

**PREVIOUSLY IN N64** Back in N64/35, we Special Investigated Donkey Kong 64 big-style.



△ Take this key to K. Lumsy and unlock his cage. He'll be ever so grateful.

▽ Lanky doing what monkeys do best: climbing up giant mushrooms. Er...

△ Crystal Caverns, and Diddy coming over all John Woo with his twin popguns. So violent for one so young.

These Kremlings-in-barrels yell "Come on!" as they scamper towards you. Cute.



△ Beautiful fish, but what we wouldn't have given for a grenade, and a Jet Force Gemini-style aquatic bloodbath.



△ Yes, it's an ice world. Yes, it's an igloo. Yes, DK64 reuses plenty of old platform ideas.

# DONKEY

**The N64's big Christmas game has arrived. Is it just what we always wanted?**

**INFO BURST**

**DONKEY KONG 64**

FROM: Rare/Nintendo

CART SIZE: 256Mbit

HOW MANY PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTROLLER PAK: X

CARTRIDGE SAVE: X

PASSWORD SAVE: X

EXPANSION PAK: X

RUMBLE PAK: X

GB PAK: X

WHEN'S IT OUT?

USA: December 3rd

GB: December 3rd

JPN: December 3rd

COST: £60 (with expansion pak)

**T**he speculation began within days of the N64's release. The *Donkey Kong Country* series of platformers had been so mammothly successful on the SNES, Rare *must* have been planning a 64-bit update. They'd be fools not to, surely?

But, the good folk at Twycross kept their mouths shut, until, without warning, a single screenshot appeared on Rare's website. There was Diddy Kong, there was a Kremling, there were shiny coins, and there was a minecart. *Donkey Kong 64* was on its way, using the same game engine as the fabulous *Banjo-Kazooie*, and all signs pointed to it being a worthy continuation of all that made the originals great.

Now, exactly one year later, it's here, and it's got a lot to prove. It needs to be sufficiently different to *B-K*. It needs to justify its astonishing £60 asking price (thanks to Nintendo's clueless distributor, THE, refusing to sell a version of the game without the required expansion pak). And, after *Perfect Dark's* disappointing delay made us cry real tears, it needs to give N64 owners a Christmas to remember.

So, the be-all and end-all of platforming, or just *B-K* in ape's clothing? Everything you need to know about *DK64* lies ahead...





**CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT**

If you can find a tile with K. Rool's ugly mug printed on it, stand on it and press Z to be transported to a Battle Arena game, where the aim is to survive an onslaught of Kremlings without toppling off the edge of the floating platform. Survive, and you'll win a crown – collect as many as you can, as they'll prove essential when it comes to getting your paws on DK64's final boss.



# KONG 64

## Monkey Magic

Although there are scores of different items to be found in *Donkey Kong*, the main quest – find the eight keys that will free giant croc K. Lumsy from his cage – revolves around collecting up that bendy fruit that monkeys love.

### COLOURED BANANAS

There are five types of normal banana scattered around DK64's eight levels, each colour-coded according to which of the five Kongs can collect it. The aim is to gather enough bananas on a level to match the number on the boss door – if you then beat the boss, you'll grab a key for K. Lumsy's cage.



▷ That balloon can be punctured for a banana bonanza. Fruity!

◁ Up to ten bananas are your reward for grabbing bunches.

### GOLDEN BANANAS

With every key you find, K. Lumsy will do a little dance and open up a new level entrance on the DK Isles hub – but a certain Mr B. Locker won't let you in until you've earned the required number of Golden Bananas.

The glittering fruit are earned by solving puzzles and winning mini-games – just like the jigsaw bits in *Banjo-Kazooie*.



▷ Now, who couldn't resist those big, sad eyes? Martin, probably.

▷ Another Golden Banana is just a short jump away.

GO! GO!



**BAD RAP**

What's three minutes long and embarrassing to watch? It's not Andrea's ill-advised Russian-style dance routine – although, believe us, that's almost unbearable. We're talking about The DK Rap, DK64's intro sequence, which contains such inspired lyrics as 'He can handstand/when he needs to/and stretch his arms out/just for you'. On this evidence, wicka-wicka-Wil Smith hasn't got much to worry about.



**BANANA BUNDLE**

The launch of DK64 has given Nintendo the opportunity to trot out a lovely new N64 bundle, featuring a copy of the game (on a suitably banana-coloured cart), an expansion pak, and the controller and the console itself in attractive, transparent green clothing. It costs £110, which makes for a not unreasonable £30 discount on the usual separate selling price. A good move on THE's part, then – unlike their stubborn refusal to sell DK64 without the expansion pak. Fools.



# Monkey Island

Spidering away from DK Isles – DK64's central hub – are the game's eight main worlds. They're similar to the levels in Mario or Banjo, with loads of different things to see, do and discover as you unlock doors, activate switches and uncover previously hidden areas within. Here's a look at the game's first three levels, and hints on how to bring about the Kong family reunion.

## JUNGLE JAPES

Donkey Kong 64's first world is a jungle clearing, filled with palm trees, wandering beavers and buzzing bees. Time to get monkeying, then.

**1** Only Donkey Kong is playable from the start, but he's free to explore the whole level for bananas. Check the tops of trees for hidden fruit.



**2** Climb up the green vine to find Funky Kong's house – he'll sell you a Coconut Cannon for three coins (find them just before the level entrance). Now shoot balloons for extra bananas.



**3** While you're here, press Z on the K. Royal tile to play the Battle Arena. Simply use your Running Attack (analogue and B) to knock out the Beavers and earn a Crown.



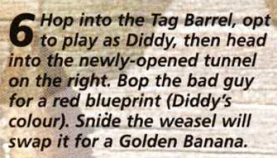
**4** Grab onto the vines and leap over to the other side of the lake, then hop into the barrel to find your very first Golden Banana. Mmm... shiny.



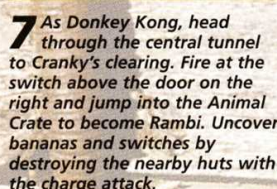
**5** Free Diddy by shooting the three Coconut switches – you'll need to take out the middle one from Funky's platform. Collect the Golden Banana to open the doors underneath the switches.



**6** Hop into the Tag Barrel, opt to play as Diddy, then head into the newly-opened tunnel on the right. Bop the bad guy for a red blueprint (Diddy's colour). Snide the weasel will swap it for a Golden Banana.



**7** As Donkey Kong, head through the central tunnel to Cranky's clearing. Fire at the switch above the door on the right and jump into the Animal Crate to become Rambi. Uncover bananas and switches by destroying the nearby huts with the charge attack.



**8** Grab the coins that you come across near the Crater and buy the Baboon Blast from Cranky. Take the opportunity to switch to Diddy and buy the Chimp Charge, too.



**9** As Diddy, buy the Peanut Poppuns from Funky, then shoot the switch on the hill near Diddy's ex-prison. Quickly scamper up the ramp that appears and enter the door halfway up.



**10** Use the Chimp Charge to bash open the small door, then headbutt the 'Lo' switch. Activate the floor switch with the Simian Slam, then climb the conveyor belts for a cart ride.



**11** Back in the main area, use Donkey's Baboon Blast on the Donkey Pad (climb up the tree near the big 'X' and swing across), and complete the Barrel game for a Golden Banana.



**12** Now switch back to Diddy and head out of the level. In the caves, there are two peanut switches, which will open a door that leads to some coins, a balloon and a Golden Banana.



# ANGRY AZTEC

Bearing more than a slight resemblance to *Banjo-Kazooie's* desert level, this world features quicksand, spitting camels, and more palm trees.



### SPACE ODDITY

When you first meet Cranky, he'll promise you 'something special' in return for 15 Banana Medals. Collecting 75 bananas will earn you a single medal, so it'll be some time before you muster the full 15, but when you do, Cranky will give you the chance to play a full version of Rare's Sinclair Spectrum classic, *Jetpac*. It's a superb touch, and it means that our Missing In Action feature in *N64/33* – where we confidently predicted the return of the game's star, Jetman – was spot on. Hurrah! (You'll find some tips for *Jetpac* on page 31, by the way.)



**1** Visit Candy's shop as both Donkey and Diddy and shell out for her musical instruments – these can be used to activate Music Pads, and they also act as smart bombs.

**3** Head through and turn right at the junction to find Cranky. You'll need to buy the Strong Kong and Rocketbarrel Boost from him (if you're looking for coins, there are some further along the tunnel).



**4** Change to Donkey, head through to the next area and turn right. You'll come across a Donkey Pad – play the Barrel game to open the camel's cage.



**6** Tiny's also in this level. Go back to Candy's area and shoot the switch on the left wall of the giant building. Enter, then Slam the switch on the right to create a set of platforms above you.



**7** Jump up the platforms (you'll need to use your high jump), then fire peanuts at the switch on the opposite wall and walk along the new platform. Play the guitar on the Pad to melt the ice.



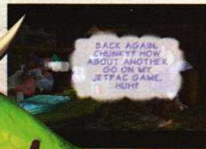
**2** As Diddy, climb the tree on the central island and swing across to the top of the camel's cage. Stand on the Music Pad and strum your guitar to open the giant locked door.



**5** Shoot the switch that appears above the camel-faced door, and enter. Play your drums in the room to the south-west to fill the pool, then swim through and shoot the switch to grab Lanky.



**8** Dive into the water, turn right at the 'crossroads', and enter Tiny's room. You'll need to slam the switch by the cage, then headbutt K-O-N-G in order to rescue the girl.



# FRANTIC FACTORY

Set inside a huge, mechanical toy factory, complete with clockwork Kremlings and walking dice, there's something strangely eerie about this third world.

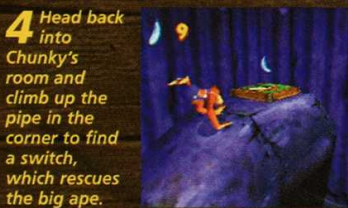
**1** Bash the blue switch directly ahead of you as you enter to open up the tunnel in the corridor to the west.



**2** Wander down there and head through the doors until you arrive in the Production Room, where Chunky's cage is hanging.



**3** Use the Tag Barrel to switch to Lanky, then head up the crates to find Cranky, and buy the Orangstand from him.



**4** Head back into Chunky's room and climb up the pipe in the corner to find a switch, which rescues the big ape.

**5** You can also play the original Donkey Kong in this world. First, activate the Donkey Pad in the middle of the room.



**6** A lever will appear next to the DK Arcade Cabinet. To use it, you'll need to see Cranky to buy the Gorilla Grab from him.



GORILLA GRAB (SIMULI STRANUS)

**7** The Arcade Cabinet is through the door next to the Toff 'n' Scoff portal, up the pole and to the left. Enjoy! (And see a few pages on for tips.)



GO! GO!



**AIRY FAIRIES**

There's a big fairy hidden somewhere on DK Isles (needless hint: look for the island in the shape of a fairy's face), and she's blubbing about her lost friends, who are scattered around DK64's eight levels. With the help of the camera she hands over, you can recapture the giggling blue imps by photographing them. There are 20 Banana Fairies in all, and five superb bonuses available on the way to snapping them all. Which we're not going to spoil for you.



# Simian skills

Most apes are restricted to swinging from trees, shouting 'ooh! ooh! ooh!' and picking fleas from their infested buddies. Not the five-strong Kong family, though: they've got over 100 moves between them, all of which come into their own for certain puzzles.

## MINI MONKEY

By leaping into a barrel, Tiny can live up to her name by shrinking to a twentieth of her usual size. There's usually a suitably small door nearby for the shrunken simian to scamper into.



## GORILLA GONE

Chunky can render himself invisible by standing on a Chunky Pad. It's most useful in the big wooden hut in the Crystal Caverns, where the ape needs to sneak up to a banana without being caught by the searchlights.



## STRONG KONG

Invincibility by any other name. This move doesn't crop up too much, but it's handy when Donkey Kong needs to scamper across molten lava or avoid attack from the irritating viking boys.



## ORANG-STAND

Clown-ape hybrid Lanky can hit a Lanky pad, flip onto his hands, and – taking a leaf from Kazooie's book – scamper up slopes that the other Kongs can't negotiate. It's the only way to reach some of the level's warp pads.



## ROCKET BARREL BOOST

If Diddy leaps into a barrel with his face on, he'll be equipped with a flaming pair of rocket boosters. There are plenty of high switches, but you'll inevitably forget them as you enjoy soaring around the sky.



# LIGHTS ALIVE

Don't expect *Turok 2*-style hi-res from *Donkey Kong 64* – the expansion pak (which comes packaged with the game and explains the £60 price tag) has been used to create the impressive real-time, multi-coloured lighting that litters the game. While this is mostly used for decoration's sake – the circular shadows that dance around the Kongs, the sparkly lights that illuminate the Toff 'n' Scoff room after the torches are blown out, the deep, dark underwater sections with Glimmer the fish lighting the way – it's also put to brilliant use in some of the game's puzzles. The best is a short section where Diddy negotiates a suspended maze, with only a torch-carrying parrot for company.



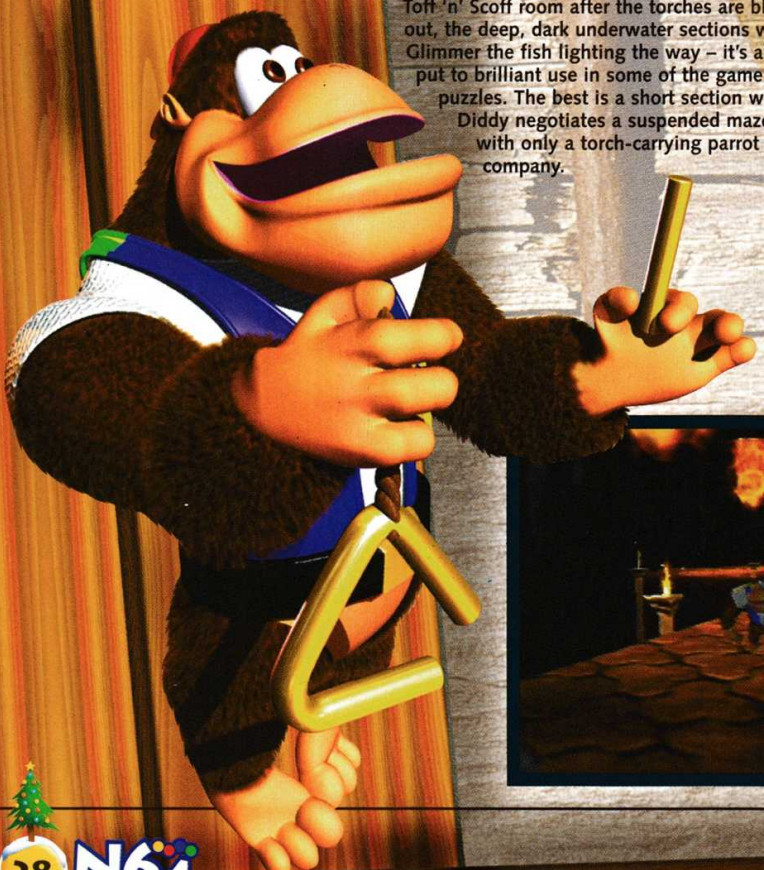
◀ The light that reflects off the huge ice walls can almost blind you – handy for any club-wielding viking kids nearby.



△ The Sun itself can be flicked on and off at will in Fungi Forest, which in turn affects the shadow cast by Diddy.

◀ Chunky tiptoes along a path lit only by leaping fireballs. Superb.

▷ Glimmer can get lost occasionally, leaving your monkey in spine-chilling darkness.



# MONKEY CART 64

**1** Don't push forward on the analogue unless you really need to – if you go too fast you'll miss important switches and door-opening bells.



**2** The Kremlings will bash you with a regular rhythm, so time your jumps to leap over their swinging clubs.



**3** It's best to keep tapping the jump button, as floating coins will often pass by too quickly for you to reach to.

**4** Look out for the levers that control the gates. You can often gain access to a more coin-heavy route by leaning over to pull one.



Donkey Kong's most famous feature – the minicart ride – makes a glorious return in *DK64*. It's where Rare are at their most extravagant, with impressive lighting, blink-and-you'll-miss-it events, and frightening speed combined to create – yes – a real rollercoaster ride.



**5** The giant rocks on Chunky's minicart ride are avoidable – just press A to leap over safely. Wonderful.



## DEAD USEFUL

Cranky's wife, Wrinkly Kong, has sadly passed away since the Kong family's last adventure, but she's still on hand to supply helpful tips. Wander in front of a Wrinkly Door, and her ghostly form will appear to tell you how to solve one of the level's puzzles. It's of great help to novice gamers, while experienced platform fans can ignore the doors and avoid having *DK64*'s puzzles spoiled. Neato.



## GIBBON GUNS

We weren't convinced that weapons and platform games could mix, but the Kongs' arsenal works surprisingly well. The orange grenades are a pleasure to use, homing in on bad guys to avoid tiresome aiming problems, and the guns are superb. It's hugely satisfying to knock beavers flying with a well-placed coconut shell (complete with satisfying 'thwock!' noise), and it's possible to earn a cheat that gives you infinite ammo for maximum bullet-based fun. Additionally, Funky will sell you a sniper add-on for your weapons, where the sights take on an authentically wild swinging motion as you zoom further in to faraway switches. Lovely.



▲ Chuck a grenade and watch the robot kremling's brilliantly over-the-top death routine.



▲ Diddy's arrow-like feathers actually wobble as they hit stone.

◀ An example of why it's best to take this guy out from a distance.



## Animal antics

The *DK64* team have borrowed the Change Tile system from *Banjo-Kazooie*, giving the Kongs the ability to jump into crates and change into other animals. Such as...

### RAMBI

You can see this giant rhino doing what he does best – headbutting beavers and knocking down huts – in the walkthrough a few pages back.



There are also a number of doors that can only be knocked down by Rambi's rock-like nut, opening up new switches and puzzles for Tiny and Lanky. Disappointingly, though, he's forbidden from entering certain areas – a giant 'No Entry' sign will appear on screen and you'll automatically morph back to Donkey Kong's beefy form.



### ENGARDE

The giant swordfish from previous *Donkey Kong* adventures makes his return in *DK64*'s Gloomy Galleon level. He's a pleasure to control, cutting through the water like a missile, and there's a cute challenge where Engarde needs to jump through rings to open up new areas for the Kongs. Brilliantly, both Engarde and Rambi have their own bonus games, where you need to knock down beavers or swim through rings against the clock. To gain access to these games, you need to... nah, that'd be ruining the surprise.





**CRANKY'S REVENGE**

Rare's perverse sense of humour has become increasingly apparent in recent games (UFG's 'Specialist Magazine' springs to mind), and if you're looking for more, be sure to spend some time with DK64's absolutely superb instruction manual. With Cranky 'hosting' it, Rare have been given free reign to poke fun at their very own game, including a brilliant bit where the old ape introduces the section explaining Candy's Musical Instruments with, "Hey! This is robbed from *Zelda!*" Top-notch.



# Bonus!

If you want to get your mitts on all those lovely shiny bananas, you'll need to perfect your Bonus Game skills. Here's a selection of the best mini games, and how to crack them.

## MAD MAZE MAUL

Simple: kill all the bad guys and find the chequered finish line. The time limit seems far too tight, until you realise that you're allowed to use your Peanut Poppuns. You've got infinite bullets, so don't bother to aim – just keep popping.



◀ *This, and the 'Sneaky Snoop' game, are very Metal Gear-esque.*

## BEAVER BOTHER

Almost *too* difficult, with the aim being to snap at the beavers and herd them into the central hole. We found it best to tap A and B, jumping and 'barking' like crazy, and pray that the beavers didn't steer themselves away from the pit. A nightmare.



◀ *You see? They just don't want to go in. This mini-game makes us cry.*

## MINECART MAYHEM

This one is brain-scramblingly difficult. Kong's in a minecart, and needs to switch routes to avoid colliding with explosive barrels. Rush into the centre, slow down to lure the barrels into your lane, then quickly rush back to the outside again.



◀ *If you're really stuck, pause the game to get your bearings.*

## FAIRY ROUTE

Here, hungry crocs need to be fed with melons to avoid them gobbling passing fairies. Confusing and not much fun, but you'll need your wits about you to complete it. Slowly work your way from left-to-right and top-to-bottom, then repeat.



◀ *There'd be less trouble if they looked both ways before crossing.*

## BIG BUG BASH

Does exactly what it says on the tin. It's not as easy as it looks. Forget about tapping only when the fly's underneath the swat – instead, pump A continuously, so that the insect is automatically squashed when you manoeuvre the crusher over it.



◀ *Leave the buzzing menace too long and he'll start giggling at you.*

## DONKEY'S WALRUS RACE

Rescue the seal in Gloomy Galleon and you'll be treated to a Wave Race-style race against him. You're allowed to miss the buoys a maximum of five times, so nip around the outside if it'll save you time, and keep jumping for those coins.



◀ *Win the race and you'll earn the young pup's 'seal' of approval. Ha!*

## CHUNKY'S GHOST RIDE

You'll come across this variation on the minecart ride in the Haunted House level. It's easy when you know how – simply move as slowly as possible to grab all the coins. When the ghostly faces come screaming towards you, switch lanes with left and right to avoid them.



◀ *In typical Ghost House tradition, doors open at the very last minute.*

## LANKY'S BEETLE RACE

Found in the Crystal Caves level, this isn't easy at all. Avoid going all-out for speed – hold back a little so you don't crash into the beetle at junctions. On the last stretch, she loses a lot of speed, so you've got plenty of time to catch up at the end.

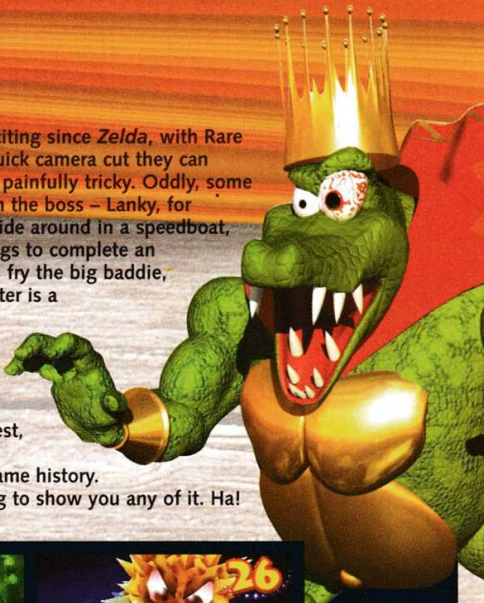


◀ *Just like those slidy races in Mario 64. Still, real pretty, ain't it?*



# BOSSSES

The boss encounters in *DK64* are the most exciting since *Zelda*, with Rare chucking in every fancy graphical effect and quick camera cut they can muster to make the battles fast, involving and painfully tricky. Oddly, some of the battles don't ask you to physically touch the boss – Lanky, for example, needs to ride around in a speedboat, steering through rings to complete an electrical circuit and fry the big baddie, while Tiny's encounter is a tricky, platform-jumping challenge. The final battle with King K. Rool, meanwhile, is just about the longest, satisfying and most inventive in videogame history. And we're not going to show you any of it. Ha!



### PLOT POINTS

The story is the usual Big-Baddie-Crashes-Good-Guys nonsense ('This one's worse than all the previous efforts put together!' exclaims Cranky in the manual), but it marks the return of most of the familiar characters from *DK* legend. It also allows for some superb cut-scenes, including a laugh-out-loud moment where K. Rool reverses his moveable island with a bus-style warning beep. The story also paves the way for a brilliant, *Zelda*-style concluding level.



△ After Diddy's finished with him, this moth turns to Chunky.



▷ This chuckling rocket-armed Armadillo also makes two appearances.



△ A few hundred kilowatts of electricity sorts this boss out.



▷ The aim is to chuck barrels at Mr Armadillo, but he has a habit of rolling over them. Grr.



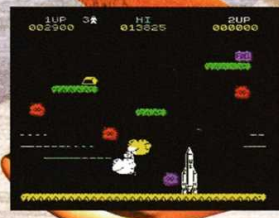
## OLD GAMES HERE

We never thought we'd be tipping 20-year-old games in the pages of *N64*. Still, you need to complete both *Jetpac* and *Donkey Kong Arcade* to finish *DK64*, and they're both supremely difficult, so here are a few tips.



### JETPAC

You need to earn 5000 points to earn the Rareware Coin and, boy, is it tricky. Firstly, hold down the fire button at all times and fly around in short bursts to avoid smashing into the skittering aliens. You don't need to touch the spaceship to drop a part or fuel pod, so stick around at the top of the screen if you can – in fact, you can earn the full quota of points without leaving the first screen, simply by collecting the jewels and shooting aliens. Once you've earned 5000, don't quit – the Rareware coin will fall from the sky for you to collect.



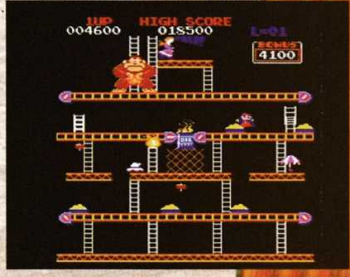
△ Aliens always enter from the opposite side of the screen, so there's no need to turn around.

### DONKEY KONG

To grab the N64 Coin, you'll need to complete *Donkey Kong* twice. The first run is relatively easy – learn to time jumps over barrels, and don't pick up the mallets, as they'll just slow you down. The second run is horrible. Climb to the top of the first screen as quickly as possible, or you'll give DK time to go barrel crazy. At the top of the third screen, you'll need to inch forward so the bouncing pipe is just missing you, then scamper up the ladder at the exact moment it passes your head. The fourth screen isn't too tricky (jump over holes to lose the fireballs), and the coin is yours once you finish it.



△ Barrels are easily leaped over – but keep your eye out for the ones that tumble down ladders.



GO! GO!



**WARP PADS**

One of *Donkey Kong 64*'s greatest innovations is the Warp Pad, the natural evolution of *Banjo-Kazooie*'s Warp Cauldrons. There are usually at least ten in each level, stamped with numbers from one to five, and they allow you to zip between points on the map at ease, avoiding the loong stretches of level inbetween. The transportation animation is great, too, with your ape popping in and out of a giant banana. We love 'em.



▷ Chunky performs his Super Duper Simian Slam, which pleases the bad guy on the left. Or maybe he's just yawning.



◁ One hit and Kremlings fall to the floor. Wimps. You'll learn to absolutely despise these viking chaps.



▷ Pearls are a girl's best friend, but this mermaid has lost hers.



See how Donkey's body is lit by the rings? Sweet.



Last month, you may remember, was christened 'middling platform game month' by Martin. With *Rayman 2*, *40 Winks* and *Earthworm Jim* all showing up to totally underwhelm us, we were left feeling pretty depressed about the general state of the genre. The N64 seemed doomed to play host to embarrassing rubbish like *Gex* for the rest of its days and destined never to see the likes of *Mario 64* or *Banjo-Kazooie* again.

Then, like the sparkling ray of sunlight that signifies the end of the storm, *this* arrived. *Donkey Kong 64* is everything a platformer should be: vast, complex, beautiful to look at, and impossibly involving. While lesser games cower in the corner with their half-hearted controls and linear play, *DK64* presents intricate puzzles, sprawling levels and magnificent sights that perfectly reflect how much real effort has gone into its making.

This is Rare's second successful stab at a platformer of Miyamoto quality; this time, we hope GT, Ubi Soft, VIS, Infogrames and Crystal Dynamics are paying attention.

*DK64* is the first platformer for months to ditch long, linear paths in favour of huge, open-plan 3D worlds. The very first level, *Jungle Japes*, is a beautiful start to the game – a gigantic, multi-levelled jungle clearing filled with things for Donkey Kong to run around, jump onto, climb up and fire at. It's followed by a wonderfully picturesque woodland area complete with working water-mill, a watery wonderland towered over by an

active lighthouse, and a menacing, multi-roomed castle that takes a good ten minutes to climb to the top of. Throughout *DK64*, Rare are positively begging you to explore and experiment, all the while teasing you with locked doors, sealed-off bananas and unreachable objects.

Once those doors and objects open up, the sheer scale of *DK64* becomes apparent, and it's truly breathtaking. As you begin, your task seems simple: grab bananas and find the keys that will unlock K. Lumsy's cage. Fifteen minutes later, after collecting a few new moves and meeting characters like Cranky and Funky, your quest has ballooned into a search for coins, blueprints, banana medals, crowns,

crying out for Diddy's jetpacking skills. You'll be itching to explore them all, and tedious character-swapping is kept to a minimum – the uniform distribution of puzzles around each world means there's plenty to do with one character before needing to move on to the next.

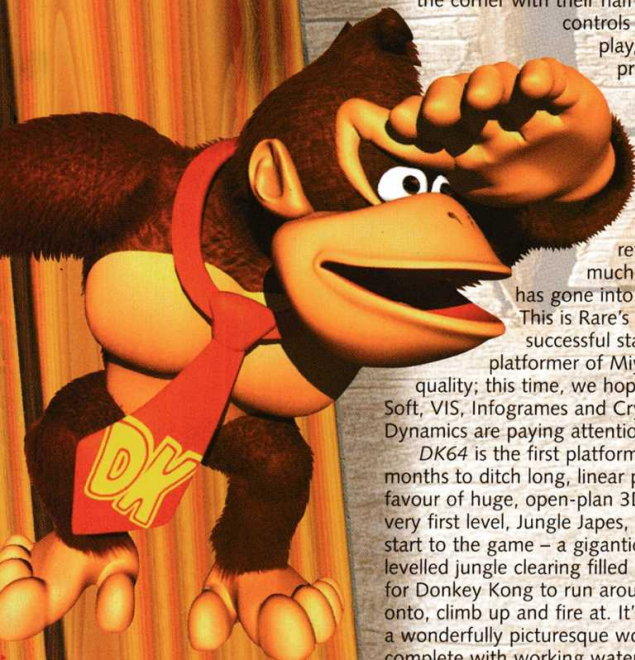
**VISUALS** ...steam rises from melted ice, clouds of sand obstruct Kong's desert vision, and walls reflect the shimmering light of the water's surface.

barrels and much more. And this is all before you've even caught a glimpse of the other four Kongs – once Diddy, Lanky, Tiny and Chunky are under your control, four fresh sets of items, switches and areas become accessible. *Donkey Kong 64* is nothing short of colossal.

Because the five members of the DK family are individuals (unlike *Banjo-Kazooie*'s glued-together duo), Rare have been able to stuff every level with things to do. In just one of *Frantic Factory*'s many rooms, you'll notice a mini game barrel just high enough for Lanky, a Tiny-sized miniature tunnel entrance, a sealed-off room that Chunky could easily punch his way into, and a mid-air platform that's

Sometimes – very occasionally – there's almost too much to *DK64*. With so much to do, and so many enticing new areas opening up with every switch pressed and banana collected, it can become overwhelming. But, mostly, *DK64*'s size is thrilling. Time and again, you'll set off to *Pineapple Gun* a switch or negotiate a platform, only to be distracted by a mini game barrel you pass on the way, or an underwater door that you hadn't noticed before – at which point, you'll become irretrievably involved as another, entirely new set of puzzles unravels before your eyes.

It's all the more impressive, then, that *DK64* manages to keep things sufficiently



# Go ape



While *DK64*'s multiplayer isn't ever likely to topple *GoldenEye* or *Mario Kart* as the office favourite, it definitely falls into the sparsely-populated 'above average' category of four-player games. You'll need to invest some time in the main game to avoid the limited view and sticky camera hindering play in the Monkey Smash game (where the aim is to knock seven bells out of your monkey cohorts), but we much prefer the Battle Arena game, where it's everyone for themselves on a small floating platform. The 'Capture' variation in particular, with all four players battling to grab a single DK coin, is a winner.



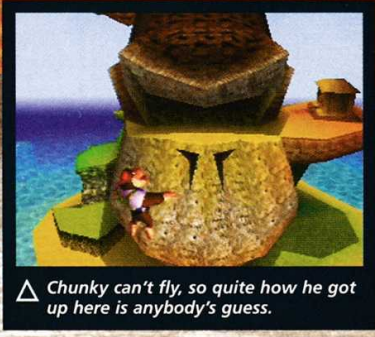
△ *Tiny's now not so tiny, having grabbed a power-up.*

◁ *The last player with the coin wins. 'Frantic' is the word.*



Another coin-grabbing match, and Diddy's winning.

▽ *Player one's sniping won't save them from the grape.*



△ *Chunky can't fly, so quite how he got up here is anybody's guess.*

varied. Two types of challenges lead to the fabled Golden Bananas: traditional tests of agility (negotiate platforms, fly through rings, stomp on switches), and short, self-contained mini games. The platforming is mostly stuff we've seen before in *Mario* and *Banjo-Kazooie*, but pulled off with typical Rare flair – why scale a mountain when you could be trekking in and out of a mountain-sized toadstool? – and most of the mini games are tremendous fun. It's all pitched at just the right difficulty level, too: no puzzle will stop you in your tracks, but there's a pleasant 'aah, I see!' factor to every gold-plated banana reached.

The only heart-sinking moment comes as you're introduced to each new level, because *Donkey Kong's* worlds – and, occasionally, the puzzles within – are disappointingly similar in theme to *Banjo-Kazooie's*. Creepy Castle resembles Mad Monster Mansion, *Angry Aztec* is Gobi's Valley, and Fungi Forest is practically identical to Click Clock Wood, right down to a night/day system that's the replica of *B-K's* four seasons.

*Donkey Kong's* environments, though, are more polished than *B-K's*, leaving you that much more immersed. The medium resolution moves quickly and fits the cartoony style perfectly, and while it's disappointing to see the same 'fading in' of scenery and objects that typified *B-K*, the astonishing visuals show just what the expansion pak is capable of when not pumping out hi-res frippery. We're used to seeing ice blocks glitter, bulbs swing and fireballs bounce, but not realistically lighting up characters and casting multiple shadows as they do so. Meanwhile, steam rises from melted ice, clouds of sand obstruct Kong's desert vision, and walls

are immediately intuitive, and – praise be – there's no 'airometer', giving you infinite time to probe the murky depths. Above ground, it's equally impressive – even the weather changes as you wander between areas, with the sky darkening, raindrops falling, and thunder ominously rolling. It's so convincing, you'll actually begin to feel cold.

Typically, there are a few problems with the camera. It's improved since the stubborn wall-basher we saw at E3, but it's still 'sticky', and occasionally flicks

There's something approaching 30 hours of 'first time' gameplay within *DK64* – about the same as *Banjo-Kazooie*. But the moment you send the final boss packing, you'll be itching to get back into the game and collect every last banana, fairy and coin. *Donkey Kong* won't disappoint when you do – for every object that you've yet to collect, there'll be another glorious set-piece or inventive puzzle waiting to show itself off. And, even when you're done with the one-player, there's the multitude of bonus games (including full versions of two classic retro titles) and the surprise four-player mode to get stuck into.

But the big question is: can *DK64* really be worth a full £60? Granted, if you've already got an expansion pak, the extra one in the package is a supreme waste of money. But *DK64* is a game that's often as vast, well-designed and impossible to resist as *Zelda* or *Mario*, and that's got to be worth cobbling together six tenners for. After a run of lacklustre platformers, this is the perfect Christmas present for the N64, and we've got the geniuses at Rare to thank for it. God bless 'em, every one.

MARK GREEN

**LIFESPAN** ● **The moment you send the final boss packing you'll be itching to get back into the game and collect every last banana, fairy and coin.**

reflect the shimmering light of the water's properly bobbing surface.

In fact, the sections where your monkey dives below the undulating waves perfectly demonstrate the fine attention to detail – to both visuals and gameplay – that makes *DK64* a *Banjo* beater. The music is muffled to perfectly recreate that echoey, submerged sound, the controls

around to look at your face for no discernible reason. In the end, we came to think of it like an elderly relative – slow and doddering, liable to have trouble keeping up, but something you'll learn to live with. Thanks to the intuitive C-button controls, you'll soon find yourself subconsciously taking manual control of the camera when it has one of its turns.

## pluses and minuses



- Absolutely vast.
- Level design to rival Shiggy's.
- Immediately intuitive controls.
- Beautiful real-time lighting.



- Camera troubles.
- When it's over, you'll be left wanting more.

## If you like this...

### Banjo-Kazooie

Nintendo/Rare

N64/18, 92%

Bear and bird in similarly superb Rare platformer.



## 9 VISUALS

Crisp, clear and colourful, with forgivable slowdown and 'object fogging'.

## 9 SOUNDS

The music changes to suit the environment, à la *Banjo*.

## 9 MASTERY

Rare's knowledge of the N64 – and sheer talent – has never been more apparent.

## 9 LIFESPAN

40+ hours of play, at least four bonus games, and a multiplayer. Amazing.

## VERDICT

Incredibly, Rare have bettered *Banjo*. Weeks of play wrapped up in one impressive package.



93%