



REVIEWS GM rates all the latest and hottest games



Could Bullfrog's *Dungeon Keeper* signal the end of the RPG as we know it..?

DUNGEON KEEPER

AVAILABLE ON

PC

TESTED

PlayStation

32X

VCD

SN

The most ambitious PC since *Pillars of Eternity*. It's also one of the most detailed games of all time, with a unique, complex, and utterly brilliant story.

Three years. Three bleedin' years. That's how long it took 'em to finish this game. If they'd have done an armed robbery they'd have been out by now. And a jail sentence would have been a lot easier, and produced less blood, sweat and tears than this long-term labour of love for the Bullfrog team.

To call *Dungeon Keeper* the definitive RPG is like calling Man Utd a mildly successful Sunday League football team or the Spice Girls a one-hit wonder. It's not just the definitive RPG. It's the bloody-aces-things-ever-definitive-turbonuttergit-what-an amazing-game RPG. I think that sums it up.

Dungeon Keeper is so packed full of features that I could spend the whole mag talking about them. There are literally thousands of different ideas and gimmicks to keep the game fresh. The overall idea is a breath of fresh air in the stale and overcrowded RPG genre. You don't play the god-like hero. You are the bad guy, the bloke who runs the dungeon. The one that heroes are normally sent out to kill. And let me tell you now, playing the bad guy is a hell of a lot more fun than being a whiter-than-white, goody-two-shoes hero.

Everything about the game is designed to turn you into some kind of warped megalomaniacal dictator. The way you can dictate exactly which rooms go where and how big they are makes you feel like you're in total control of your dungeon. When your dungeon is eventually invaded (and it will be) you feel almost offended (how dare someone find a weak spot!) and go out of your way to make your opponent as uncomfortable as possible.

The variety of creatures also makes you feel in control. You take almost a fatherly attitude towards the



Fight or watch?

Just in case you get yourself into fight (maybe you did something daft like start one for a laugh) you have three options.



Sit back and watch — an icon will appear telling you that a fight has started, your team is on the left so sit back and see who wins, without even going to the scrap.



Ring-side seat — when the scrap is announced, click the 'zoom to' icon and watch the viscera hit the fan. If your team is losing, drop some more troops in behind. Oh the joys of being a god.



Get your hands dirty — hold down Shift and click on one of your fighters. You'll enter a Doom-style view and can control the actions of your chosen fighter.



The bigger your workshop, the more traps and doors that will be produced. Vital for combat.



Drop troops into the training room to make them a lot tougher.

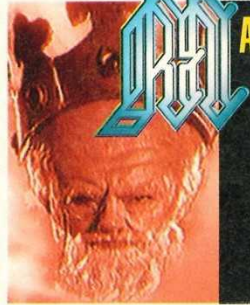
You'll need to constantly expand your treasure room, especially if you find a gem wall that gives you infinite cash. Dead handy that.



MASTER TIP

AMBUSH

It's the best way to win fights. Set up a few lesser creatures to attract the attention of enemy monsters. As the monsters attack your crew, drop in some of your really powerful mates behind the enemy mutts. The enemy will have to split up, making them weaker and easier to kill.



Fight dirty 1

Guard rage – at the junction where your dungeon merges with others, sink a corridor into the walls and build up guard towers. Stick a creature in there that has projectiles, like a warlock. Then sit back and watch as they hit any attackers, causing complete chaos. Protect them with a line of gas traps.



Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to slaughter the enemy we go. Ha ha.



fighting creatures – training them, feeding them and looking after them in battle, while the poor old Imps take the brunt of your temper – being slapped around when they don't do what you want first time. All of these creatures almost seem to have personalities of their own as well. They'll only take so much grief from you before they go into a sulk and start to work against you. And those Imps again, they never stop. Even when they have carried out your orders they always find work to do to try and please you, like decorating your dungeon. Bless 'em.

After you've designed your dungeon and staffed it, the next job is to get rid of anyone who stands in your way – be it a computer opponent or a human one over the network. Send out your scouts, locate them, destroy them and take over their dungeon. Of course, you don't have to kill them all. You could always capture them,



imprison them and then torture them. Always assuming that you can get your own Kinky Mistresses out of the torture chamber (they enjoy it in there apparently).

Graphically, *Dungeon Keeper* is a stunner with a wide variety of views and resolution modes to get the best out of your machine. You can even pick a creature and zoom in, viewing the game through its own eyes in a *Doom*-like scenario. Each creature has a different kind of sight as well (spiders have eight eyes so see things differently from Demon Spawn or Kinky Mistresses for example).

The gameplay can't be faulted either. It's a perfect mixture of *Populous*, *Sim City 2000* and *Theme Park* with filthy great knobs on. You can pretty much get as involved as you want in the game, setting up computer assistants to sort out the finer details, or plumping for all the dirty work yourself. Every level has something new and different to offer so longevity isn't a problem. It's definitely the most addictive game I have played for a VERY long time and come December, people will still be calling this one of the greatest PC releases of the year, if not ever. 'Nuff said.

Les Ellis



A level one enemy monster walks into your trap and hits a level five creature of yours. The result? A slimy mess on the walls and a major headache for your opponent.



This is the dungeon through the eyes of one of your creatures.

You can even fight through this viewpoint by using the *Doom* Keys.



The hatchery is a great place to go if you want to see a lot of bloodshed as your monsters attack the chickens to try and find some dinner.

Fight dirty 2

Trap 'em and gas 'em – Build a door in a corridor and lock it. Build a line of gas traps leading up to it. Entice the enemy in and watch as they batter the door while suffering the effects of the gas. If they do get through it they'll be so weak that if one of your creatures so much as farted it'd kill them.

Be careful not to mix creatures that don't get on in the kitchen room. Spiders and flies will always fight each other.



The Warlocks love working in your library. They make new spells.



You want atmosphere? Walk through your dungeon in this viewpoint.



DUNGEON KEEPER VERSION REVIEWED PC NO. OF PLAYERS 1 to 8 FROM Bullfrog/EA PRICE £35 AVAILABLE July	GRAPHICS Incredible in hi-res but even at the lower end they look crisp. Let your eyes have a feast. 94	SOUNDS Top speech, screaming and groaning. Listen out for the enemy banging at your walls to get in. 93	GAMEPLAY Totally addictive. Perfect learning curve. You'll never run out of new things to do or find. 95	LIFESPAN It's huge. Tons of levels and you'll never find all the secrets. This'll last you for months. 94	OVERALL 94
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JUDGEMENT Bullfrog's finest hour. *Dungeon Keeper* is way ahead of any other RPG, in fact, on the PC there isn't much that can touch it.

