

SIERRA QUEST

"Roberta Williams had played the original computer adventure and yearned to write her own. Unfortunately, Roberta had no knowledge of programming and therefore had to turn to her husband, Ken, for help. After some persuasion, Ken started coding his wife's game scenario. Whilst discussing the plot, the two hit on an idea that would bring a huge change in the world of adventuring: the use of high-resolution graphics. Nick Clarkson investigates the innovative and highly underated results of their efforts."

Using their Apple II and a Koala sketch pad their first game, *Mystery House*, was created. They sold over ten thousand copies of that initial game and many more followed. Their business expanded from the rickety kitchen table and soon took over the whole house. The company name changed to Sierra-On-Line and the business was forced to move.

That all happened back in 1980 and since then Sierra have moved to their current base in Coarsegold, near the Yosemite National Park where they now employ about eighty people. Ken and Roberta still like to keep the homely feel of their business and do their best to treat the staff as one big happy family.

Sierra's games are truly graphical adventures. The characters can move behind, in front, on top, and under many of the depicted objects, hence the 3D description of the games. Upon reaching an exit point of a scene, a new location is loaded from disk while the previous one disintegrates using an impressive screen-dissolve routine. All the disk accessing slows the games down somewhat. However, as these games are not super-fast zap'em-ups, this factor doesn't hinder the player's enjoyment too much. Text is input at the base of the screen using the keyboard in the normal fashion. Several of the function keys have been pre-set, thus making the more common system com-

mands such as, save, restore, repeat and the like, all single key strokes. A text window appears in the centre of the screen in response to any typed input or program-generated event. These windows contain

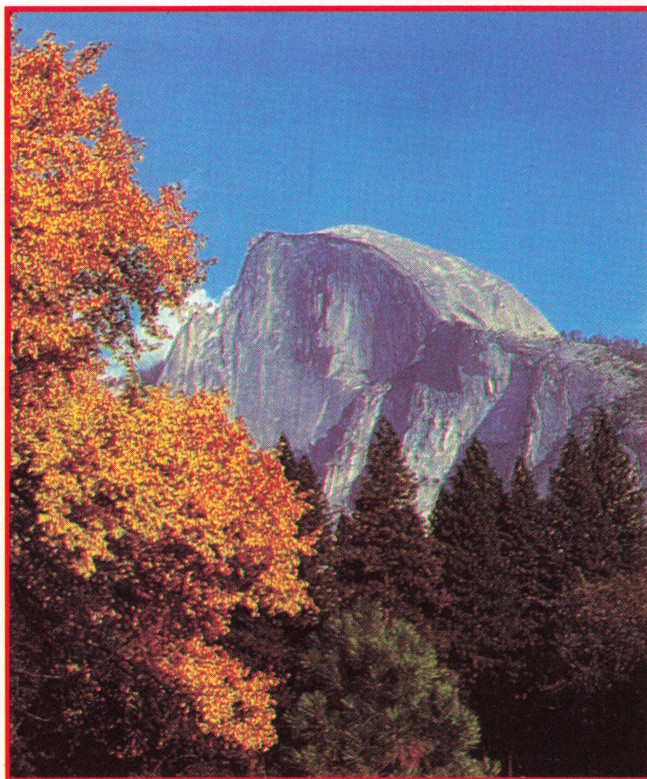
appropriate text and remain present until the return key is pressed. These features are present in all of Sierra's games. The format is always the same - only the storylines ever change.

We took a look at some of their major releases: the now famous King's Quest series, the wacky antics of space janitor, Roger Wilco, in *Space Quests I and II*, Leisure Suit Larry's life amidst the *Land of the Lounge Lizards*, and Sonny Bond's investigation of the Death Angel in *Police Quest*.

The arguments over whether text adventures are superior to graphic adventures still continue.

Graphics enthusiasts maintain that the pictures enhance the games and test one's attention to detail; many clues are often hidden within the pictures. Text aficionados, however, contend that graphics are but mere graffiti when compared to the pictures of the mind's eye.

Whether it is the carefully drawn pictures or the intricate prose that creates the feeling of "being there" remains the individual's choice. But whichever you find the more rewarding, grab that brass lantern - it's time to go adventuring!



*Quest for the Crown***King's Quest I: Quest for the Crown**

King Edward and his beautiful wife once ruled over the kingdom of Daventry. Their people were prosperous and happy, and peace reigned throughout the land. The King and Queen, however, were saddened because they were childless. They had no son to inherit the throne, nor a daughter to gladden their hearts. As time passed, the King in desperation offered the kingdom's greatest treasures to anyone who could provide them with a child. Alas, the King's pleas were not answered and his Queen soon fell ill. Offering further treasures, the King called for someone to help his beloved wife. Unfortunately, no aid was forthcoming and the Queen sadly passed away. The King had lost



his beautiful wife, the kingdom's valuable treasures and the chance of an heir. Daventry was doomed. The King called his most loyal knight, Sir Graham, to his side. After explaining the sorrowful state of affairs, the king sent Sir Graham to recover the lost treasures, and thus ensure the prosperity of the people. Should the brave knight succeed, the King vowed to take him as his son and eventual heir.

You must become Sir Graham and your mission is simple: just recover the kingdom's lost treasures. Along the way you will meet

numerous creatures and beings from both fable and folklore. Witches, trolls,

giants and leprechauns all abound in the land of Daventry. All of your skills will be called

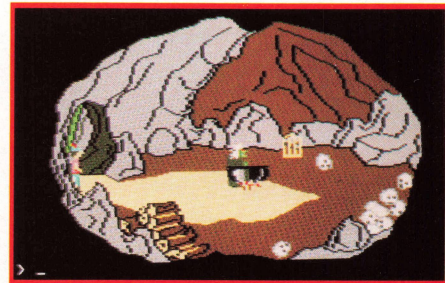
upon, both bravery and compassion will be required to eventually return victorious with the missing valuables.

King's Quest is the first of the now world-famous Quest series and represents an easy entry into the world of 3D adventuring. Can you manage to overcome all the odds and save your ill-fated land, or will you fail in your quest?

**King's Quest II: Romancing the Throne**

Having rescued the kingdom of Daventry from impending doom, the brave knight, Sir Graham, has now ascended the throne. The kingdom of Daventry is once again at peace with the world, but poor King Graham has become unhappy. After gazing into the magic mirror King Graham spied the face of Edward, the former King of Daventry. Edward's message was grim, unless King Graham can provide the country with an heir it will once again fall into disrepute. Before fading, Edward's image instructed Graham to

marry and provide the kingdom with such an heir. King Graham searched throughout his kingdom for such a bride, but, alas, his hunt for a wife proved fruitless. Again King Graham consulted the magic mirror, and this time, instead of Edward's features, he gazed upon those of a beautiful maiden. The girl seemed sorrowful; she had been imprisoned high in a crystal tower far away in the land of Kolyma by the evil witch Hagatha. Graham knew that this girl, Valanice, would be his Queen. He gathered together his provisions, donned his adventuring cap and vowed not to return without his bride.



You must help King Graham in his search for his Queen. Travel to the enchanted land of Kolyma in search of the magic keys which will lead you to your final goal. The journey will be perilous; meet King Neptune in his undersea kingdom; visit the gloomy castle of the terrifying Count Dracula, come face to face with the old witch Hagatha; and hopefully meet the girl of your dreams, the beautiful Valanice. King's Quest II follows the fortunes of our hero, Graham, in his attempt to find a wife. The game is well thought out and should provide any novice adventurers with a good insight to Sierra's 3D games.



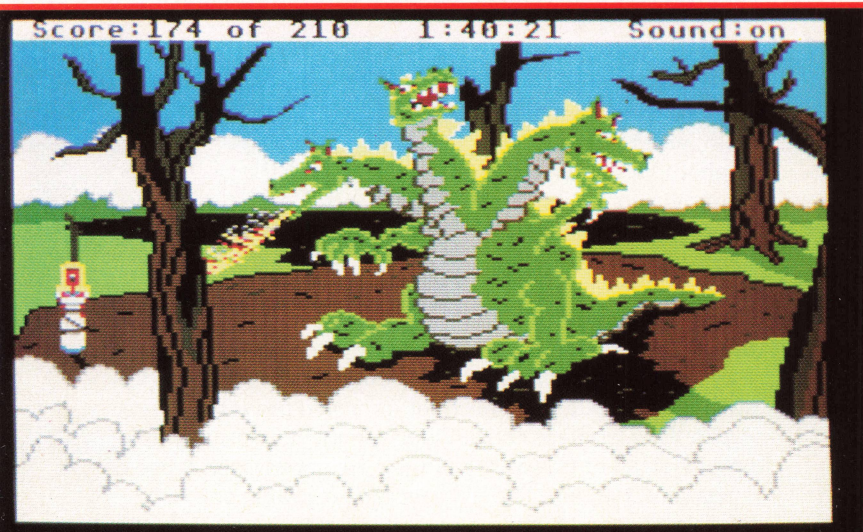
KING'S QUEST III

To Heir is Human



King's Quest III : To Heir is Human

King's Quest III: To Heir is Human, concerns your adventures as Gwydion, a young boy enslaved by the wicked wizard, Manannan. Said wizard simply doesn't like doing the dirty chores around the house. As a result of his lazy



tendencies, every seventeen years he kidnaps a baby boy from the local village. In return for the boy's housekeeping, Manannan clothes and feeds the unfortunate candidate, albeit rather poorly. What the unsuspecting young lad doesn't know is, that when he reaches the age of eighteen, the wizard will neatly dispose of him and find yet another victim! Your task, as Gwydion, is to escape from the evil thrall of the wizard. To succeed with this mission you will need to learn Manannan's darkest secrets and use them to free yourself from his evil bondage.

The documentation that comes with the package, provides helpful instructions about ingredients and directions for certain spells, which may aid you in your quest. The game does not stop after you have managed to conquer the evil wizard. With the knowledge you have gained, you must make a perilous journey to a distant kingdom; there you must help free the land from the ravages of a terrible monster!

King's Quest III, although one single story, does have several sub-plots. Gwydion must first find a way to rid himself of the evil wizard. The poor boy must also learn how to conjure powerful spells before he can embark on his perilous journey across the high seas with a group of reckless pirates. If the boy is successful he will find the lost kingdom of Daventry and his real parents, King Graham and Queen Valanice. King's Quest III is one of the more challenging titles currently in Sierra's range. The game is fifty per cent larger than any other previous game and it is recommended only to the more seasoned players.

Space Quest I : The Sarien Encounter

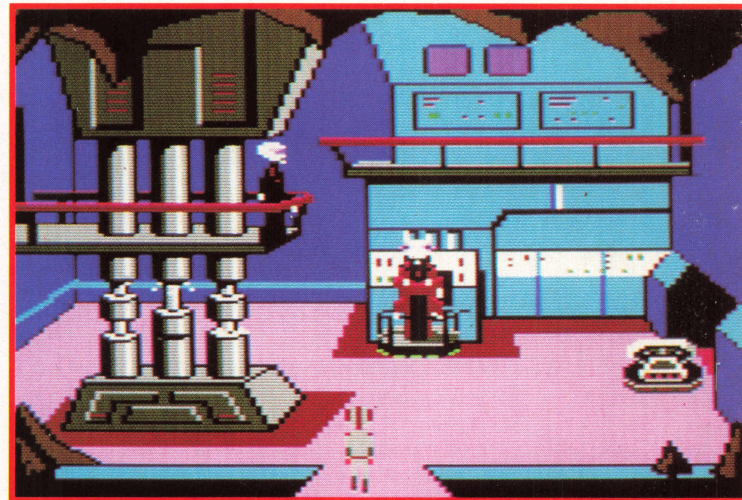
Take on the role of Roger Wilco, a class 4 janitor on board the starlab Arcadia. Having finished testing the Star Generator, a revolutionary new power source, the crew of the Arcadia are making their way back to Xenon when they are space-jacked by the Sariens. This evil bunch of space pirates have decided to capture the Star Generator and use it to help them in their aim of ruling the entire star system.

While all the chaos was happening aboard the spacelab, Roger was taking one of his customary naps in his favourite broom cupboard. The game starts with Roger leaving the confines of his resting place only to find the spacelab overrun by the Sariens. Roger's task is simple: find and destroy the Star Generator, thus ending the power-crazy Sariens rule.

Roger's journey is not going to be easy. With your help he must locate the Sarien base. During the course of his adventures our hero finds himself stranded on the desert planet of Keron. Here he must befriend a super-intelligent race and help them before they will aid him in his cause.

He will travel to the local space port, a place filled with the universe's most undesirable beings. If Roger should get lucky he may even manage to buy a used spaceship and travel to the sinister Sarien base, the Deltaur. Once aboard the enemy craft, Roger is faced with his final task, to destroy the Star Generator and to escape with his life.

The storyline is well thought out and maintains humorous undertones throughout. I noticed the similarities between parts of the scenario and various films, so any science-fiction enthusiast will feel quite at home with this



game. Space Quest represents a wonderful challenge and is a good game for an intermediate player.

SPACE QUEST™

THE SARIEN ENCOUNTER

A 3-D
ANIMATED
ADVENTURE
GAME



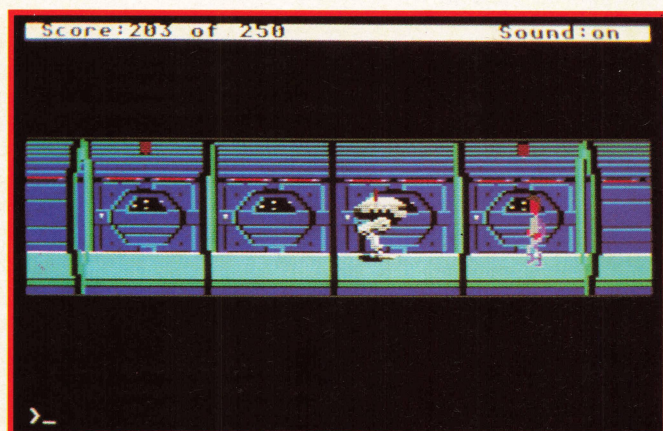
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SPACE QUEST II™

VOHAUL'S REVENGE

Space Quest II : Vohaul's Revenge

Having briefly enjoyed his short-lived fame, Roger Wilco finds himself as the head, and only, janitor aboard the Xenon 4 Orbital Station. One day, while cleaning a small space freighter, Roger is jumped by a couple of apes and transported to the secret hideout of the evil Sludge Vohaul. Having had his plans thwarted once by Roger, Vohaul has decided to take no chances this time and has our hero transported to the nearby mines on the planet of Labion. Having failed to conquer the planet of Xenon once already,



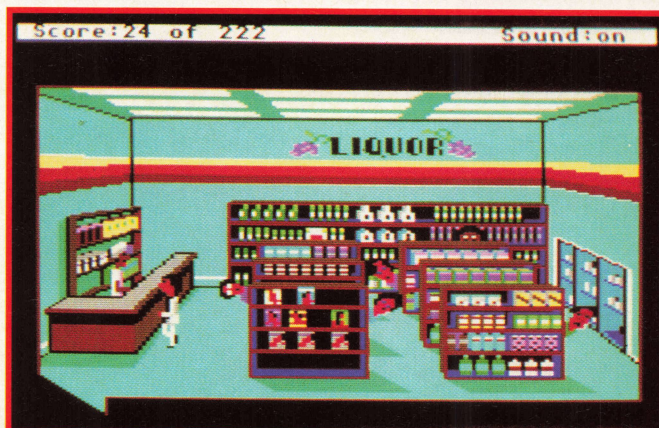
Vohaul has devised a foolproof plan. The evil, demented scientist has decided to dump hordes of genetically engineered door-to-door insurance salesmen on Xenon, thus ensuring the complete insanity of every human being on the planet.

Whilst Roger is being transported to his new place of employment he has the misfortune to crash on the planet of Labion. After having his fall broken by one of the unfortunate guards, Roger emerges unscathed. With the knowledge of Vohaul's diabolical scheme, Roger sets off to avert the launch of the hideous salesmen.

The game is split into two definite stages.

The first sees our hero bungling his way through the dense jungles of the planet Labion in an attempt to find a means of returning to Vohaul's fortress. Should Roger manage to return to his arch-enemy's hideout he must then avert the launch of the salesmen and once again escape with his life. Along the way, Roger will meet many strange and wonderful creatures, some friendly, others just plain hungry.

Space Quest II continues where its predecessor left off and the game has even more humour than the first chapter and is noticeably larger. Space Quest II is recommended for space fanatics everywhere and, again, is of an intermediate level.



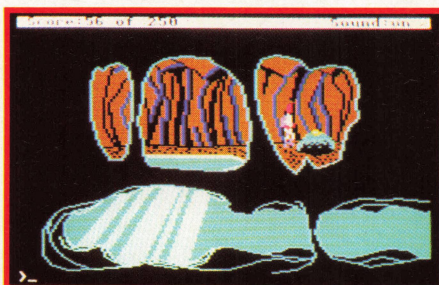
Leisure Suit Larry

Step into Larry's loafers and travel downtown to the Land of the Lounge Lizards. Larry Laffer, (Boy, his Mum and Dad must have had a sick sense of humour) is every girl's worst nightmare. He still lives with his parents; he has just turned forty; and he's still single. And, as if this were not enough, he's balding, grey-haired (covered with Grecian 2000, of course), wears gold medallions, has Ultra-Brite white caps, wears the finest 100% man-made permanent press-suits and has halitosis that could kill at a hundred paces! Apart from these minor faults, Larry is just your everyday, loveable kinda guy.

So, become Larry Laffer the loveable nurd for one rip-roaring night. Visit seedy downtown bars, where not even Omar Sharif's best pick-up lines would work. Help out absolutely plastered drunks and become totally intoxicated yourself. Ride in overpriced cabs; become a living lamp-post for a four-legged friend; and even meet a monk who loves to make an exhibition of himself! Of course, you are really looking for that special someone with whom you want to settle down and spend the rest of your days. Try looking in bars, discotheques, the casino or even the local 24-hour we-sell-everything store.

Along the way Larry will meet up with all kinds of low life, often with the most hilarious results. Life in the Land of the Lounge Lizards is by no means cheap, so Larry could try his luck at the local casino. The program includes a blackjack game where our hero can gamble away his hard-earned cash. Larry's life is both fun and exciting to play, but as the game's contents are maybe a little risqué, the programmers have included a special age detector where a player has to answer five topical questions related to his or her earlier years.

Leisure Suit Larry's adventures in the Land of the Lounge Lizards is not essentially a difficult game, especially for anyone matching up to Larry's credentials. So if you fancy a night on the town without the hassle, don your leisure suit and head on downtown.



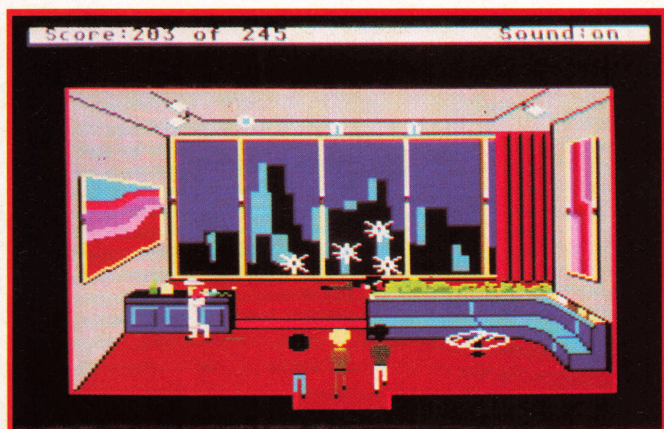
POLICE QUEST™

IN PURSUIT OF THE DEATH ANGEL

Police Quest : In Pursuit of the Death Angel

Take to the streets in the form of Sonny Bonds. Sonny is a uniformed officer who works for the Lytton Police Department. Just lately there has been a noticeable rise in the crime level around the town; vice, drug trafficking, even murder - it all seems to be happening in Lytton just lately. The local press have dubbed the mastermind behind this wave of crime as "The Death Angel". Law-abiding citizens are now scared to walk the streets. It's now up to you, a faithful "Blue Knight", to serve and protect your community from the dastardly dealings of the "Death Angel"!

Sierra's Police Quest is not supposed to be a fantasy game. Written by Jim Walls, an ex-police officer, the game is meant to be a factual account of many true happenings. Players will be required to follow strict police codes and ethics when dealing with suspects. Attention to detail is essential; careless mistakes could allow an obviously guilty party to walk free from Judge Palmer's courtroom. Personal safety, that of yourself and fellow officers, is also of para-

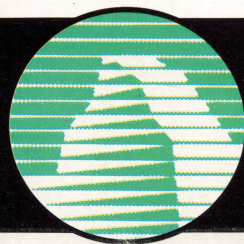
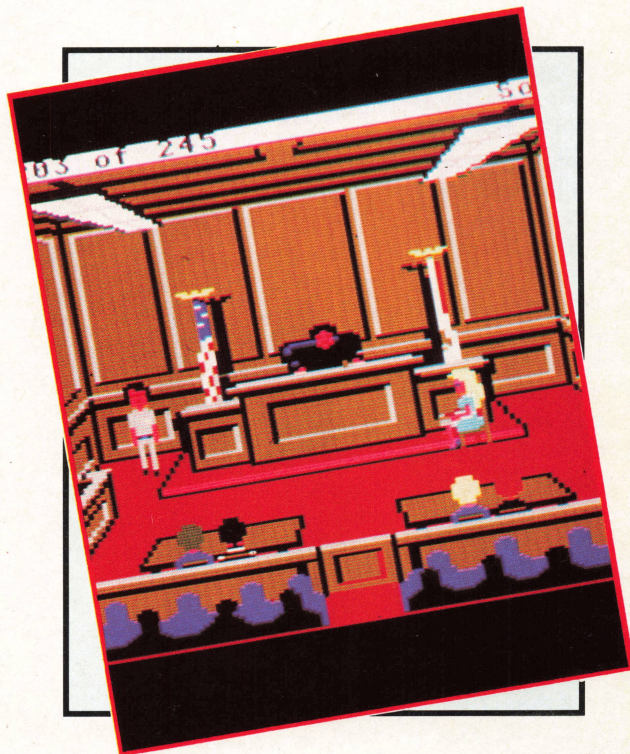
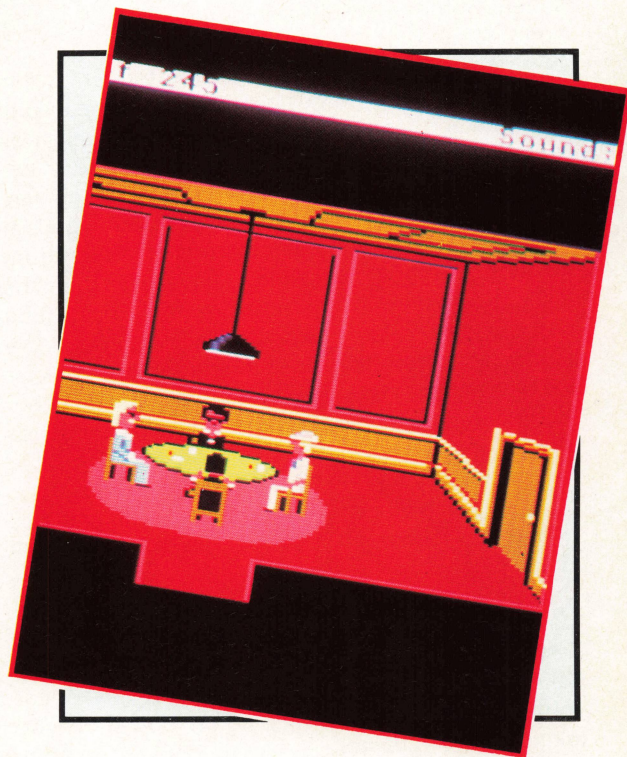


mount importance. One simple lapse and you could find yourself on the coroner's slab!

Not all police work is glamorous, as a uniformed officer you may find yourself undertaking very mundane routines. Speeding drivers, bar brawls and drunken drivers all have to be watched out for. Should you manage to cope with the run-of-the-mill work, you may be assigned to the plain-clothes Homicide Division. Follow the case of the "Death Angel" closely and you may even be called to infiltrate his gang.

Police Quest is by no means an easy game, especially for anyone unfamiliar with American law. The game's car-driving sequence is rather tricky to control but my advice is to persevere, it's worth it! Police Quest is probably suited to the more seasoned player, the game itself consisting of progressively difficult stages. Just one hint for anybody playing the game: the telephone number for American Directory Inquiries is 411.

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SIERRA QUEST