomph. The music follows the game's overall theme of traditional and modern Japanese styling. It's adequate and well done but doesn't really lift the game. Vasarva controls well enough but I did think that the hero sprites could have moved a little quicker. But having said that, I think the overall balance of challenge works with them moving at that rate.

I wouldn't decribe Vasarva as a classic or a great game but it does have the feel and look of a very decent arcade shooter. There's nothing really inventive here but it is a good example of it's genre. The gameplay balances well and I do like it's look and overall feel.



### SCORES



Graphics: 16    Sound: 15    Control: 16    Fun: 16  
Lastability: 18    OVERALL: 81%



## Extra Content Corner

So as we live in a world of updates and DLC, it makes sense to do an article now and again on shoot em ups of varying kinds that have received major, after release extras. These may be quality of life changes to gameplay, or additional menus or even extra levels and/or new characters. Now, I will make sure I emphasise that this is not about just a generic update to patch or fix things, but rather content that is added to games that we feel now make the game either worth dusting off and replaying or extra content or updates that now improve games to the point where they are worth it. Without further a-do, let's crack on.

Rolling Gunner Overpower DLC - on Switch Store. Graham reviewed Rolling Gunner for the Nintendo Switch in issue 7 of Shoot You Sir, so for a full review of the original game please visit [slyeessar.com/shoot-you-sir](http://slyeessar.com/shoot-you-sir) and download the copy for free, if you have not already done so. As a quick over-



view, Rolling Gunner is a horizontally scrolling SHMUP, with lush graphics, tight gameplay, Cave-esque bullet patterns, and very nice, 2D visuals. As the name suggests, you have a barrel gun, that rolls around your aircraft to fire in any direction, using the left analog stick, which also moves the aircraft. This is in addition to your main shot, fired from the front of your 'craft. Overpower DLC takes this to the next level in terms of control, as you can now play the game as a twin stick shooter. The left stick used for movement, and the right analog stick now controls the rolling barrel gun. This is extremely easy to do, and really opens the game up. This is one of the main new features that just elevates the game, giving it a new feel. Another addition to the game is the newly armed bust beam, that penetrates through enemy bullets, and the rolling gun can now help prevent enemy bullets from hitting your 'craft. Allowing added depth to offensive or defensive tactics. This, along with a plasma shield that automatically recovers, add a new dimension to the game. To compensate for these changes, enemies now deal different, thicker and more aggressive bullet patterns, helping the game create a very well balanced feel. Later stages feel like a mega battle between your 'craft and enemy bosses, these can be rather intense, and are just a joy to play.

You can switch back and forth between the original game and overpower, via the main menu, very easily and start the game going in no time at all. So is the price tag worth it for all the extras you get? In a nutshell - yes. As I mentioned, these new features elevate the game for me from a very good game to one of the best on the system. I always thought making this game a twin stick would be a game changer and the devs have managed to balance this really well. You can buy the game with overpower as a bundle on the Switch store, or just buy overpowered separately. If you have the non-EU versions of the game, you can find this on both the Japanese and US digital stores to download. This extra content gets a big thumbs up!

**Psyvariar Delta Additional Craft 'Blanche' from Cybattler** - Switch Store. For those of you that are not aware of Psyvariar Delta, it was originally released in arcades in 2000, and later found its way onto PS2. The game itself has 3D cyber looking sprites on a 2D plane, that is a vertical scrolling shooter. It has some interesting mechanics based around getting close to enemy bullets for point scoring. Fast forward to 2018, where the game was ported over to PS4 and Nintendo Switch. With Craft 'Blanche' from Cybattler, you can now shoot in 8-way direction. This actually changes the way the game plays a little bit, although you will still be firing up the screen most of the game, you can change tactics and move around the screen and fire in 8 directions to gain advantages you did not have previously. To top this, you also gain a shield, which is handy, you even get additional arranged music included. Fans of Cybattler will enjoy the ability to play as Blanche and have 8-way mechanics imported into a game as good as Psyvariar Delta.



# Game Review

By Slyellessar

# FULLBLAST

Nintendo Switch



Full blast is a SHMUP with early 2000's arcade looking graphics, basic menu systems, and two player functionality. The central play area is roughly half of the screen, with colourful borders and a basic scoring system at the top left.



Overall, this game looks like it could have been released on Dreamcast or PS2 and regular readers will be very much aware that Shoot You Sir! Is very much into this look. Enemies are various forms of creatures and organic looking plants, that are attached to the environment. The background looks good, but is extremely repetitive, making the first few levels quite boring, but you do unlock different stages. later on. The added graphical text, stating 'BOOM' when you destroy an enemy gives this game a slight comic book feel.

The rocking sound track for this game will get stuck in your head, mostly because, like the backgrounds, it is extremely repetitive. With that said, the main riff sounds great and will end up imprinted in your mind, for an hour or two after playing. When you destroy an enemy it gives a decent enough explosive sound, and when you activate your bomb you know that the explosions will be wiping everything off the screen.



Controls are basic: Shoot and bomb. You can manoeuvre around the screen with both the analog stick and the D-pad. Movement is fairly solid, but does not feel as tight as some of its contemporaries. I really enjoyed my first playthrough, but I have struggled to go back to it. The initial impression of the graphics and type of enemies was rather enjoyable and I have a fond memory of the game. Some of the enemies made me chuckle, so ultimately a solid fun experience.

Last-ability is where this game falls short. I have mentioned that my main playthrough was a lot of fun but with subsequent play throughs, I have gotten bored very quickly, of how basic this game is. Out of all the SHMUP games I have played this year, this one does not have me thinking about it when I am not playing it. Overall this game is worth a look at, if it is on sale on the e-store, as the game is worth atleast one play through. It won't however be on anybody's 'best SHMUPS of all time' lists but I guess it is not aiming for such glory. It feels like a well made indie game, paying homage to early 00's shooters and is doing its best to delivery a good experience.

## SCORES

Graphics: 15    Sound: 14  
Control: 12    Fun: 15  
Lastability: 10  
OVERALL: 66%



# BLAZING STAR

## Game Review

By Slyelessar

Neo Geo

So where to start with this classic? I am sure we would all like Graham to chime in with his two cents at the end, as he was actively gaming in the Neo Geo scene when this game came out. As he stated during the "Neo Geo, Let's Talk" video on the Sunaru Gaming youtube channel, Pulstar was a really important game for him. Blazing Star was eluded to as a sequel at the time, leading some gamers to disappointment and inviting a lot of comparison with Pulstar. With that said, the games are quite different, and Blazing Star ticks another box entirely- so let's explore this particular rabbit hole.

Blazing Star is a horizontal side scrolling shoot em up, developed by Yumekobo and published by SNK in 1998 for the Neo Geo arcade and home systems. It is the follow up to the renowned game Pulstar, from

which it differs a fair bit. Now, it has been documented by various sources that during development the devs wanted this game to maintain a degree of independence from Pulstar, making it more of a "Gaiden" or spin-off game. However, Yumekobo's president at the time, wanted to keep Pulstar in the name for business reasons. At some point, the game was going under the working name "Pulstar Blast", but the publisher SNK, did not want to release the game using Pulstar, as in the west the game received poor reception, due to its high difficulty. Eventually, the game was called Blazing Star, in all regions.

Blazing Star is considered to be less challenging than Pulstar, and I can personally attest to this, as I have found Pulstar to be quite a beautiful but frustrating beast. To get us going, I'm going point out the nuances between the two games. In Pulstar, the player must spend time learning the layout of the environment for each stage, as well as the enemy movements and bullet patterns. Blazing Star relies much less on knowing the patterns and layout of the environment earlier on, meaning it is a lot more accessible from the start, and more in the vein of a traditional shoot em up. The game evolves in later stages, becoming much more Pulstar-like, with a large difficulty spike, and the player having to learn patterns environments if they want to survive until the end.

Another noticeable difference that separates B-Star from P-Star, is that when your aircraft is destroyed, if you still have a life, your aircraft will re-spawn continuing the action without any pausing (unless you run out of credits). In Pulstar, if your aircraft is destroyed, the game stops and you are taken back to the last checkpoint, which even happens during a boss battle.

The other most noticeable difference is the amount of aircrafts available. Blazing Star gives you access a large number of ships with different firing patterns, whereas Pulstar only has the singular ship available from the start – Dino246. More on this later.

So now that the background is covered, what does the game actually look and play like? Visually Blazing Star is a lovely game, with highly detailed 2D backgrounds and environments that are a lot of fun to play and later on more challenging to navigate. The sprites are designed well, and the variety available makes the game-world the developers have created feel larger than it actually is. The bosses you encounter within the game clearly have a lot of





Review cont.....

the game. The Player has a choice of several ships with differing shot types and charge patterns, listed below.

HellHound (Standard) 4 way shot – deathflame – Hellburst (Pilot: Caster Mild)

Windina (Simple) Wave - Tidal Wave – 3 way spread – homing missiles (Pilot: Leefe Chao)

Aryustailm (Technical) – Laser – Lightening Bolt – Sword – Swordfield (Pilot: Jan Bismarck)

Peplos (Difficult) – 3 way shot – 3 way rapid – holy flare –divine breath (Pilot: Asayuki Kizuyomina)

Dino-135 – Shot – Rapid Shot – Spread Shot – Special Scatter (Pilot: Naomi Yamazaki)

Dino-246 (Defensive) Shot – Rapid Shot – Charge Shot – Bomber (Pilot: Kaoru Yamazaki)

Character attacks are colourful and differ quite a bit. Once a credit is used, you can change aircraft. A cool feature for video capture and can change the game up quite a bit if you aren't happy with your current 'craft. For instance, Windina's homing missile attack is useful for stages where enemies and bosses are approaching from the left of the screen, as they will home in on them.

The colour scheme differs a lot from Pulstar, even the space sections are more vibrant. The early stages do not appear to look much different from other shooters of the era, but the further you go into the game the more impressive the environment looks. Even the variety of the stage locations make the game feel like there is a big colourful world, and we are only getting a glimpse of it.

The music on the game is really well done, mostly electronic and synth, with electric drums. It is a fairly usual affair for a SHMUP for the most part, except for that the Stage 5 track sounds fantastic, and is worth a listen. You can find the soundtrack online if you want to listen through it. All the explosions and shots have impact and good quality ear-feel (coined in a previous issue). There are some Sci-Fi sounding noises here and there, that only help to add to



the experience. If we are still making comparisons, I think that Pulstar actually takes the biscuit here, as it has some brilliant atmospheric tracks in the game, really making the experience more intense and immersive.

The developers are very familiar with the genre and the Neo Geo at the point they made this game, so the controls are tight and responsive. The different aircrafts move and play differently from each other. Some a little faster, some with wider spreads, ultimately giving you quite a lot of choice. If you are playing the Hamster

port of the game to modern consoles, you have a lot of control of the game in terms of display settings and game settings. You can even turn on rapid fire, allowing you to hold down a button rather than keep tapping it. On Neo Geo, this game is a lot of fun with an arcade stick, and I highly recommend playing it this way. Holding down the charge button and releasing it to fire a powerful blast- is a mechanic that was brought over from P-Star, but has been evolved to encompass the different number of ships, all having different kinds of charged attacks. This mechanic changes as you pickup power-ups, that not only increase your main shot attack, but the power and duration of your chosen 'craft's charge attack. These all range from weaving larger bullets, to beam-like blast columns that move with you, to more of a physical spark looking attack. Once again, all of which help add to the aircrafts looking and playing differently.

The overall package I find is a lot of fun. The game is vintage enough in terms of gameplay,



REVIEW CONT.....

but offers up great 2D visuals, with fantastic boss battles and the large choice of ships means there is a lot of re-playability to be had. The game gets less fun for me during much later levels, where you need to start memorising things a bit more, but overcoming this challenge makes it only more enjoyable. It does a lot of things right, making you feel part of the world the developers created, giving you some options in play-style and keeping things simple. There are some downsides however. The score counter, high score counter

and boss battle timer take up a large amount of the top of the screen. The game is still playable, but it is hard to see bullets and projectiles if you need to go up to that part of the screen. Conversely, the same with the charge counter, level meter, and credits (the latter two removable in the Hamster version), take up space at the bottom of the screen. Some level environments are smaller which is fine, but somehow seems that this was done to compensate for this during difficulty spikes. It's a small bug bear, but it is noticeable.

This game is mentioned a lot in SHMUP lists for the Switch, and I can understand why. Not only is the original Neo Geo version a lot of fun but the ports from Hamster to current gen consoles work a treat and bring the experience to new gamers. This has extended the longevity of the game, and indeed all the Neo Geo games that have been ported in this manner. Overall, when people talk about Neo Geo SHMUPS, Blazing Star is always in the conversation, whether that's high praise or in a comparison to Pulstar.

Ultimately, they are different beasts and appeal to different types of gamers. For any new comers to the genre, I highly recommend B-Star, as it is much easier to get into. I would also state that P-Star should be on your top SHMUPS to play before you die, because of the status that it holds. I would love to see some footage of someone 1CC'ing it on level 8! It would make for quite an interesting watch. Blazing Star fetches really high prices, with even the MVS and conversions costing a pretty penny. You can get access to this game on alternatives like Dark Soft, but it is likely most people will now get it on PSN, Switch store or the Xbox store, as it is really cheap. We will always recommend playing Neo Geo ports, especially if you are into 2D gaming, as there are so many fantastic games that were released on the original console (as most readers are aware!). Also, Hamster get your finger out an port Viewpoint to current consoles, the modern world needs to experience that game!



## SCORES

**GRAPHICS: 18    SOUND: 17    CONTROL: 18    FUN: 18    LASTABILITY: 18**  
**OVERALL: 89%**

NOTE: Blazing Star was reviewed in the August 2018 issue of New Earth. And to my surprise it shares a lot of views with Sly's. Pulstar is very much a game in the style of R-Type, where as Blazing Star is a more traditional, horizontal scroller. Almost every time, I'd choose the traditional over the R-Type, which goes to show how brilliant Pulstar is, as in my view it is the far better and more enjoyable game, in every way. The exception that proves the rule, as they say. But I'll also repeat, Blazing Star is a great shooter, do try it. **Graham.**