

The Beast Within

An adventure to howl about!

With technology borrowed from *Phantasmagoria*, Sierra's supernatural detective prepares to put a bite on the competition.

—Todd Vaughn



Though Sierra wasn't ready to reveal the SGI-rendered werewolves from the final game, expect them to look something like this pre-production shot.

F.Y.I. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Game: *The Beast Within: A Gabriel Knight Mystery*
Developer: Sierra
Publisher: Sierra, 3380 146th Place SE, Suite 300,
Bellevue, WA 98007, (800) 757-7707
Projected Price: \$69.95
Percentage Complete: 75%

In a nutshell:

The Beast Within marks the return of one of Sierra's most interesting adventure game characters and provides a unique blend of horror and suspense.

What's so special?

Despite its live-action video, it's not a typical Hollywood game. Designed with careful attention to gameplay, *The Beast Within* shows that a graphic adventure can seamlessly combine tradition and new technology in one fun package.

Why should I care?

It's a terrifying adventure game that's unlike any you've played before. Both novice and veteran gamers will find plenty to like in the new look and story.

And when's it coming out?

Fall 1995

Ask graphic adventure fans to describe their favorite games, and instead of hearing how great the graphics were, or how challenging the puzzles, you're more likely to get a lengthy account of the game's plot or details about the characters and settings. That's because die-hard adventure fans know instinctively that what really matters is the story.

That's certainly been the case with most of Sierra's adventures. From the King's Quest and Space Quest series to the Leisure Suit Larry games, they've had a penchant for designing memorable characters and story lines, and nearly everyone who has played them is able to recount them in vivid detail.

But if there's a recent Sierra game that really sticks in people's minds, it's probably *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers*. This supernatural adventure had the pacing of a spine-tingling hor-

ror novel, slowly revealing the details surrounding a sinister series of voodoo-related murders in New Orleans, giving the player plenty of time to identify with the characters and concentrate on the task at hand.

From a gameplay standpoint, *Sins of the Fathers* wasn't perfect — there were lots of dialog trees to wade through and several tough puzzles that kept some people from finishing — but for those who stuck with it, the game was an unforgettable experience that left them wanting more.

Enter *The Beast Within: A Gabriel Knight Mystery*, which Sierra hopes will create more fond memories with its special brand of horror and intrigue. In a bold step to make the most of the horror elements and capitalize on the live-action trend, *The Beast Within* will use the same full-motion video technology pioneered in Roberta Williams' seven-disc CD extravaganza, *Phantasmagoria*, rather than the computer-generated graphics of the first GK game.

Some purists are bound to be a lit-

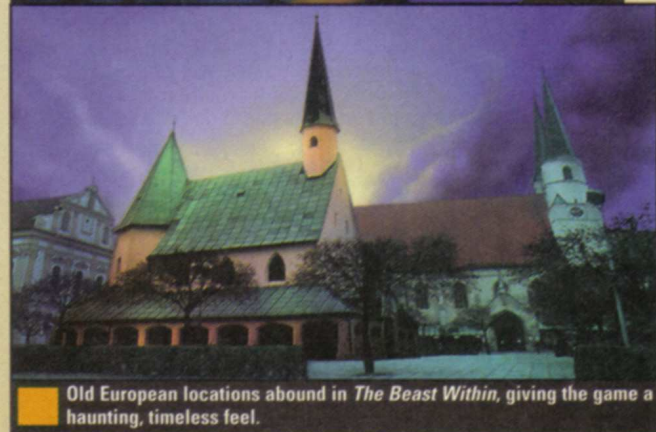
tle anxious about Sierra's move to full-motion video. But *Sins* creator Jane Jensen says the decision to use the new technology was an easy one, because it'll give the game the mass-market appeal it needs if it's going to stand out from the current crop of graphic adventures — and it doesn't have to mean compromising the underlying story.

Jensen's dedication in keeping the Gabriel Knight series plot-driven adventures is apparent when she talks about *The Beast Within*. She's been hard at work for the past two years developing the story line for the new game, and she says the game wasn't designed around the latest technology; instead, the technology is flexible enough to suit the story.

In choosing the supernatural elements for *The Beast Within*, Jensen drew on popular werewolf lore. In *The Beast Within*, which begins shortly after the events of the first game, we find that Gabriel has written a successful book on the voodoo murders. With a little money finally in his pockets, he leaves his New Orleans bookstore to return to his family's castle — Schloss Ritter — in Rittersburg, Germany, to concentrate on a new book.



Director Will Binder and actress Joanne Takahashi do a final run-through of the script and check the lighting before shooting a scene.



Old European locations abound in *The Beast Within*, giving the game a haunting, timeless feel.

Not surprisingly, Gabriel's heritage as the last of the Schattenjagers, or Shadow Hunters, doesn't exactly prove conducive to relaxation and writing. A group of villagers comes to Schloss Ritter to ask Gabriel to help them investigate a creature that has been terrorizing the countryside, and he accepts. As the game develops, Gabriel discovers that werewolves have been roaming this small part of the world throughout history and are very much alive and well in the present.

Gabriel's sidekick, Grace, who was a big part of *Sins* appeal, has an expanded role in the new game; in one of the game's subplots, the player will be able to control her as well as Gabriel. The sexual tension that developed between Grace and Gabriel in the first game also plays a much larger role in *The Beast Within*.

To give much more detail than that would spoil the game. It's enough to say that gamers who found *Phantasmagoria*'s simple plot less than engaging will find plenty to like in *The Beast Within*. Every character you meet is an important part of the story, providing information about the challenges that lie ahead in the game.

On the puzzle side, Jensen made sure everything had a logical basis in the story itself. The game won't be easy, but those who thought *Sins* was a little too tough will find that the challenges in *The Beast Within* make more sense in the context of the game.

Some fans of the first game may balk at the thought of losing the charm of its animated characters, but Jensen is confident that gamers who give it a chance will find the transition isn't as jarring as it might sound. The only real problem, she said, was finding the right per-



During his investigations, Gabriel is led to an exclusive German club that a suspected werewolf frequents.

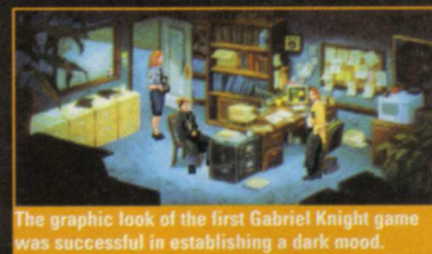


Not all of the scenes in *The Beast Within* are confined to computer-generated sets; several key scenes were filmed on location.

The Original Sin

As one of the few adult horror games that actually came through with its promise of spine-chilling intrigue, *Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers* took adventure fans into a brave new world, investigating the dark side of voodoo, playing New Orleans bookseller-turned-sleuth Gabriel Knight.

Game designer Jane Jensen said the concept and characters arose very much from her own unique tastes: dark conspiracy theories; ominous dealings with the occult; and historical events and locations. For long-time Sierra fans, *Sins* was welcome departure from the comedy-driven *Leisure Suit Larry* or *Space Quest* games, introducing a new world of evil and intrigue.



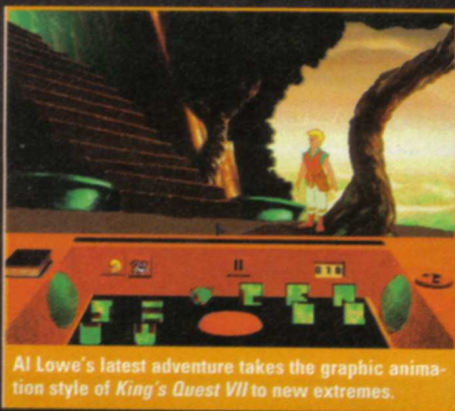
The graphic look of the first Gabriel Knight game was successful in establishing a dark mood.

While the game was able to lure in adventure fans across the world and earn a spot in *PC Gamer's Readers' Top 40* (January 1995), Jensen's hope for a King's Quest-sized success fell a little short of the mark. But as *The Beast Within* nears completion, she's hoping the same attention to character development and puzzles, coupled with the new video technology, will satisfy both the hard-core puzzler and reach a broader audience.

Al Lowe's Graphic Departure

With Sierra's horror titles and new-fangled FMV technology taking center stage at the moment, it's nice to see they aren't entirely backing away from the kinds of games that made the company what it is today.

Leisure Suit Larry creator Al Lowe, who has always had his finger firmly on the funny-bones of the gaming public, isn't taking the horror route with his latest family adventure, *Torin's Passage*. Filled with Al's special brand



Al Lowe's latest adventure takes the graphic animation style of *King's Quest VII* to new extremes.

of humor, *Torin's Passage* is the tale of a young lad whose parents have been whisked away by an evil sorceress.

Torin must explore five interlocked worlds before he can save his parents. Utilizing the same hand-drawn animation techniques as *King's Quest VII*, *Torin's Passage* will also take advantage of multi-plane scrolling, which adds even greater depth to the backgrounds and allows for some wickedly difficult puzzles.

As for the next Leisure Suit Larry game, well ... let's just say Al's still debating whether or not it'll use the live-action technology from *Phantasmagoria*, but he promises another Larry game is certainly in the works.

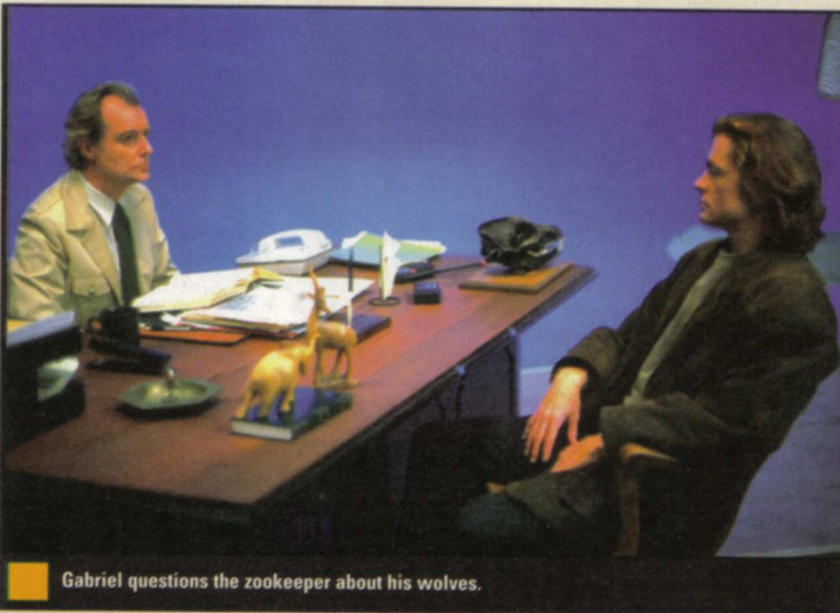


The backdrops in *Torin's Passage* feature such loving detail, you'll wonder if you're looking at a Disney film.

son to play Gabriel.

Needless to say, finding someone that could match Tim Curry's voice-over contribution as Gabriel in *Sins* would've been a nightmare. While the idea of having a well-known actor play Gabriel was considered early in the development process, Jensen says the decision to stick with unknowns couldn't have worked out better. Within a few days after the screen tests began, Jensen had already settled on Dean Erickson to fill the role. Actress Joanne Takahashi was chosen to play Grace.

The technology behind *The Beast Within* is based on the bluescreen technique used to create Sierra's own



Gabriel questions the zookeeper about his wolves.

Phantasmagoria — actors are filmed in front of a blue background, then incorporated into traditional computer-generated backdrops. Although *The Beast Within* didn't have quite as big a budget as *Phantasmagoria*, Jensen says the lessons Sierra learned while shooting that first mammoth undertaking helped them refine their techniques so much that the quality of the new game will actually be substantially better.

The Beast Within will have the same simple point-and-click interface used in *Phantasmagoria*, which should prove to be an asset when searching through Gabriel's detailed surroundings. What you won't see repeated is the "bookmark" save game feature of Roberta

Williams' horror game, or the chapter-based structure that lets players jump in anywhere — even at the end of the game. A playback feature will be included, however, allowing the player to replay important conversations without having to resort to a previous save. And fans who found the playback ability of the first game will be happy to hear that feature will be included so you can review dialog from important exchanges.

That's a wise decision, because *The Beast Within: A Gabriel Knight Mystery* looks like it will deserve to be played from start to finish. With its tightly woven plot filled with thrilling twists and turns, you won't want to miss a minute of the game. In my all-too-brief look at the game, it looked as if Sierra may be at that ever-important crossroad where gamers can get the high-quality production values they want without sacrificing the gameplay they deserve.



Gabriel takes some hair samples into the lab and finds that they don't match any species of wolf.