

SHOOT 'EM UP CONSTRUCTION KIT

Outlaw Productions, £14.95 cass, £19.95 disk, joystick or keys

● Create your own sizzlers with Sensible Software's SEUCK!



ables of a shoot 'em up to be defined to suit the user's requirements. Sprites may be designed and animated, backdrops drawn, alien attack patterns set and even scoreline and bonuses fixed. A completed game may also be saved and played independently of the designer program.

Designing a game starts with the main menu. From here the user selects one of nine editable features: sprites, backgrounds, objects, sound effects, player limi-



Sensible Software, whose previous successes include *Parallax* and *Wizball*, are set to take the vertically scrolling shoot 'em up market by storm with their *Shoot 'em up Construction Kit*, a utility which allows a person with absolutely no knowledge of BASIC or machine code to create their own stationary or vertically scrolling one or two player head-to-head blasting games.

The SEUCK allows all the vari-

- The SEUCK even allows two players to do battle on screen at the same time

This has to be one of the greatest packages ever released on the 64. The games that come with it would be worth the money alone, but this gives you the ability to make your own. You've got an excellent sprite designer and graphics utility with features, such as slide and mirror, that are hard to find on some dedicated art packages! There's also a brilliant special effects mixer thrown in for good measure. All this is so compelling, I defy anyone not to become totally engrossed as soon as they start using it. It's beauty is that it enables literally ANYONE to produce high quality bashes of virtually infinite variation. The incredible feature of the package though, is that just when you think you've exhausted its resources, you find some other little trick it can do - such as the independent file saving. With people able to create high quality stand-alone games quickly and easily, it shouldn't be too long before we see the first SEUCK Sizzler or, dare I say it, Gold Medal!?

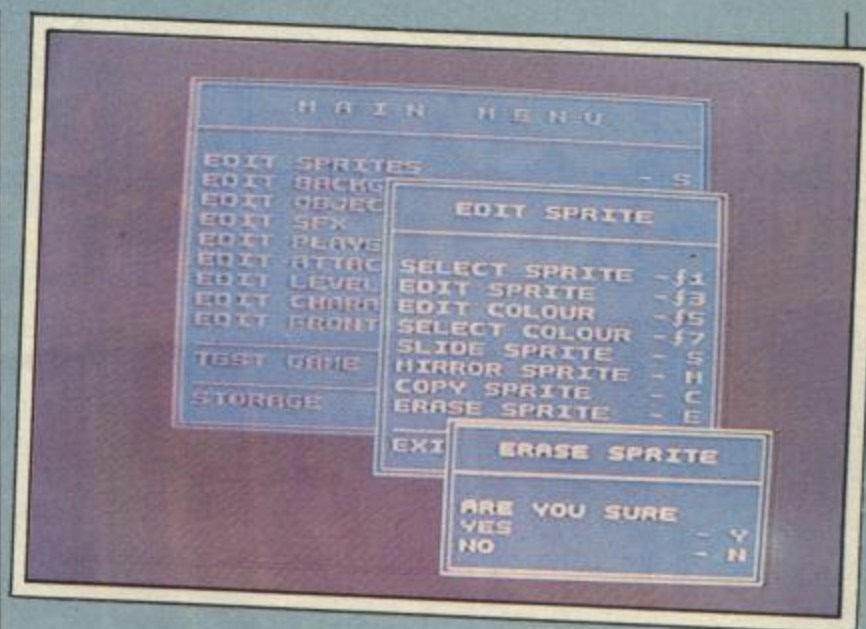
- The 'select block' mode, displaying the separate blocks available to create your scrolling map

tations, attack waves and levels to the character set and front end. Choosing one of these results in a sub-menu appearing, which gives further options for the editor in operation.

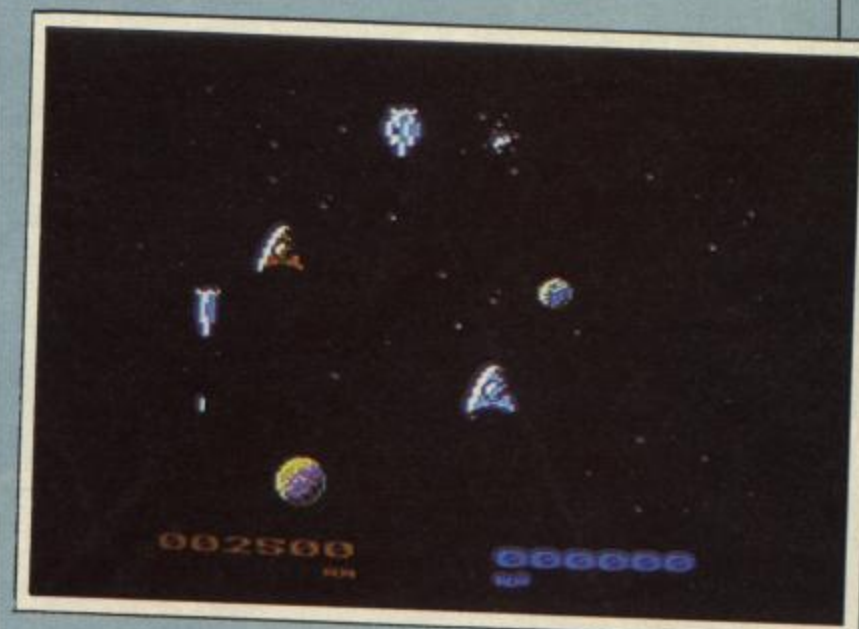
For example, when the 'Edit Sprite' option is chosen, the screen prompts: select, edit, edit colour, slide, mirror, copy and erase. This comprehensive series of options allow up to 128 12x21 pixel sprites to be designed, coloured and animated. These may be saved out, or used immediately in the 'Edit Objects' mode which allows the animation to be defined and polished as required.

Backgrounds are designed and drawn in a similar fashion, with an extensive sub-menu allowing a character to be selected, edited and coloured, and all the chars to





▼ Alien attack patterns are easily defined and stored in the program



▼ Fancy a bit of Slap 'n' Tickle? It's free with the SEUCK

What a great idea! OK, it isn't the first, but it's certainly the best executed and most comprehensive (non-adventure) game designer to date. I couldn't believe how quickly and easily a simple game could be created. The whole package is brilliantly designed and so pleasant to use. The sprite designer alone is great fun and any aspiring Disneys will appreciate the animation facility. I won't say that SEUCK will be everyone's cup of tea: some people have neither the time, imagination or inclination to sit down and design their own games. And don't kid yourself—it does take time to create a really good game—but if you fancy designing your own Sizzler, then SEUCK is just what you've been looking for.



be put into blocks and used to create a very large scrolling map.

Once the backdrop and sprites have been prepared, the limitations of the player and enemy sprites are set. Here, the user defines the enemy attack patterns,



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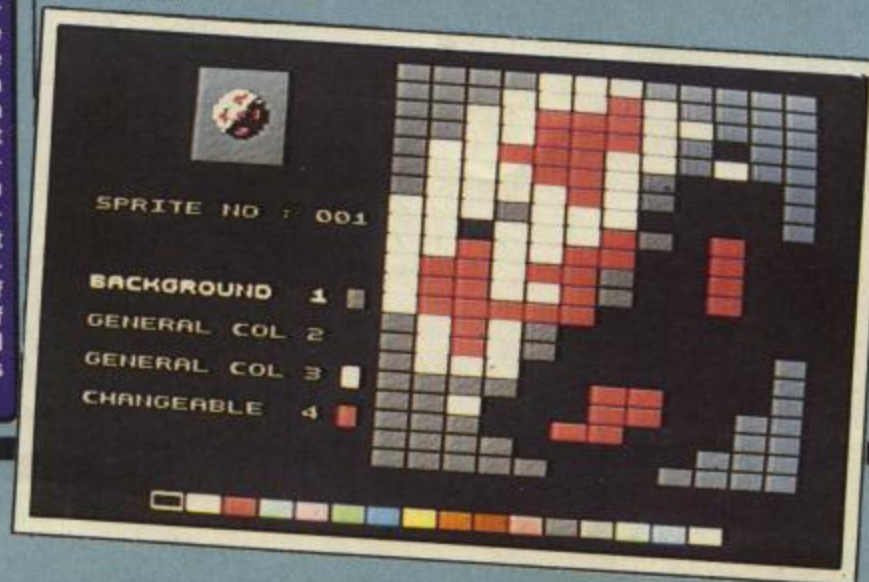


► More blasting chuckles with *Slap 'n' Tickle*

Sensible Software have certainly come up with something special this time! If you've got the time and patience, you can use the SEUCK to create some really incredible games. Earlier attempts at games designers have failed due to the lack of freedom. SEUCK gives the user an incredible amount of space in which to develop his ideas – it'll take a long time before someone manages to push it to its limits! The thought that has gone into its workings is absolutely phenomenal, so much so that you can sit down and start designing without reading the instructions – we did! You do have to refer to them eventually, and when you do they're helpful and informative. The package comes complete with a quartet of games, all of which are extremely good – in fact they're better than some full-price games! The Shoot 'em up Construction Kit is a milestone in computing history. It mightn't appeal to all 64 owners, due to the amount of attention it requires, but if you've ever wished you could design your own game, this is a dream come true.



► The highlight of the construction kit: the superb sprite designer, editor, animator ...



the level of their aggression and sets the players' movement.

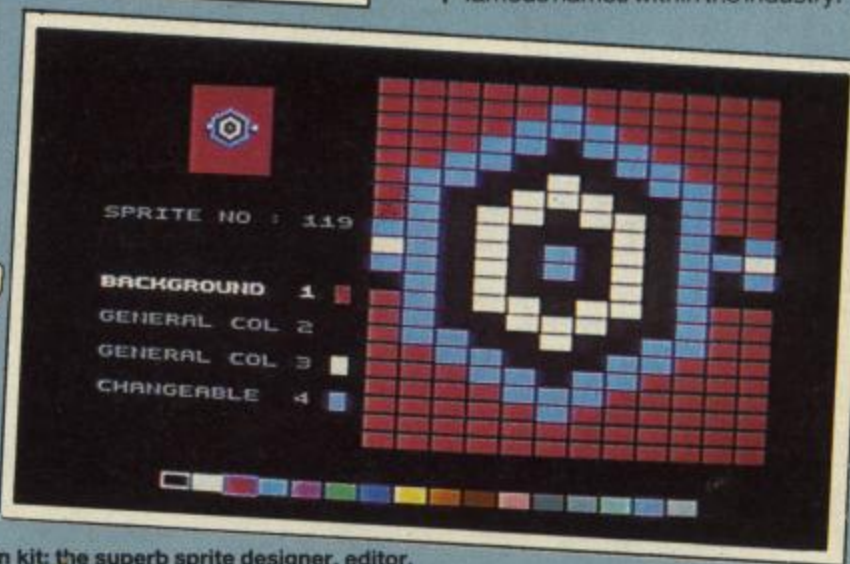
The game may be split up into separate levels, the duration and type of which can be specified, including a static bonus screen at the end of each, if required.

To add to the atmosphere, some suitable spot effects may be created using the 'Edit Sound Effects' option. This sound generator is akin to a miniature mixing deck and allows up to 24 different sound effects to be generated by adjusting the on-screen slide controls. The wave, attack, pitch, plus speed and time of the rise and fall can be altered to create a wide variety of sounds, from soft gongs to raucous white noise blasts.

For the finishing touch, a title screen is also written and 'colour cycled' by selecting one of the 23 predetermined patterns. The character set may also be redesigned to give the game that final polished appearance.

As the creation process progresses and new features are implemented, the game may be playtested and tweaked as necessary. Finished games are then saved to tape or disk using the storage facility, and run as an independent program.

To show some of its capabilities, and give the user something to practice on, the package comes with four demo games: the cheekily named *Slap 'n' Tickle*, a variant on an Imagine licence, *Outlaw*, a Gunsmoke clone, *Transputer Man*, a *Robotron* game and *Celebrity Shoot 'Em Up*, a blaster containing sprites designed by many famous names within the industry.



There's no doubt that **The Shoot 'em up Construction Kit** is an exceptional piece of software – the Gold Medal award is thoroughly deserved. However, since it's a class of its own we feel that it's unfair to compare it with other software on the market, and therefore there are no ratings. We have offered three individual opinions as a guideline, but ultimately it's up to you to decide whether or not you'd like to try and design your own games.