

GRIM FANDANGO

LucasArts
(415) 472-3400
www.lucasarts.com
Company's ETA: Q3 '98.
CGW's ETA: Q4 '98.

Grim is the perfect word to describe the state of adventure gaming these days: There are lots of bad games, and a few really great games suffering from poor sales. But *grim* is also a word to associate with the genre's best chance for a comeback this year. GRIM FANDANGO, LucasArts' upcoming 3D adventure game, is as original and exciting as any game we've seen this season—regardless of genre.

Designed and conceived by Tim Schafer (the creative force behind DAY OF THE TENTACLE, FULL THROTTLE, and other classic LucasArts adventures), GRIM

FANDANGO is noticeably darker than anything the company has done before, while still retaining the smart humor that has always set LucasArts adventure games apart. This time around, Schafer has combined his interest in Mexican folklore with his love of film noir to tell a bizarre, original story set in the Land of the Dead.

The protagonist is Manny Calavera, a long-dead working-class stiff who's stuck with the task of welcoming newcomers to their new non-existence, and setting them on their five-year journey across the Land of the Dead. Manny wants out, though, and, as the game begins, he commits a desperate act that soon plunges him into the center of a *Double Indemnity*-style plot full of double-crossing schemers, menacing bad guys, and femmes fatale.



The 3D artwork, based on Mexican folklore and also modeled on Tim Burton's stop-motion animated classic movie *The Nightmare Before Christmas*, is a thing of strange beauty. The characters' painted 2D faces over 3D polygonal bodies create a look that is both haunting and cartoony. Gameplay-wise, expect LucasArts' always-great puzzle design and first-

rate script. Note, however, that you'll "drive" the main character yourself, moving through and interacting directly with the environment, rather than just hunting for hot spots.

GRIM FANDANGO exemplifies a bold, challenging, and stylistic new direction for LucasArts. Anyone interested in the future of the adventure game genre should be excited. We sure are.



GABRIEL KNIGHT III: BLOOD OF THE SACRED, BLOOD OF THE DAMNED

Sierra Studios
(425) 649-9800
www.sierrastudios.com
Company ETA: Q3 '98
CGW's ETA: Q4 '98.

Like LucasArts, Sierra is another company hoping to use 3D graphics as a way to jumpstart the adventure-game genre and get gamers interested again. Although Sierra struck gold a couple years back with GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN (which won CGW's 1996 Game of the Year award, among others), it probably represents—in retrospect—the

pinnacle of FMV-based adventure games, both in terms of artistic quality and popularity.

Now Sierra is forsaking video and returning the GABRIEL KNIGHT series to its animated roots, but with a brand-new 3D engine that will allow gamers to switch between first- and third-person points of view. Master storyteller Jane Jensen is once again at the helm, as she sets Gabriel Knight and Grace Nakamura off on another supernatural mystery centered around the kidnapped

newborn son of a dethroned prince in a small European village. Jensen writes the best stories in the business—deep, intelligent, and atmospheric—and GK III looks as though it will not disappoint. In the diminishing world of adventure gaming, GABRIEL KNIGHT III is one of the year's biggest events.

REDGUARD

Bethesda Softworks
(301) 926-8300
www.bethsoft.com
Company ETA: Q4 '99
CGW's ETA: Q4 '99

From the creators of DAGGERFALL comes another game set in

the world of Tamriel. This is no RPG, however (you'll have to wait for MORROWIND for that), but is instead a PRINCE OF PERSIA-style action adventure. (Notice a trend here?)

Set 40 years before DAGGERFALL,

REDGUARD puts you in the role of a mercenary redguard who, while investigating the disappearance of his sister, gets caught up in a web of political intrigue. As with Sierra's MASK OF ETERNITY, REDGUARD is a story-based adventure, but will ask you to deal with a certain amount of action gameplay, such as swordfighting.

Unlike DAGGERFALL, REDGUARD's new 3D engine is gorgeous. And with the deep, rich backstory of Tamriel as established in previous games, REDGUARD stands a very good chance of bringing the Elder Scrolls series to a more mainstream gaming crowd.

