

Issue 13



**November
2021**

Hi there shooter folk and welcome to Issue 13 of your favourite fanzine. So, we have entered the second year of Shoot You Sir! Old school we may be but we are lucky enough to have a multitude of contemporary shooter games to keep the dream alive. Which you'll see reflected in our reviews, further on. Focus on a developer has returned this issue and another Top 5, for your amusement. Please do remember that we are always on the look out for articles, reviews and comments from you, the reader.

Happy gaming.

SHOOTER NEWS

M2 Toaplan Hishou Same! Same! Same! So M2 have been active again recently, with what was in my opinion a fairly average game, in **Tiger Heli**. A port for the Nintendo Switch. More on that game another time, as I will review it in full.

So M2 appear to be on a Toaplan spree recently, which I think is rather interesting. In case you did not know, CAVE were originally formed from former Toaplan employees. Check out the CAVE dev article in Shoot You Sir, issue 6, for more info on what happened. So a few games from Toaplan are certainly welcome.



M2 are the go-to porters of all things SHMUP and they certainly add a lot of features to arcade classics, that are ported forward to current gen. It looks like **Hishou Same! Same! Same!** Is their latest port. AKA **Sky Shark**, aka **Flying Shark** in the west, this game is being released on PS4/5 & Switch in the spring of 2022, joining the likes of **Pocky & Rocky**, which was moved back to this release period.

The game itself features early 90's type graphics and looks rather similar to **Raiden**. Sprites are well detailed and fairly crisp for a game from this time period. You get the standard controls of shoot & bomb and that's really all you will need.

M2 will be including there rather snazzy M2 Gadget - which let's you alter a large number options depending on which game they add it to and a super easy mode, to help ease people into this peak arcade era game, as some of the older games can be harder entry points to SHMUPS. Overall, if you know what M2 can do, then it is likely that you will be purchasing this game, which will hopefully 1up Tiger Heli.





So the Aleste Collection has been getting a lot of attention online, mostly with fans of the series, and 8-bit junkies (& game gear players). Some of the large youtube channels are really making a lot of noise about it, but is it because the games are actually good or because they have been given a copy or are fighting for the most video views when a new game releases? Well, I have spent my own money purchasing the collection, to see what it is all about. See below mini reviews for the older games, and a full review of the M2 made GG Aleste 3 game.

Aleste - Originally released Feb 1988.

Visually the game is basic, with sprites being fairly detailed for the time period but certainly not anything to write home about. The environments feel even more basic, but on the positive side they are not distracting.

The music is very simple and boring but the sound effects are bright and loud and do work with the basic pixel aesthetic. The controls are basic, with a main shot attack and a secondary attack. The movement of the ship itself is surprisingly, very tight and is the best part of the game. It is playable, but not memorable in any way. This particular game won't be fun for anyone who isn't a fan of the series or who played the game originally.

Overall: 52%

Graphics: 6 Sound: 6 Control:16 Fun: 9 Lastability: 15



Power Strike II 1993 (Master System) Originally released March 1993.

This game offers up a bit more, with the ability to select between 7 different shot types at the start, a great addition. Backgrounds are quite saturated and offer up a lot more than the '88 Aleste game. Sprites are animated slightly more and the game is a step up from the previous title, but is also definitely nothing to write home about. Controls are exactly the same, with the gameplay being tight and responsive,

which is important. The music and sound effects are less harsh to the ears and suit the game well enough. The power ups that drop throughout the game, range from rather cool up to rather frustrating, and needing a 'work around'. Once you get an idea of which item is for which power up, things get a little bit easier. Stages are generic and boring. If you have the M2 Shock Triggers gadget activated, you have some really cool information dotted around the outside of the gameplay area. Once again, this is a game for fans.

Graphics: 7 Sound: 7 Control: 18 Fun: 9 Lastability: 15 Overall: 56%



GG Aleste - Originally released December 1991. This game has two specific modes: normal and special. But actually they are both fairly similar and I cannot discern much difference between the two and have determined that it is likely concerning the difficulty. Graphically this game is basic, but the level design has more to offer than the 1988 instalment of Aleste. Clearly trying to make up for lack of power, the developers have provided an attempt of what looks like

'layered' levels. For example, the first level looks like it is taking place on a colony or satellite, with a mix of panels with grassy areas, and behind this what looks like stars in the form of single yellow pixels in the background - think one of the space colonies from Gundam. However, sometimes it is difficult to tell that there are enemies embedded in the environment, not just flying onto screen, and this can be annoying. The music is much better than the two games mentioned above and adds a lot more intensity to gameplay, which as I have come to expect with the Aleste games, is tight and responsive. Explosions and shots are still puny, but I guess that is part of the 8 bit 'charm'. There are a lot of high pitched screeches that actually hurt my ears, especially against the first level boss.

REVIEW CONTINUED This game provides a challenge, and plays well, with fairly decent if not basic bullet patterns, and some more interesting enemy designs as well. Dying in this game is annoying but it makes you want to dust yourself off and give it another go. It's at this point I started to realise where the series was going, and why it is so revered. Power ups and shot type upgrades appear often but are not always easy to navigate towards and to remember what all the different types are, is confusing unless you have them memorised. It is best to find one or two that you like and remember the letter of the shot type when it drops down the screen. Enemies move quickly and tend to sweep and bounce across the screen. The game opens up a lot more after the first level, and there is slow down present when a lot is happening on the screen. The options are as basic as it gets, difficulty and sound being the only real parameters. Overall, this is one of the more playable games in the collection, easily scoffed at but surprisingly, it provides a good challenge and plays well.

Graphics: 8 Sound: 9 Control: 16 Fun: 11 Lsatability: 15 Overall: 59%



GG Aleste II - Originally released October 1993. This is where the series shows improvement over the last game. The GG Aleste games are the better choice of games on the collection. GGA2 has improved graphics, although enemy sprite designs are mostly the same as the previous game, with the bosses being the exception. Environments although still basic, are at the point where the game makes you feel like there is an actual game world or universe you are playing in,

rather than just extremely basic backgrounds. You now have planets in the backgrounds of space stages, stars are dotted around randomly instead of obvious patterns of pixels. There are more detailed obstacles to destroy or avoid. The music has more arpeggios and the game in general has a more pumping soundtrack, helping to add to the game. Enemy attack patterns are more concise and much more interesting. The tight controls that have been honed in previous titles is ever present. The game still suffers from the fact it is a much older ported game, but shows where the series was headed and is certainly a playable game. This feels like the stepping stone M2 used when they made GG Aleste 3, and realistically GGA2 & GGA3 are the only games in this collection that can be played side-by-side with other SHMUPs of the same or slightly higher bit count. The rest of the games show how the games evolved and provided the building blocks for the later titles, with some of the mechanics from the early games being kept right up to GGA3. If the games were ever sold separately, this may be worth paying the same as the arcade archive games.

Graphics: 9 Sound: 8 Control: 17 Fun: 13 Lastability: 15 Overall: 62%



GG Aleste 3 by M2, released December 2020. This game was created by none other than M2 themselves, and interestingly enough, was made as a true Game Gear game, and not just an approximation of a game for this system. It has been included in this collection and will likely be the real factor for anyone who is not already a fan of Aleste, to buy it. This is for several reasons: The first being it is the most up-to-date of all the games,

and although having a very basic, pixel art design, it does have the controls and some mechanics of a more modern game. It is also visually and sonically, the best of all the games in the collection and anyone curious as to why the almighty M2 team decided to make this game, is likely to have purchased the collection specifically find that out.

Graphically the game remains in the 8-bit realm, but compared to the previous games included in the collection, it is heavily detailed. Environments and backgrounds have slightly more details than the last game, with a lot more on display. Again, this is by no means the visual spectacle that View Point or Pulstar are and nobody should expect that, as the Neo Geo has much more bits. But all the sprites look decent, and bosses are much more impactful than the other titles in this collection. The birds flying away on the second stage, against the forest background, looks really cool, and the colour palette available is rather pleasing.



Much like Shenmue III and games of that ilk, this game was surely made for fans that have been loyal and awaiting a sequel for some time. The M2 gadget around the outside of the screen provides a wealth of information in a similar vein to the other games, they have ported to current gen and also includes information on the different weapon types.

The soundtrack is also more intense than the other Aleste games, with good separation between stages and boss fights. With an improvement to the sound effects, this game is a step up in every parameter. However, once again the sound FX are fairly weak and diddly compared to most modern games, but then again this is an 8 bit game made for the Game Gear. I do bring this up, however, as although the game is made for a low bit machine, they could have included an arrange soundtrack and sound FX for the Switch/PS4, which would have made the high price point more reasonable.

The controls remain the same, with tight game-play being at the heart of this game. If it does nothing else to impress you, anyone will admit that the game plays really well. The player controlled 'craft feels intuitive and responsive when using both the analog stick and the D-Pad. The secondary attacks have some interesting mechanics, rather modern ones actually. Some can be aimed opposite to the direction you are moving in and some provide momentary beams or circulating balls of energy that destroy enemies that are moving to crash into you. A theme that has remained from earlier on in the series, but improved on in this game. The different offensive or defensive choices are provided often via items dropping down the screen. The game does fall into the same negative trap of having these drop down the screen a lot, and even if you don't want it, sometimes you have to move into one to avoid enemies and bullets, causing you to change from your favourite secondary attack to a completely new one. The tactics you previously had in place are now 'out the window' and you have to adapt until the next item drops. With that said, it is no where near as bad as the annoying continuous weapon change items constantly dropping in Raiden IV X Mikado, which really hampers the game a lot more.



The game is a lot of fun to play, and playing through the more basic games and reaching GGA3 makes it feel even more worth it. Even if you could take or leave 8 Bit games, GGA3 plays really well, offers up a decent challenge and has more rewarding gameplay than the other games in the collection combined. Fans of the series will really love this game and it has enough charm to make newbies to these games fall in love with it.

For my part, I am pleasantly surprised how much I enjoy playing this game. Out of all the Aleste games, this is likely the only one I will come back to, long term and I do like what M2 have done here. But have I fallen in love with it? No. I might have it as my bit on the side for a while but it won't be the main stay, like DoDonPachi DOJ or Crimson Clover W. E. are.

SCORES

Graphics: 12 Sound: 12 Control: 19
Fun: 17 Lastability: 15 OVERALL: 75%





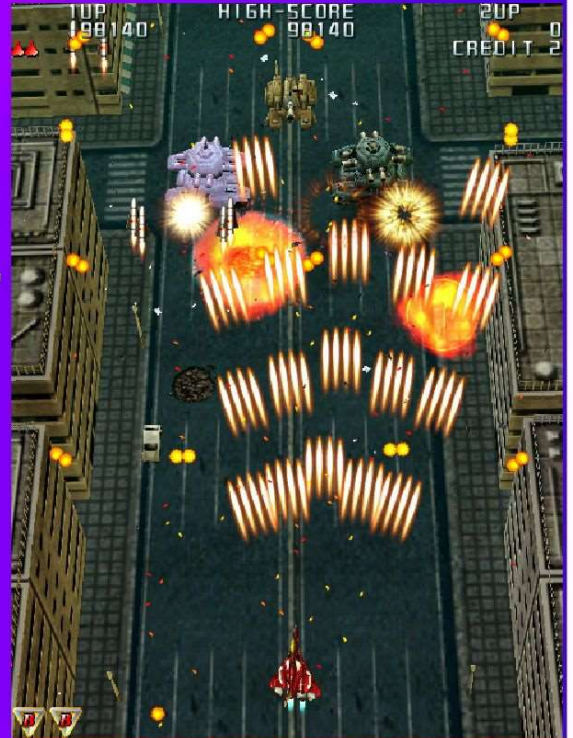
MOSS are a Japanese game company, based in Tokyo and were founded by Toshinobu Komazawa in March 1993. They were formed by the development staff from the games company, **Seibu Kaihatsu** and later bought the **RAIDEN** franchise and carried on developing that classic shmup series, over the coming years. In fact the Raiden series dominates Moss's shmup output, with the exception of the two Caladrius games and a couple of shooters for SNK Playmore.

Raiden III hit the arcades in 2005, using Taito's Type X hardware, it made it onto the PS2 in the same year. It also went onto Microsoft Windows in 2006. This game is a real icon in the shoot-em-up world. Very sharp sprite work, a ton of gameplay, that has amazing power-ups and dramatic firepower, fantastic music and sound effects, this game has it all. No flashy storyline, just all out action, power play.

Raiden IV hit the arcades in 2007 and made it onto the Xbox 360 in 2008. The graphics got even sharper, with superbly detailed sprites and even better, 3D-esque backdrops. To me, this is shooter heaven. Classic play, looks and even more superb tunes and explosive sound effects. MOSS did not try and venture into other genres or excessive background, they just went with a winning formula and made it better.

In 2010 Moss programmed the **King of Fighters Sky Stage**, for SNK Playmore. This was reviewed in Issue 12 of this Fanzine by Sly and was a very decent and fun shooter. It kind of reminded me of The Castle of Shikigami series. It made it onto the Xbox Live Arcade, too. 2010 also saw an almost identical game, called Neo Geo Heroes: Ultimate Shooting, appear on the Playstation portable system.

3 years on, in 2013, **Caladrius** was first released on April the 25th, for the Xbox 360 in Japan and later on, in the arcade, on the RingEdge 2 system.



Although it still had some Raiden elements, this game really ramped up the visual and sonic splendour. It also had on going chat, from the pilots. This game really impressed me when it came out and still does now.

Developer article

MOSS

continued.....



2014 saw the release of **Raiden IV: Overkill**, on the PS3, with a Microsoft Windows release in 2015. A very nicely done update on **Raiden IV**.

Moss continued with another quality update in **Caladrius Blaze**, that made it onto PS3, PS4

and Microsoft Windows. This game really should be got by any shooter fan.



The **Raiden** series continued with **Raiden V** in 2016 and **Raiden V: Director's Cut** in 2017. The latter really impressed us both, here in **Shoot You Sir!** land. Another real classic, as reviewed in Issue 2. There are other **Raidens** on the way. OK Moss have very much stuck to a formula but it's a formula that works. I'd put

Caladrius Blaze and **R.V: Directors Cut** up there with some of the best.

TOP 5 ARCADE GAMES

The Top 5 of games we have actually played in the arcades

GRAHAM PIKE

1. Soccer Brawl
2. Viewpoint
3. Metal Slug
4. House of the Dead 2
5. Phoenix

SLYELESSAR

1. House of The Dead II
2. Sega Rally
3. Knights of The Round
4. Mortal Kombat 2
5. Jurassic Park Arcade

GHOST PILOTS

GAME REVIEW

By **Graham Pike**

SNK
©1991 SNK CORPORATION

M. Mioshi, N. Mori and R. Miyazaki. The, now very dated, military style music, was composed by Masahiko Hataya.

This is a full screen, 1 or 2 player, vertically scrolling, 2D shooter. An old school, very traditional game, with straightforward controls. A = Shoot, B = Bomb and there's 8 directions to move in. Conventional and dated it may be but it still has some retro charm, to it's looks and playability. Start the game and your seaplane manouvers from it's moorings and takes off,

It's W.W.2 and an ambitious Nazi general, sends forces against the Allies. Two ace pilots, Tom Phillips and Charlie Stingley, nicknamed the "Ghost Pilots", set off in their seaplanes, to take the Axis forces head on.

I wasn't that keen on Ghost Pilots, back in the early 90s. But then again, I hadn't really got the shooter bug, back then. Dating from 1991, this game was produced by SNK, under the Directorship of Takashi Nishiyama. It's producer was Eikichi Kawasaki, assisted by designers



to confront the enemy. You have 3 lives and 3 bombs per continue but there are plenty of fire-power and bomb power ups to collect and increase your chances of success.

The nicely drawn backdrops to this game do not have a huge amount of variety. With jungle, sea and ancient ruins, taking up most of the space. The enemy's attack patterns are very familiar and you have to avoid plane collisons as much as enemy firepower. You are almost as likely to be shot at from the side, so you have to be aware of all the missiles and enemy planes.

Because after the rather easy first stage, things soon hot up and eventually ramp up to the very tricky indeed.

Although these graphics do not compare favourably with later Neo geo shooters, they are easy on the eye. This is very much a blast from the past. The enemies come from air and ground and overall, give quite a fun challenge. The traditional, end of level bosses are large and give some extra challenge, too.



GHOST PILOTS



Review

Continued



The main problem with Ghost Pilots, is it's lack of variety. Scenery, fire patterns and enemy movements do not evolve much. They just get busier. Even back in the day, this game didn't wow fans that much. But any Neo Geo or shmup collector would probably want to own this. It has some novelty and good old fashioned shooter challenge. But don't expect too much.



SCORES

Graphics: 15 Sound: 13
 Control: 16 Fun: 15
 Lastability: 17
OVERALL: 76%



LAST RESORT™

GAME REVIEW

SNK By **Graham Pike**

SNK CORP. OF AMERICA ©1992

This horizontal, R-Typesque, 2 player shoot-em-up, came out in 1992 and briefly held the crown as the Neo Geo's top shooter (until Viewpoint). It was produced by Yasumi Tozono, with help of designers Eri Koujitani, Hajime Ito and Khozoh Nagashima and programmer, Takefumi Yamamoto. It's a familiar story. Aliens are invading Earth again and you wouldn't believe it but they're beating the hell out of us. So, what's to do? Yes, you've guessed it, the military have a secret weapon, a "Last Resort", to sort them pesky aliens out.

So, off you go..... it's bomb, shoot and generally blast those aliens to dust. The player controls both a space jet and when acquired, a robot drone which acts as a shield against small projectiles and as an extra weapon with multi-directional fire and bludgeoning launch capabilities.

The drone can be switched between a fixed position and acting as a rotating gun drone. The space jet can be upgraded with three levels of three differing types, increasing firepower and speed. It has 5 levels of intense shooting fun. Old fashioned it may be, but there are plenty who love this type of game.

So what's Last Resort got going for it? For it's time it had some very tasty graphics indeed with backgrounds that still look pretty cool today, as do those shiny metallic



Cont.....over



sprites, although they are a bit flat looking, at times. Sonics too are excellent with power house music from Toshio Shimizu. This is a typical Neo geo game. Big sprites that look really stylish, move well and are fun to control. Your reactions have to be fast to get through this baby and you will even get a little help with some unusual (for the Neo Geo) slowdown, which occasionally effects the screen. Too much cannon fodder probably. The levels are a little short but are pretty tough. In fact this is

one tough game, pretty much throughout. I've always found it to be the toughest of the Neo Geo shooters. Hardcore shooter fans will enjoy this. Although it is far from perfect, it does provide a feast for the eyes and ears and has very dynamic gameplay.

There's no doubt in my mind, that Last Resort was surpassed by Pulstar and Blazing Star, on the Neo Geo but if you like your horizontal blasters, with a classic R-Type vibe and hard as nails, then this game is well worth a try.



SCORES

Graphics: 17 Sound: 17

Control: 18 Fun: 17

Lastability:18

OVERALL: 87%