

# A+ ▶ THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

## ▶ GAME REVIEWS

### THE REVENGE OF THE ENCHANTRESS: ULTIMA II

Sierra On-Line, Inc.  
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Coarsegold, CA 93614  
(209) 683-6858

List Price: \$59.95

Requires: Apple II, II Plus, or IIe; 48K RAM; one disk drive

CIRCLE 701 ON READER SERVICE CARD

**Question:** What do you get when you cross your Apple computer with a fantasy adventure game, the movie *Time Bandits*, arcade action, and graphics wizardry?

**Answer:** The Revenge of the Enchantress: Ultima II.

Ultima II, an outstanding arcade adventure game, whisks you through time and space on a magical, mystical quest. Not only do you scour the Earth searching for clues, recovering ancient artifacts, and slaying evil monsters, but you also rocket to other planets in the solar system, including those not yet discovered. If that isn't enough, you travel through time itself via time doors—gateways connecting Earth's past, present, and future—if you can catch them.

Ultima II is a sequel to Ultima I, but you do not need Ultima I in order to play Ultima II.

Ultima I's villain was a powerful sorcerer named Mondain. Presumably, if you have finished Ultima I, you've already vanquished him. In Ultima II, Mondain's apprentice, Minax, the "enchantress of evil," takes Mondain's place. She's so vile she makes Mondain look like a Boy Scout. Your mission is

twofold—discover what will eliminate Minax, and then proceed to do so.

As all role-playing games do, Ultima II requires you to create a character—a computerized alter ego—to adventure across Earth, space, and time. You have 90 points to distribute among your character's six attributes, which are strength, agility, stamina, charisma, wisdom, and intelligence. The higher the point total, the better the attribute.

Next, you choose one of four races—human, elven, dwarven, or hobbit; one of four professions—fighter, cleric, wizard, or thief; and one of two genders—male or female. Each race, profession, and gender adds points to a particular attribute. For example, selecting elven increases your agility five points, wizard adds ten points to intelligence, and male boosts strength by five points.

You can add points to your attributes, up to 99 points apiece, during the adventure. You must discover how to do so, however, and the points are costly.

Your character starts with 400 hit points, 400 food points, and 400 gold pieces. The hit points, which indicate how much physical damage you can take, decrease quickly during battle, especially if you are not wearing armor. The food points gradually dwindle as you explore. The gold pieces allow you to purchase weapons, armor, information, and other items—if you can find a place that sells them.

You then begin your quest in earnest by being dropped somewhere on Earth—usually in the middle of a hostile wilderness with no friendly village in sight. Your first order of business is to find a village and buy some weapons



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and armor, and then you can start exploring and have a reasonable chance to survive.

Ultima II contains truly impressive graphics with seven colorful types of terrain. The deep-blue ocean rolls between the coasts. Blue-and-green swamps mingle with dark-green forests, and purple mountains tower majestically over plains of green spotted grass. White walls flank the purple cobblestone streets in the villages and inside the castles.

That's just the surface. When you enter dungeons and towers, you see corridors and rooms displayed in three-dimensional perspective. Since you face only in one direction, long corridors fade into the distance, and you cannot see around corners.

## ▶ Evil monsters populate the countryside, and they swarm around you like piranhas after fresh meat.

The monsters, creatures, and men on the surface are small, slightly fleshed-out white stick figures. Despite their diminutive size, you can easily tell the difference between an orc, a thief, a daemon, a jester, and anything else.

The monsters in the towers and dungeons are another story. They're colored green—perhaps with envy of the aesthetic quality their surface counterparts possess. These monsters are much larger than their surface cousins and are sculpted with block graphics more reminiscent of a TRS-80 than an Apple.

The game also contains good sound effects. About the only thing missing is a speech synthesizer. As you explore, you hear the click of your heels echoing off the ground. During battle, you can hear the swish of a miss or the crunch of a hit. A high-pitched whine signals your entry and teleportation through one of the blue time doors.

The movement controls permit rapid responses, and they are very simple to

use. As in an adventure game, you travel in the four compass directions. Ultima II is a real-time arcade adventure game, however, so instead of typing in a direction, you press the Return key, the / (slash) key, the right-arrow key, or the left-arrow key to move north, south, east, or west respectively.

### Into Battle

Only evil monsters populate the countryside, and they swarm around you like piranhas after fresh meat. If you're clever, you'll put your back to something impassable such as a wall or a mountain. Some monsters are easier to kill than others—for example, a daemon is pretty tough, but an orc is "more pest than peril." To attack, you press the letter *A* and then a direction key.

Pressing two keys in sequence during a real-time battle can be tricky. Sometimes you accidentally reverse the order, pressing the direction key first, followed by the *A*. This sequence causes you to try to move through the monster, which you can't do, and you end up losing your turn. Even the manual notes that "the timing will come."

Ultima II contains 26 letter commands ranging from *A*, for attack, to *Z*, for character status. Some of the more interesting commands include *C*, for cast one of nine magic spells; *H*, for engage the rocket's hyperspace drive; *S*, for steal item from a store; and *Y*, for yell something nasty to release your frustrations.

An 18-page illustrated booklet, skillfully crafted to look like old parchment, provides instructions to start you on your quest. The documentation contains a one-page story on the rise of Minax, but pitifully few hints on how to depose her. After all, the manual says, "Your purpose is to learn how to fulfill your quest and then do what is required."

That's a pretty tall order, though, especially when you can roam all over the globe, enter dungeons and towers, rocket around the solar system, and pass through time doors to five distinct periods of Earth's past, present, and future.

Even worse, all those time doors are not fully mapped. You receive an artistic, 16 × 22-inch cloth map of Earth

with interconnecting time corridors printed on it. Unfortunately, the map is not all that accurate. You can get real lost real fast trying to navigate the corridors, but that adds to the fun of exploring the game.

Ultima II has many plot twists that mix technology and magic across time and space. With each accomplishment, you receive experience points. The more experience points you accumulate, the more powerful you become. In general, the tougher the battle, the greater the points. Thus, you receive more experience points for defeating a devil than you do when you get a lowly orc.

Whenever your character dies, and that will happen all too frequently during the first few times you play Ultima II, the program will "reincarnate" your character with all attributes, gold, and

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belongings. The character will be reborn right where you were the last time you saved the game.

If you play Ultima II once, you'll be hooked for a long time. The game boasts more than 300K of machine-language programming spread over three disk sides. You are not going to solve the puzzles, recover the artifacts, and finish the quest in one afternoon. Prepare to receive your money's worth from this program. The *Revenge of the Enchantress*: Ultima II places you in the middle of a maelstrom in Lord British's fantasy realm. It captures your imagination as you battle across time and space in a fast, fun, and exciting quest against evil. Ultima II is the ultimate arcade adventure game.

Russ Lockwood

# Ringside Thrills

Championship Boxing provides the fun and excitement of professional boxing from Sullivan to Holmes—without the usual wear and tear on the participants.

All through the ages, men and women have been tormented by conflicting feelings of attraction to and revulsion for professional pugilism. Protest though we may at the thought of paying to watch two humans attempt to bludgeon each other into submission, fighting has a peculiar appeal even to the most effete, lily-livered liberal. And a glance at the audience of a prize fight or a professional wrestling match reveals no shortage of women, either.

“But, it’s wrong!” as Richard Nixon once said. As we move along in this modern age, 2,000 years from the days of the gladiators, there must be something that can replace the blood lust that is at the core of boxing’s attraction.

Yes, folks, you guessed it: computerized boxing! No more sweaty arenas. Away with blood-spattered rings. So long, Howard Cosell (been waiting for years to say that). Bring on Sierra On-



## Championship Boxing

Sierra On-Line  
Coarsegold, CA 93614  
(209) 683-6858

List Price: \$34.95

Requires: 128K RAM, color/graphics adapter.

CIRCLE 783 ON READER SERVICE CARD

END-OF-ROUND STATISTICS

MARCIANO's status - Breathing heavy.  
Not hurt.

FRAZIER's status - Breathing heavy.  
Bruised rib.

| Score for round 1 |    | Judge 1 | Judge 2 | Judge 3 |
|-------------------|----|---------|---------|---------|
| MARCIANO          | 9  | 9       | 10      |         |
| FRAZIER           | 10 | 10      | 9       |         |

Press any key for MARCIANO's corner

In a *Championship Boxing* rematch, the judges put Frazier slightly ahead of Marciano after the first round.

line's *Championship Boxing*.

All seriousness aside, this is truly one of those breakthrough games that comes along only ever so infrequently these days. On a single sliver of silicon resides an erudite simulation of the abilities, styles, and records of boxers from the past 100 years as well as an entertaining participatory game with staying power. *Championship Boxing* is one of the games you'll want to trot out to show to

your friends and neighbors when they ask you to demonstrate exactly what it is that your computer can do.

Or, suppose you find yourself engaged in a lively discussion among gentlemen down at the Cross Keys Tavern one Friday night and that blowhard lawyer from the insurance company stands on a table and declaims to the world that Rocky Marciano was the greatest fighter of them all and that anyone who thinks oth-

erwise is a liar and deserving of a back-alley lesson in fistic arts. Don't roll up your sleeves—just plug in your PC. (You do carry your computer with you at all times, don't you?)

### A Parade of Champs

There on the *Championship Boxing* disk reside the magnetic reincarnations of 53 of boxing's greatest. Of course, there's Marciano, champ from 1952 to 1956 and winner of 43 of his 49 fights by knockout. (He retired without ever losing a professional fight.) But also represented are John L. Sullivan (who won the title in 1885), "Gentleman Jim" Corbett (who took it away from him in 1892), Jim Jeffries (1899), Jack Johnson (1908), and Jack Dempsey, the "Manassa Mauler" (1919-1926).

You can also choose among Gene Tunney, Max Schmeling, Jack Sharkey, Primo Carnera, Max Baer, Joe Louis, and other greats of the twenties and thirties. More modern boxers include Floyd Patterson, Ingemar Johansson, Sonny Liston, Muhammad Ali, "Smokin'" Joe Frazier, Ken Norton, Larry Holmes, and Gerry Cooney. And if you follow di-

visions other than the heavyweight, there are a few of the best lighter fighters, including Roberto Duran, "Sugar Ray" Leonard, and current favorites Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini and Hector "Macho" Camacho.

The package comes with a set of well-done instructions, a booklet about the theory of boxing, and a history of the sport including biographies of most of the boxers. The program requires 128K RAM and will run on a PC with color/graphics adapter or a PCjr enhanced model. The graphics are designed for a color monitor but can be viewed on a monochrome monitor attached to the graphics board output.

### Historically Correct

When you start out *Championship Boxing*, you're rewarded with a nicely drawn scene of a boxing ring. There, prancing to the tune of the old Gillette razor theme, is a scantily clad young woman carrying the title card back and forth. ('If not violence, then sex,' I hear someone out there say. Wrong again: think of it as historically accurate scene setting.)

(continued)

You proceed, via an on-screen menu, to the selection of your boxers. You can select from one of the 53 fighters supplied, or you can choose to create your own pugilist—you select a name, age, height, weight, reach, endurance, style, and 15 other factors. Go ahead—put your mother-in-law up against Muhammad Ali for a laugh. The game also includes a pair of ringers: Matilda the boxing kangaroo and a wimp named Peewee. (Watch out for Matilda's feet, by the way.)

### Strategy and Arcade Modes

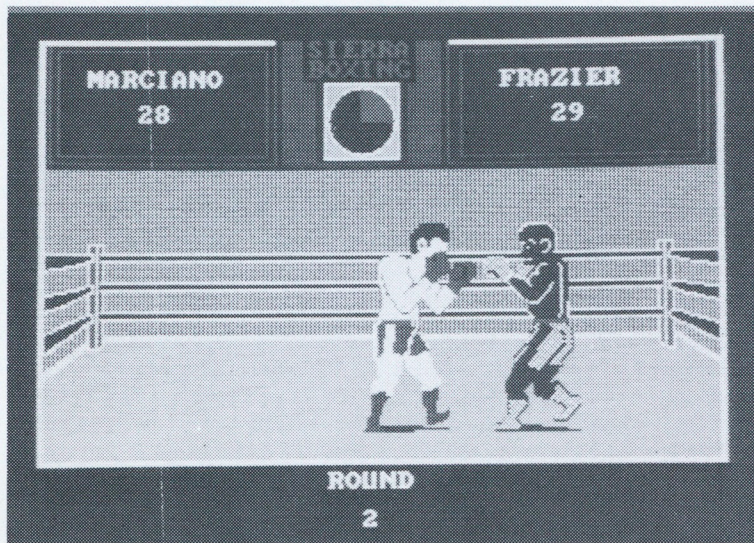
Once the fighters are selected, you have a choice of two modes: Strategy, in which you give advice to your fighter between rounds but do not control the actual punches for him, or Arcade, in which the fight is controlled from the keyboard. You can tell your fighter to step back, move forward, jab, throw an uppercut, punch to the body or head, or cover up. In a two-player game, the boxer on the left is controlled by the function keys, the boxer on the right by the cursor keys.

Then two boxers appear on the screen. The program adjusts their skin color for historical accuracy, sizes them according to weight and height, and lets them loose to perform according to their abilities, records, and your fleet fingers on the keyboard.

If you choose to take the role of manager rather than boxer, you can limit your involvement to setting strategy between rounds and shouting instructions from the corner during the match. I found I preferred this game to the arcade version. It also allowed me to watch more closely the computer's realization of the differences in boxing styles. (For example, the young Muhammad Ali floats like a butterfly and stings like a bee; bull-like Marciano just wades in and punches.)

### In This Corner

And so, sports fans, I put Marciano up against another hard puncher of more recent vintage, Joe Frazier. I managed both



This shot of the second-round action shows the two heavyweights slugging it out.

## PC ARCADE

fighters. Here was the "Tale of the Tape" the computer provided before the start of the match:

| FRAZIER    | MARCIANO   |
|------------|------------|
| Age 29     | Age 32     |
| Weight 205 | Weight 184 |
| Reach 74   | Reach 68   |
| Height 72  | Height 71  |
| Fights 29  | Fights 49  |
| Losses 0   | Losses 0   |

The computer told me that it figured Frazier to be a 5 to 4 favorite in the 12-round fight.

I instructed both fighters to open the match by coming out slugging, and that's exactly the way the first round went. Marciano went right at Frazier, and they stood in the center of the ring exchanging punches. And then, midway through the

round, Frazier dropped his jab and Marciano let loose an uppercut that knocked Smokin' Joe to the canvas where he sat out eight counts. But Frazier got up angry and 20 seconds later decked Marciano. The computer judges scored the round even.

The second and third rounds, during which both fighters were instructed to work on their opponent's body, went to Frazier as he repeatedly snapped Marciano's head back. Frazier was ahead on points as they entered the fourth round, but both fighters were clearly exhausted and just shuffled around the ring.

Managing Frazier at the start of the fifth round, I sensed the opportunity to end it all, and I instructed Joe to go for the knockout. Managing Marciano, I sensed that Frazier might be going for the knockout, and so I instructed Rocky to

fight defensively—cover up and rest.

It was, alas, too late for the Rock. Forty-five seconds into the fifth round, Frazier lifted Marciano off the canvas with an uppercut, and Marciano was out for the count. In the background behind the on-screen ring, press photographers stood up to flash their cameras at the moment of victory, and someone tossed a hat in the air.

*Championship Boxing*, programmed by Dave Murry with graphics by brother Barry, is a knockout.

On *PC Magazine's* scorecard, with a low of 0 and a high of 6, *Championship Boxing* is a heavyweight:

|                 |      |
|-----------------|------|
| FUN:            | 5.0  |
| CHALLENGE:      | 4.0  |
| COLOR/GRAPHICS: | 5.5  |
| TOTAL:          | 14.5 |

