

REVIEW

AHH, A MAGIC FAKHARI RUG!  
BEN MANSILL SLIPS OFF HIS SHOES  
AND DIGS HIS TOES INTO THE DEEP SHAG  
PILE. HMM, SHAG PILE...

# MAGIC CARPET



Imagination. An attribute in curiously short supply recently, especially amongst the community of alleged "top game designers". Rare it is indeed then, that a piece of entertainment software arrives which is remotely new or unusual. Old ideas are good ideas, it seems. This is a generalisation (a sad one at that), not the rule. At Bullfrog Productions in the UK, people are thinking. Syndicate blew us away with its richly detailed ultra-violence and supremely cool atmosphere. Attention was gained, fans won and Bullfrog became a name to look out for. Now Magic Carpet arrives and it seems Bullfrog rather likes life at the top, for this effort is one of startling originality and IMAGINATION. A Winner, no less.

### Carpet Sim

Its concept is a simple one, for yes, this is a Magic Carpet sim. The basics are basic; you fly your rug over the world, spreading Good and destroying Evil. It was probably a tenuous moment when the concept was first sold to those with the development dollars, but some programmer with latent sales talents said the right thing, and Bullfrog threw everything behind the project. The end result is a new cutting edge for 3-D modelling, it is smooth, fluid and gorgeous.

In a move sure to alienate (or at least depress) mere 486 drivers, Magic Carpet has also been "optimised for Pentium". That's not to say that it won't run on a 486, it will and well. But if Santa was good enough to deliver the goods and you now run with the fastest, a level of detail and realism awaits that you probably thought was years away. Tents have a silky-smooth almost plastic sheen, passing villagers are numerous and complete in surprising detail. The sky-hazing and terrain detail surpass anything yet seen. This magnetically appealing world is solid, tangible and vast, but thankfully, entirely make-believe.

Like any decent flight sim, Magic Carpet offers great flexibility to adjust various detail options to suit your machine speed. Even lowly

owners will have to visit this screen. The game auto-detects the presence of a Pentium, without one you just don't get the option of full detail, even just to check it out with a lousy frame rate. Still, the 486 mode is mind-blowing enough...sigh. Running on a 90 Mhz Pentium with a 64-bit PCI graphics card, Magic Carpet looks incredible to say the least. It doesn't try to look photo-realistic - you can look up from the screen and get that for free, instead it captures all that is good and right about supremely cool computer graphics. This is far superior to realism, photo or otherwise. It suits the game too, after all the subject matter is well and truly on the fantasy side of the line. The experience is a surreal re-living of the Aesop's Fables of your early youth.

### Mana for Nothing

Mana man. That's what it's all about. Waste a beastie and instead of pixilated ofal, they ooze shiny orbs. This is

Mana, it is the Force of the Earth which is the soul of either good or evil. Everything is explained during what is potentially the Best Intro Ever. In a nutshell, evil wizards have sucked all the Good Mana from the world, shattering it in a cataclysmic event. You, a young apprentice wizard, must restore Equilibrium by destroying the infestations of evil the wizards created (assorted medieval and Arabian creatures of myth). Said wastage results in the spillage of Neutral Mana, this should be quickly transformed into Good Mana before your CPU, serial, modem or network opponent gets to it. The winner of each level is the first to accumulate a set amount of Mana, increasing with each level to keep you awake. Magic Carpet supports the VFX-1 VR helmet, as well as offering a novelty 3-D mode (glasses included!), even without these toys it still delivers a virtual world Origin and D.I.D can only dream of. Magic.

### PC CD ROM

Available: NOW

Category: FLIGHT SIM / ACTION

Players: 1-8

Publisher: BULLFROG

Price: NO RRP

Rating: G

60 and 66 Mhz Pentium



VISUALS	SOUND	GAMEPLAY	LONGTERM	OVERALL
<p>Everything you've waited for since you first flew on a PC. No bothersome HUD's or gauges either, just perfect 3-D in your face.</p>	<p>Lets you know it's real. True sensory immersion. Environment effects vary depending on where you are and what you're doing. Supports Wave Table.</p>	<p>Dogfight Dragons on a flying rug, build a Magic Castle, cast spells! Even normally serious people will grin stupidly and have mad fun. Compulsively playable.</p>	<p>Fifty levels, with requirements for Great Skill past level ten. Lucky it's so brilliant or we wouldn't bother.</p>	<p>An achievement. Drop-dead graphics AND winning gameplay. This is sadly rare. Worth a look no matter who you are or what you like.</p>
92%	86%	89%	88%	90%

