



JET FORCE GEMINI



Effects-filled explosions make battles visual treats.

FROM THE CREATORS of GoldenEye 007 and Diddy Kong Racing comes Jet Force Gemini, another epic N64 adventure that should have gamers lining up at cash registers. Jet Force's captivating blend of action-packed third-person combat, Zelda-esque adventuring, and gorgeous graphics make it one of the top games this fall.

It's a gem

Juno, Vela, and Lupus—brother, sister, and (no joke) cybernetically enhanced dog, respectively—make up the Jet Force Gemini team. The trio acts as a sort of interstellar police, so when the evil Mizar sends his insectoid hordes of Drones to invade the planet of the Tribals (a cutesy teddy bear-like race), it's up to the trio, each working individually, to shut Mizar down.

Jet Force is an absolutely huge, nonlinear game, and it's that "working individually" part that makes it so big. At the beginning, the three split up, and you start out as Juno. As the game progresses, you'll rescue



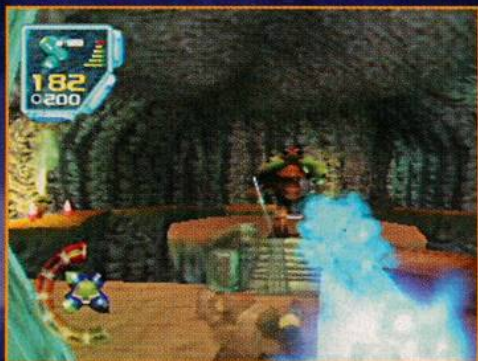
PROTIP: Drones crouching behind shields! Lob grenades.



PROTIP: When facing more than one enemy, keep moving (strafing's a good idea) and take cover when possible.



PROTIP: The machine gun's pretty inaccurate, but its spread pattern makes it useful for mowing down crowds.



PROTIP: To open the red door in Goldwood, behind which is a machine gun and a nasty guardian, you must first collect the red key from Magnus, the ambassador in purple. To find him, position your back toward the red door, then run straight out.



PROTIP: If you're facing the conveyor belt in the SS Anubis hold, locate the proximity mines on the left and shoot the cell-door plate to unlock Vela's cell.



PROTIP: The best approach to death-matches in the SS Anubis arena is to park yourself on high ground and snipe at opponents as they run past below.

Vela, team back up with Lupus, and even locate Floyd the flying droid. Naturally, each character has different abilities: Vela (like all female game characters) can jump pretty high, Lupus (like, um, few dogs) can fly, and so on. Because you can replay any level at any time, going back and exploring levels with different characters unlocks tons of new areas, secrets, and the like. Jetpacks let you fly to hidden high spots, the crowbar pries open trap doors, and even Floyd can unlock new rooms.

But Jet Force isn't just about exploration; it's mainly about third-person combat—and it rocks. All three characters pack serious heat, ranging from the pea-shooter pistol you start out with to the shurikens to the gonzo tri-rockets. You'll need to use all of these to systematically blow Drones to bits. It's very cartoon-like violence, but it is pretty goopy. You can even collect dead Drones' heads as trophies.

force-filled fun

The Drones and other enemies aren't there only for target practice. Backed by some very clever A.I., they fight back with unnerving fierceness, ducking behind cover, circling behind you, and sniping from safe perches. It makes for thrilling, pitched battles, nicely spaced by those calmer periods of Zelda-like exploration. Combined, they make Jet Force riveting and fun to play.

As with GoldenEye 007, Rare didn't neglect multiplayer mayhem, either: Jet Force Gemini lets you and three others face off in a good variety of split-screen deathmatch games, and there is even a two-player cooperative mode that you can unlock eventually.

sniper sights

Throughout the varied gameplay, Jet Force's controls keep you in the game as you jump, crawl, strafe, and run through the levels. An auto-targeting option that aims your fire at the nearest enemy is very intuitive and useful, but some trouble crops up when you're using the first-person sniping. To line up your cursor on the enemy you have to use the analog stick, but its action is so jittery that you'll often get wasted while struggling with your aim.

The game's other big problem is the camera work. As with too many third-person games, the camera will often fail to stay behind you, leaving you stuck looking away from whatever's



PROTIP: Collect the gold key from the tunnels behind the life-force door in the Outset Goldwood area. Return to the beginning of the level. Open the gold door to score some shurikens.



PROTIP: At the start of SS Anubis, jump up the stack of crates to the left of the force-field door that opens into space and...

shooting your ass off and unable to return fire. It can be a frustrating—and deadly—problem, but with practice, you can learn to avoid it.

Beautiful alien worlds

Jet Force's spectacular visuals do a lot to compensate for the camera troubles. The game's sci-fi scenery is packed with detail, bright pastel colors, and eye-catching characters who give the game a unique, captivating style. The characters have a youthful look—Juno looks more than a little like Mega Man—and they're animated beautifully, skidding to a stop or skittering sideways in a strafe move.

Impressive lighting helps bring things to life whether the sun's glinting off the water or Juno's shadow is trailing him around a campfire. Cool details, like flies that buzz around slain Drones, add a touch of humor.

Awesome music, from the island jungle drums to the soaring symphonies of the space settings, accompanies each level, while the weapon sounds, from the clatter of the machine gun to the unnerving chirp of proximity mines, just kick serious ass. The only flaw is the annoying squeak that Vela emits every single time she jumps—it's worse than fingernails on a chalkboard.

Jet to the store

While Jet Force certainly isn't perfect, it does so much so right that its flaws won't bother you. Besides, with such deep, challenging, and exciting action, Jet Force Gemini is a game that every N64 owner should check out. **G**



PROTIP: ...head across the walkway, battle through the depository—then jump into the space ship to unlock the Walkway level.



PROTIP: Whenever enemies are in range, Floyd flashes red to warn you.



PROTIP: Most airborne enemies fly in patterns, like Galaga. Locate a point in the air they always pass through and lock your fire on it.



◀ As soon as an enemy appears in front of you, your character becomes transparent, giving you a good perspective on the battle.

GRAPHICS 5.0

Jet Force Gemini is simply beautiful. The awesome environments overflow with lush colors, hypnotic lighting, and rich details, while the characters and enemies sport a sharp, cartoon-like look. These graphics have style to spare.

SOUND 4.5

Jet Force's excellent music perfectly matches each environment, and the thumpin' weapon effects will rock your speakers. Vela's yelp when she jumps, though, is gratingly squeaky, and you're stuck hearing it all the bleepin' time.



BY AIR HENDRIX

- Published by Nintendo
- \$59.95
- Available October
- Action/adventure
- 4 players
- ESRB: Teen

GRAPHICS SOUND CONTROL FUN FACTOR



◀ Jet Force's gorgeous cinematic showcase the game's alluring environments.



policing the galaxy

Juno



Vela



Juno and Vela, brother and sister, are the stars of Jet Force Gemini. You'll spend a lot of the game playing as these two interstellar cops who must stop evil Mizar's invasion of the Tribals' planet.

Lupus



Lupus, the cybernetically enhanced pooch, is the third member of the Jet Force team. You'll unlock him later in the game.

the tribals



The members of the innocent race you're rescuing in the game, the Tribals, are cuter than a stuffed-animal collection. Kinda like the bananas in Donkey Kong, they're scattered throughout the levels for you to collect.

floyd



Floyd the droid joins you if Juno successfully completes a side quest in the Tawfret level. He floats along with whomever of the three main characters you're using and helps out by unlocking doors, etc.

the drones



Mizar's diabolical forces, the Drones, are your main enemy. They explode into satisfying piles of goo (you can even collect their heads as souvenirs).

CONTROL 4.0

The various characters you control in Jet Force all handle smoothly and comfortably whether they're strafing, crawling, or jumping. First-person sniper targeting is too twitchy, however, and occasionally the camera can't keep up with you—both can be real hassles.

FUN FACTOR 5.0

Jet Force Gemini is another fine example of why Rare is one of gaming's best developers. Spectacular graphics and sounds combine with deep, gripping gameplay to make Jet Force a must-own action/adventure experience.