



AT THE MOVIES
Homeworld brings
 silver-screen
 quality action to
 your PC.

Coming Home

HOMEWORLD Is the Best-looking Strategy Game Ever, but Is It Fun?

FACT FILE

■ PUBLISHER Sierra ■ DEVELOPER Relic Entertainment ■ GENRE Real-time Strategy ■ PLAYERS 1-8 ■ ESRB RATING Teen ■ PRICE \$50.00

GAME GLANCE

- 56 units
- 2 Battling Races
- 1 Homeworld
- 1 Great Storyline
- 1 Theme Song
Recorded by Yes



You are in trouble. Enemy fighters swarm your mothership like angry hornets: under, over, through. They sting with their laser bolts and then zip back out into space before turning for another run. In the distance you see your own fighters, desperately rushing home to save the mothership. Will they make it in time?

-By Steve Klett

Despite what is mostly conventional gameplay, *Homeworld* lives up to its "revolutionary" billing with its truly thrilling 3D

environment. Add cinematic-quality visuals and special effects, excellent sound, and an intriguing story, and you've got a winner on your hard drive.

Homeworld approaches the real-time strategy genre with a combination of eyeball-splitting graphics; cinema-worthy music, sounds, and special effects; and a style that makes you feel like you're a character in the game, rather than just some schmuck pointing and clicking units around the screen.

The real trump card that sets the game apart from the other real-

time strategies out there, such as *StarCraft* or *Tiberian Sun*, is the fact that *Homeworld* is a true-3D game. Being able to zoom your "camera" around all sides of a moving starship gives you a real sense of being there. You are the director of your own space movie, of sorts. This is a new concept for the genre.

Instead of layering a 2D bitmap with "3D terrain effects," in *Homeworld* your 3D units float in space. There are no bottlenecks on the gamemap to show you from which direction the enemy will attack, as with games like *Tiberian Sun* and *Total Annihilation: Kingdoms*. In

Homeworld you'll be attacked from all directions, and from any angle—from the front, back, sides, above, and below. This presents many new tactical considerations—*Homeworld* will make you *think*.

For instance, early on I played *Homeworld* as I would any other real-time strategy game—with 2D thinking. Thus, I got my butt kicked early and often until I finally caught on. Soon, I was coordinating attacks on enemy capital ships from above and below, and I was captivated. *Homeworld* had me in its clutches.

Tell Me Your Story

The story begins at the far reaches of the universe on an isolated planet populated by a



NICE PAINT JOB The fighters are very detailed. Like his cool racing stripes?

peaceful race of humans. They were forced into exile here so long ago they can't remember where they're from. An ancient tablet is discovered that is believed to show them the way back to their home planet—which lies in the heart of the galaxy. A giant mothership is constructed with the goal of bringing millions of the planet's inhabitants home.

You must lead the mothership safely to its homeworld. Of course such long-distance space travel involves the use of a hyperdrive, with



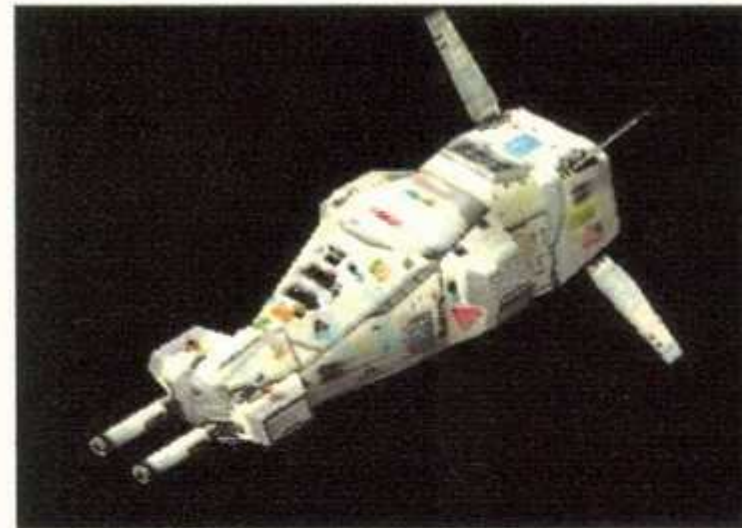
ELECTRIC FUNERAL *Homeworld's* camera controls let you into the middle of the action: Here's 2,000,000 volts up your bum!

As you take a wider look at the situation, you see your own fighters, desperately rushing home to save the mothership. Will they make it in time?

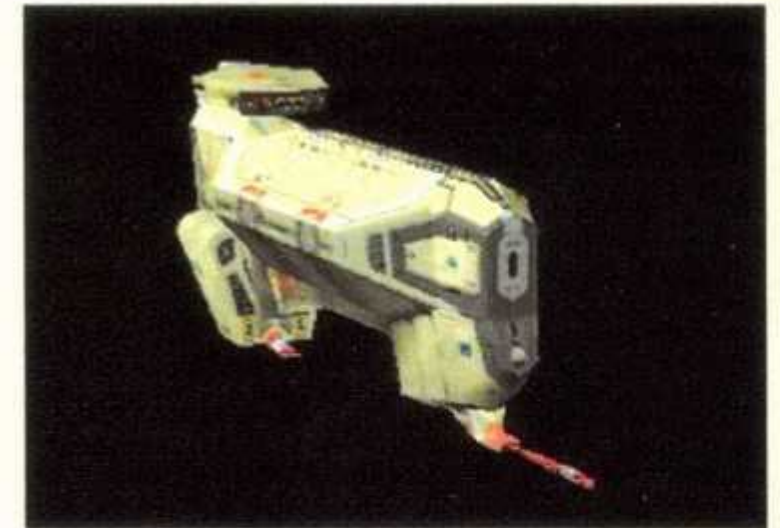
Battle Fodder

You're Dead Meat if You Don't Use Your Instruments of War Wisely

Whether you battle against the computer in the single-player game or fight human opponents online, you'll never be victorious unless you use your forces shrewdly. Combining different units into balanced fighting forces is key. You'll need to choose which units to post in defensive roles and which to use as your metaphorical battering ram. Here's a taste of the 30 units you'll find in the game. (Unless noted, each side has a unit that's nearly identical in function).



As its name suggests, the **Taiidan Scout Fighter** is small, fast, and most importantly, cheap.



No, this is not a huge sewing machine, it's a **Kushan Ion Cannon Frigate** and it's one mean fighting machine.



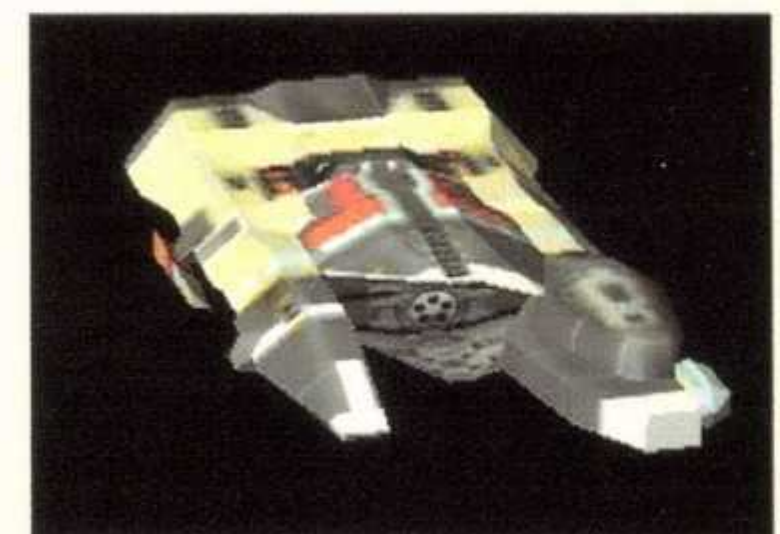
The **Taiidan Light Corvette** has a heavy-duty engine, chassis, and armor, which makes it excellent for fleet defense.



Only the Kushan have the **Cloaked Fighter**, which can become invisible to enemy forces; it's great for recon duties.



The **Taiidan Assault Frigate** is the most general purpose combat vessel among the capital ships.



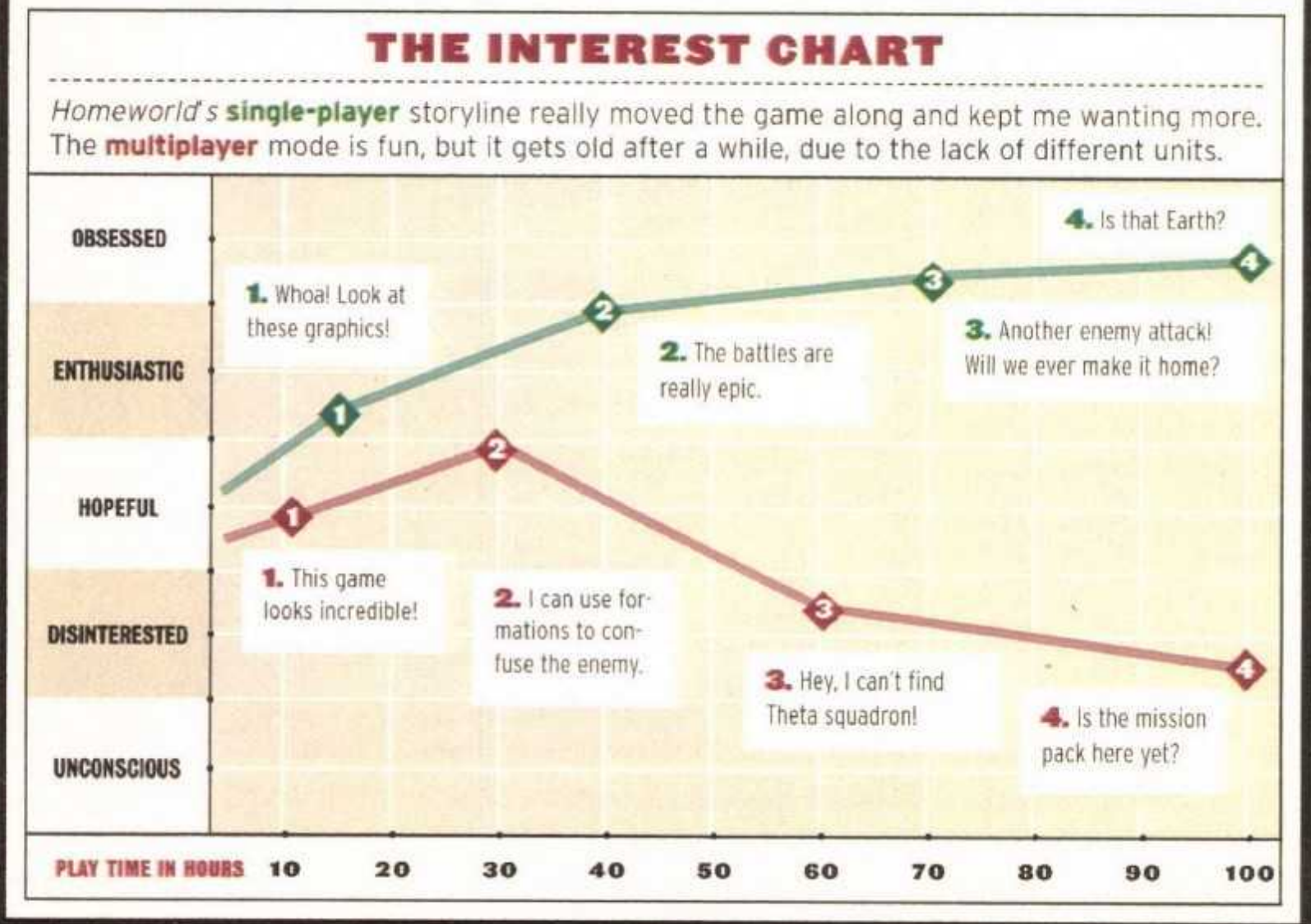
The **Kushan Interceptor** is less maneuverable than a Scout Fighter but packs a much heavier offensive punch.



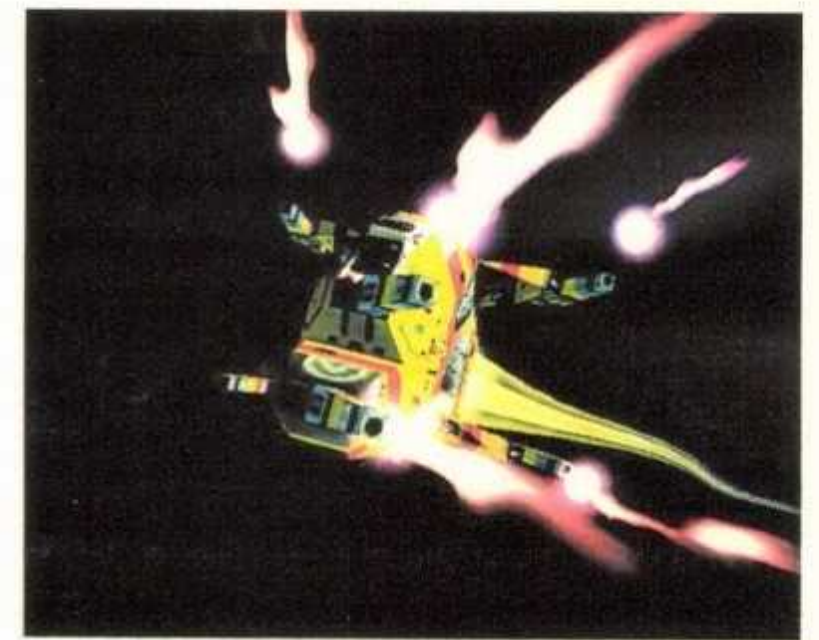
Only the Taiidan have a **Defense Fighter**. It doesn't attack enemy ships but rather shoots down their projectiles. This makes it an ideal protector of slower ships. It is excellent when paired with a group of fighters.

Test Center		Homeworld											
UP AND RUNNING													
INSTALLATION				ACCESSIBILITY									
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quick Install No Install glitches No hardware conflicts 				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Excellent training missions Campaign gradually ramps up difficulty Interface is fairly intuitive 									
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART													
PROCESSOR ▶		Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700			
SYSTEM RAM ▶		32		64		32		64		32			
		64		1024		32		64		1024			
Voodoo		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
Diamond Monster 3D		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
Voodoo2		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
Diamond Monster 3D II		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
Voodoo3		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
3dfx Voodoo 3 3000		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
RAGE 128		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
All-in-Wonder 128		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
Matrox G400		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
Millennium G400		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
TNT 2		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
Creative 3D Blaster TNT2 Ultra		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
S4 Savage		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
Diamond Stealth III S540		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
Software		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768
		640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768	640 x 480	800 x 600	1024 x 768

WHAT IT MEANS: - Forget it! - Runs poorly - Acceptable - With ease



You break a long-forgotten 4,000-year old treaty to never, ever develop hyperdrive technology—and so the trouble begins.



UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL It's pretty, and it packs a wallop, too.

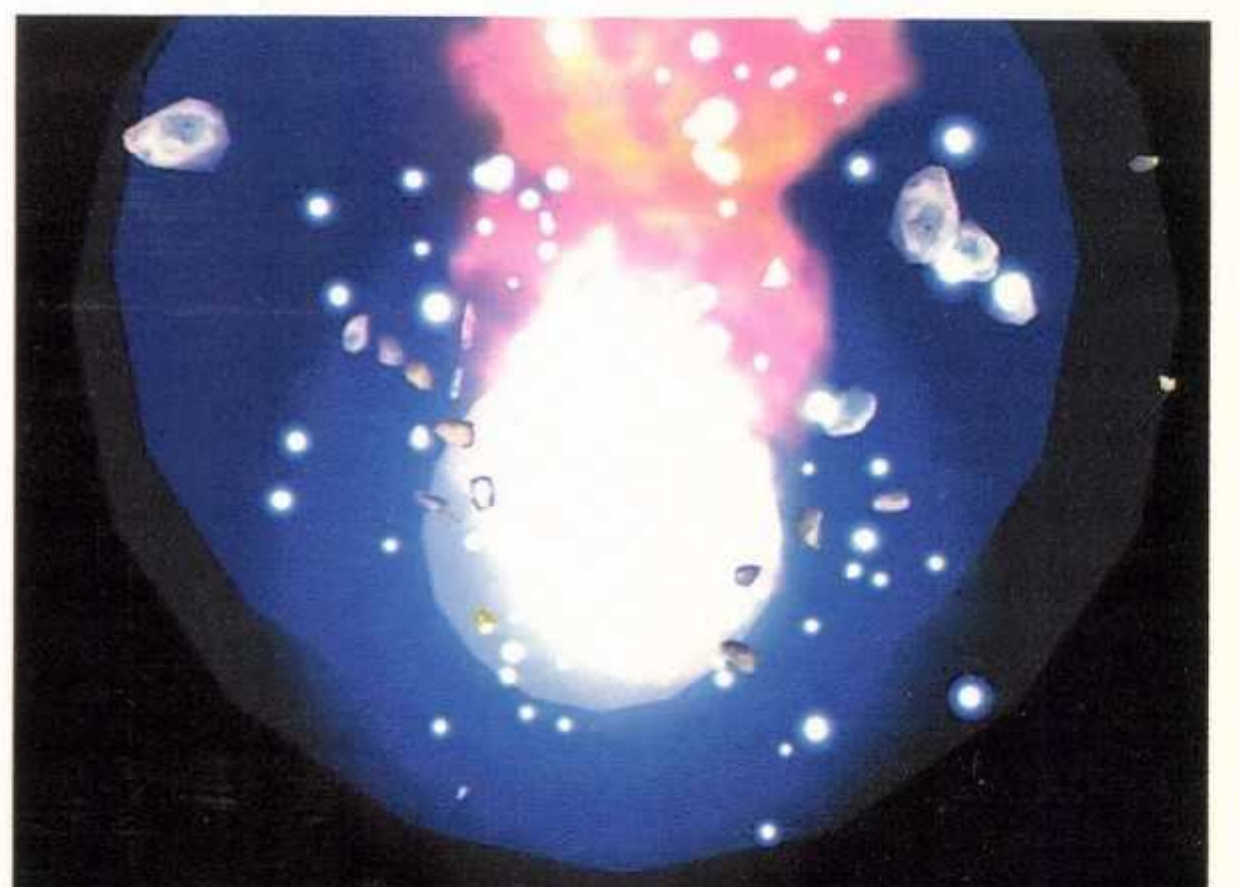
which the Mothership is equipped. However, when you use it you break a long-forgotten 4,000-year old treaty to never, ever develop hyperdrive technology—and so the trouble begins...and you find yourself battling your way back home.

Homeworld's gameplay conventions are amazingly simple. You harvest resources (gasses, asteroids, and the like) that are floating about in space and turn these into cash (or Resource Units), which you use to build an armada. You then point-and-click your units about the map to accomplish different objectives that fit with the story. There aren't many unit types to keep track of—15 for each of the two races (Kushan and Taiidan).

This brings us to a couple of Homeworld's down sides:

First, the units are a bit bland, and there are not enough units unique to each race. While this means that the two races are very finely balanced, for the most part the Taiidan and Kushan ships do exactly the same things, although they look dramatically different.

Second, while you can play the single-player campaign as either the Taiidan or the Kushan, the story and missions for each are exactly the



OUT WITH A BANG! The Mothership emits a wonderful fireworks display when she goes up.

same. Making the two races compete to reach the homeworld first would have added more intrigue (and gameplay value) to the game.

Once you have the units where you want them, you can use them in many ways. You can group units together and assign them one of seven different formations, each with a distinct tactical advantage and disadvantage. If none of the provided formations is suitable for the task at hand, you can also create your own specialty formation.

It's easy to build units, re-search technologies, and harvest resources, which lets you worry as little as possible about micro-management. That is, save for one thing, refueling. Your ships need fuel to run and they will run dry in battle, which should be easy to

Now you can be besieged from any direction, and any angle—front, back, sides, above, and below. *Homeworld* will make you think.

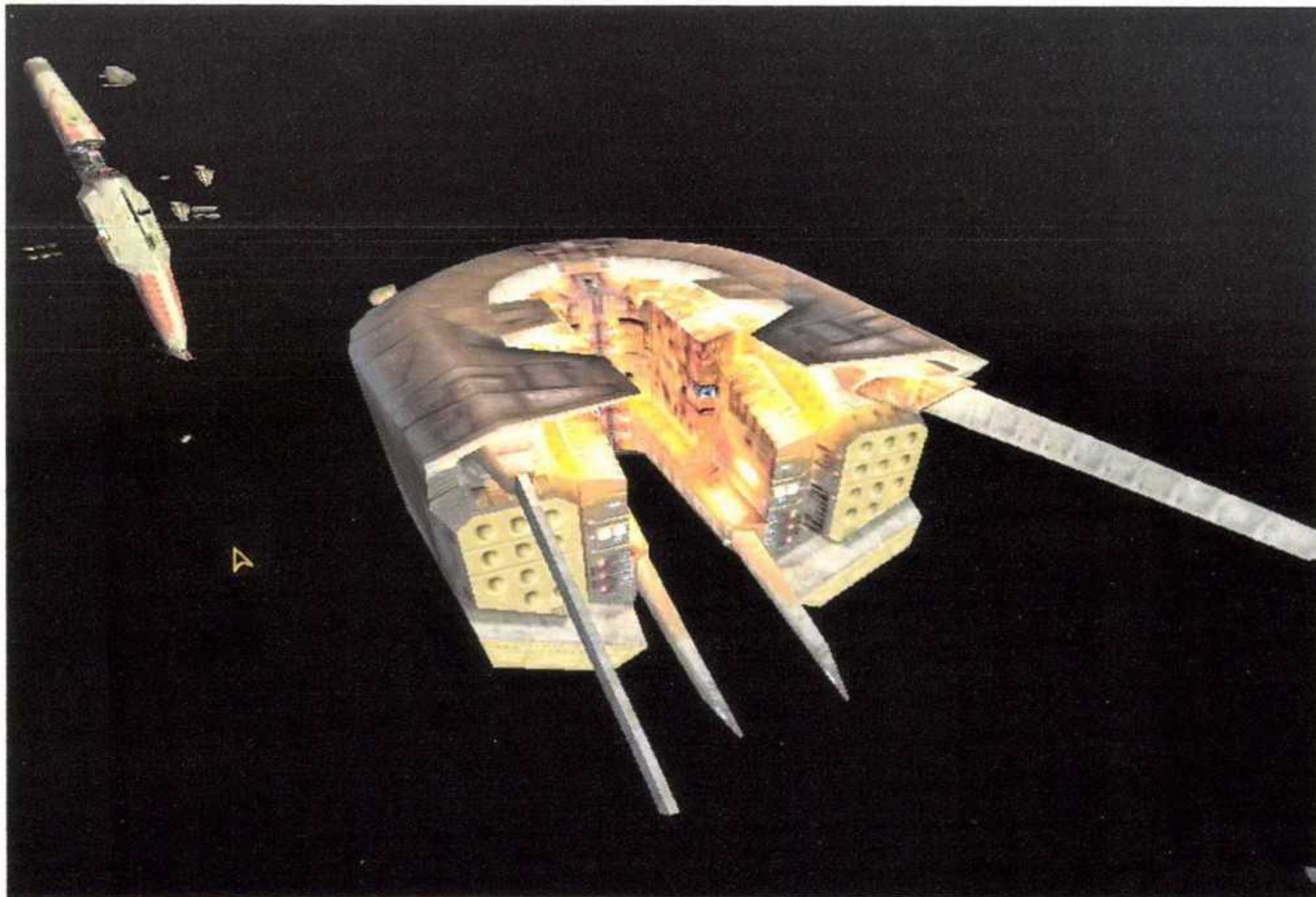
deal with. However, in the middle of a conflict you'll hear some unit report it's low on fuel, but that unit can be hard to locate quickly. By and large, it's easy to lose track of individual units in combat, making it necessary to assign all critical units a group number so you can jump to them in a pinch. Some automation would have helped here—units low on fuel should return to base on their own.

Homeworld is the tactical space combat game we've been waiting for. Sure, it's got some rough spots, but its gameplay more than makes up for any technical glitches. **E**



IT'S ON THE CD!

Play the *Homeworld* demo on the *incite* CD-ROM!



NO ASSIMILATION HERE The Bentusi may sound like the Borg but they're quite benevolent—they'll even sell you valuable stuff if you're nice. Think of them as the Sanford & Son of space combat.

Bizarro Galactica

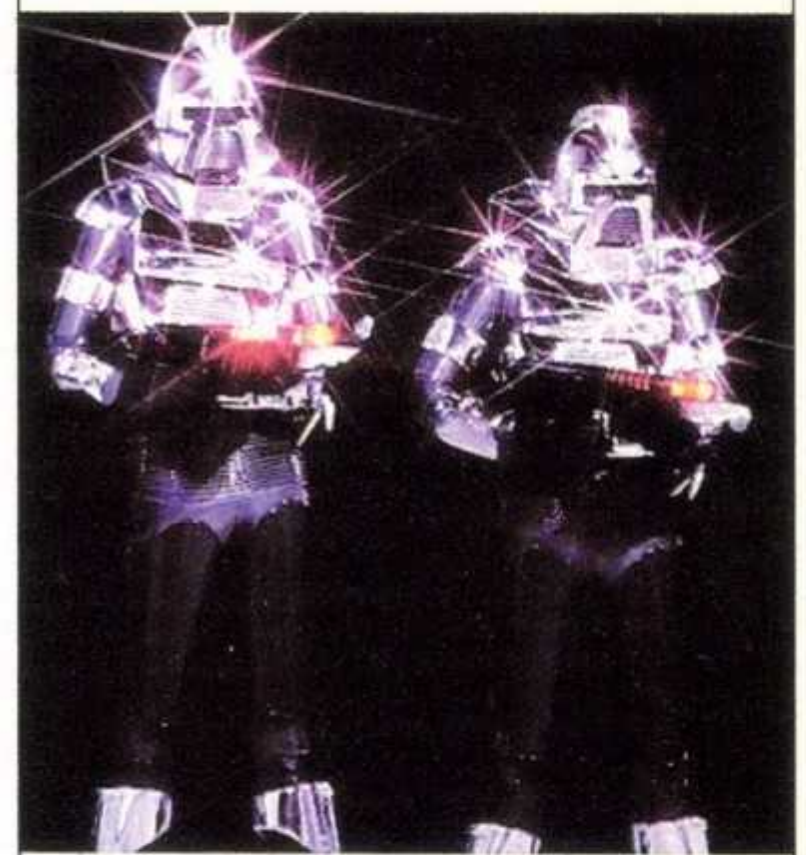
Too Bad Relic Couldn't Dig Up Lorne Greene for Voice-overs

If *Homeworld's* story is familiar to you, perhaps you were a *Battlestar Galactica* fan in your youth. This epic television series ran in the late '70s and early '80s and enjoys a cult following to this day. (Check out www.battlestargalactica.com if you don't believe us.)

The show was about a series of human Colonials that were attacked and nearly destroyed by the robotic Cylon race. The last remnants of survivors—a ragtag fleet led by the last Colonial Battlestar—escaped and began a long search for the lost Colony planet called "Earth," and a new beginning. Unfortunately the show fizzled shortly after the Colonials reached Earth.

I couldn't help but think of *Battlestar Galactica* as I played *Homeworld*, as the game's story evoked the many hours I spent watching the TV series. It also begs the question: would *Homeworld* be even better if Relic had a license such as *Star Wars*, *Star Trek*, or yes, even *Battlestar Galactica*? Given the track record of over-hyped games with big licenses, we at *incite* PC Gaming would have to say that *Homeworld* is fine as it is.

Still, it's fun to think about Taaidan scouts being Cylon Raiders instead, and Kushan interceptors being Colonial Vipers.



If Cylons were robots, why weren't they all built the same height?

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

- **MINIMUM SPEC** 200MHz & 32MB
- **PREFERRED SPEC** 300MHz PII & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

- Software Rendering ✓
- Direct3D ✓
- 3dfx ✓
- OpenGL ✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

- EAX (SBLive!) ✗
- Aureal 3D ✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

- **MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT**
- Maximum number of players: PC LAN 8, Internet 8
- **CD FOR EACH PLAYER?** Yes
- **MIN. NET CONNECTION** 28.8 Kbps

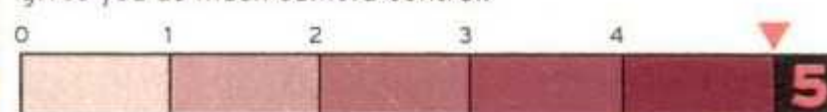
The Verdict

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **StarCraft**
A true classic. Although its in 2D, its gameplay and unit balancing are tops.
- **Homeworld**
The first, fully 3D real-time strategy is king of its own mountain.
- **Starfleet Command**
Another space-based real-time strategy, and one of the best *Trek* games.
- **Total Annihilation: Kingdoms**
Lots of cool 3D units and 3D terrain effects.
- **Rebellion**
Could have been great 3D *Star Wars* real-time strategy were it scaled down.

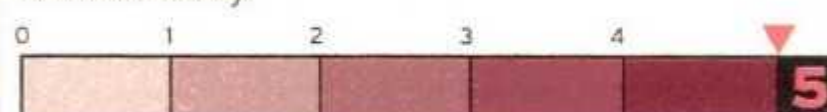
GRAPHICS

■ It's tough to think of any game that looks this good and gives you as much camera control.



SOUND

■ Excellent, soothing soundtrack; awesome sound effects and voice acting.



MULTIPLAYER

■ Good multiplayer capabilities, but the fun factor is a little hampered by the difficulty in seeing distant units.



Homeworld

PROS: The true 3D nature of *Homeworld* cannot be overstated. It really feels like you're in space.

CONS: It could have pushed the gameplay boundaries more. Also, the game has too few unique units.

OVERALL

You'll feel like the commander of a great space armada. The 3D world really brings the gameplay to life.

5
OUT OF 5

