

*"Everyone wants to be in control of his or her own destiny - everyone fantasizes about adventure... of being a hero - this is what we endeavour to portray in these games." Don Bluth.*

CD-ROM may be just only be around the corner, but Don Bluth and his pals have been interacting with video images for years now. The first laser disk games appeared in the early eighties and it seems incredible to think of the leap forward in technology that allows the same games to be played on your home micro. Still, here it is. Yep, Dragon's Lair is the ultimate show-piece for your ST, both the graphics and sound are stunning. The same, however, can't quite be said of playability. Sure, the game's fun to play, but once you've mastered the moves it becomes a little tiresome. Sadly, like Space Ace, it isn't whether or not you should buy this game, more a question of you being able to afford it.

NC

# DRAGONS LAIR

READYSOFT (£44.95)

As Dirk prepares to enter Singe's desolate domain he is oblivious to the perils and pitfalls that lie in wait for him. Only your quick thinking and lightning reflexes will save the day.

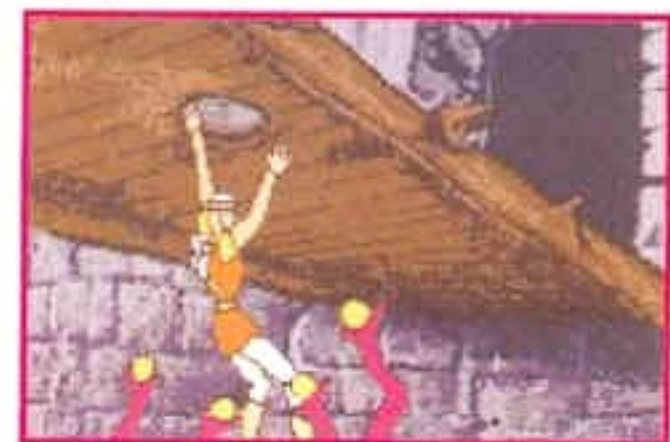
This is no time to be hanging around, Dirk! Swipe at those meanies with your sword and get on with it!



ger than his brain. In true fairy tale fashion, Mr Daring is besotted with the fair Princess Daphne. But horror of horrors, the beautiful maiden has been kidnapped by Singe the Evil Dragon. There's only one thing for it! You must set your large chin in a typically heroic position and travel with all haste to Singe's castle. Expect nothing less than a perilous journey, a fight to the death. But just think of the prize - Daphne really is rather gorgeous! If you're familiar with the stunning laser-disk arcade game, you'll be surprised, nay stunned, at the accuracy of the transition to the humble ST. After an extremely brief

intro in which a digitized voice barely manages to get out the words "Dragon's Lair...". Dirk stands at the forefront of the screen with chin pointing determinedly. He then turns swiftly and makes towards the drawbridge. Suddenly, the timbers give way and Dirk just manages to grab a hold. As he struggles to gain a grip, a multi-headed serpent lurches out of the moat and tries to grab Dirk with his tentacles (I said with his, not by his). Quickly you must draw his sword at the exact moment and amputate the tentacles. Dirk pulls himself up through the drawbridge and continues towards the castle.

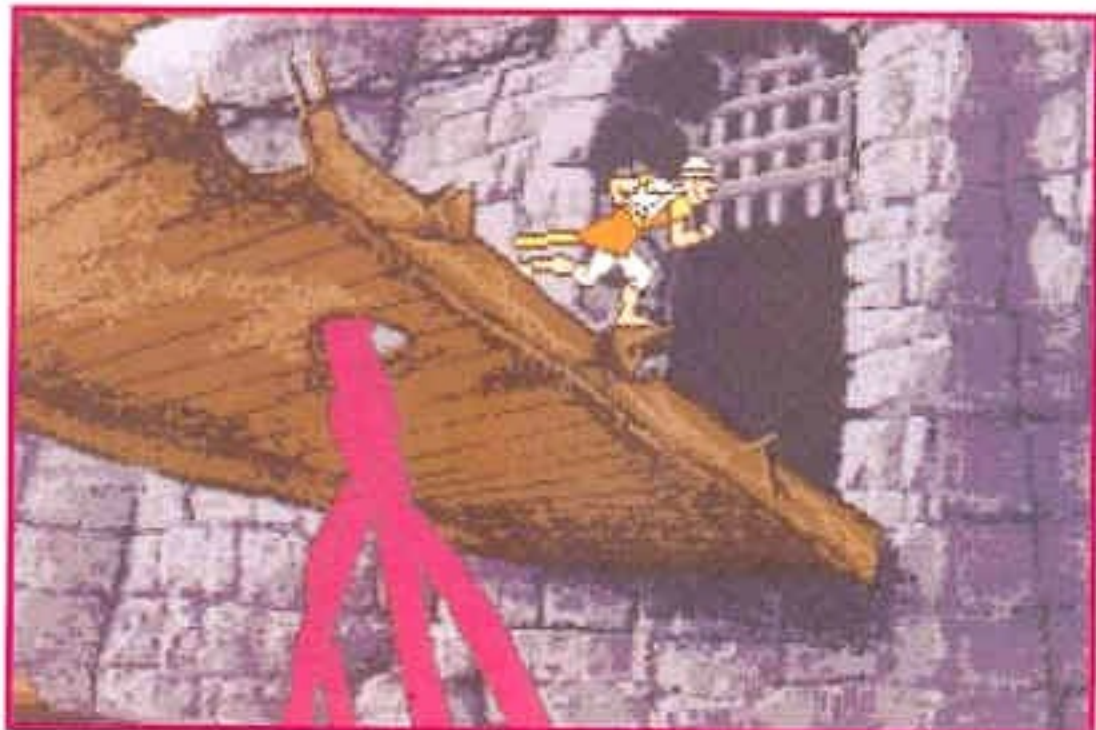
Within the castle, a potion flashes - Dirk must avoid this poison. Then, a door flashes and, immediately, you must guide the heroic one towards the door. Dirk emerges in the next room to face more



When Bluth introduced the interactive movie, Dragon's Lair, into the arcades, the game dominated the coin-op world. Now this veteran animator and his brilliant team have achieved the seemingly impossible, by transferring the amazing effects onto the home computer. Whether you are a staunch critic or an avid fan of Bluth's productions, nobody can ignore them.

You are Dirk the Daring! A knight whose courageous heart is certainly big-

Getting into the castle isn't as easy as it may at first seem. As our hero crosses the rickety drawbridge, large purple tentacles jump out and try to grab him. Only the correctly timed joystick moves will allow Dirk to continue.



As the story unfolds, Dirk the Daring will find himself deeper inside the castle. Only by making the right decisions will he finally find his true love, the princess Daphne.

How much? For forty-five quid I'd expect something just a little bit special, and if you're not fussy about limited gameplay, that's exactly what Dragon's Lair is. I found Dragon's Lair more enjoyable than Readysoft's previous release, Space Ace, not because it had more inter activity or improved graphics and sound, but because I found it more enjoyable to play. Dragon's Lair is a brilliant game that is bound to impress, but although it is the best of the bunch, I still don't think it is worth the somewhat hefty price tag.

AS

One of the monsters appears in the shape of these large, green tentacles. Drawing his trusty blade Dirk tries to fend them off. Having done so, he also has to leap around the room.



peril. At once, slimy green tentacles slither out of the ceiling and make a grab for Mr Daring, and you must draw the sword at the right moment, smite the tentacle and chop it in half. With the severed tentacle twitching, Dirk moves ever onwards. He enters the court of the Black Knight where this electric character is smashing his sword into the flagstone. This causes an electrical charge which rushes through the floor and, as if on a chessboard, Dirk must jump, hop and run at just the right moment or suffer an electrifying end. Shock! 'Ooh blimey!' Dirk is now perched in a flimsy coracle and paddling furiously in a river fraught with rapids and whirlpools. Again, split-second timing is required to paddle around the swirling

I certainly did enjoy my few hours playing the heroic Dirk - it was not so much like playing a game as watching an adventure cartoon in which you had some say in the outcome of the plot - if you're too slow, Dirk dies: if your timing's precise, he lives to fight another battle. It really goes without saying (but I'll say it anyway) the graphic and sonic effects are truly, without a word of a lie, stunning - top cartoon quality in every sense of the phrase and, sure enough, the Bluth team have made certain that you have as much control as is possible for this particular medium of entertainment. Sure, the package is a bit on the steep side, but look at what you've got! A classic on your ST which is as impressive as its laser disc, arcade original - a phenomenal feat.

JS

Everywhere he treads, Dirk encounters the dreaded green tentacles. Which exit should he take, the door to the north or the stairs leading up?



whirlpools and into the tunnel at the end.

Now, a glutton for punishment, Dirk enters a sinister room with bottles at one end. Stealthily, he walks towards the table. But suddenly, a truly hideous monster oozes out and lurches towards our hero. The screen changes and just before Dirk is devoured, you must draw his sword and decapitate the fiend. Without pausing for breath or wiping an heroic brow, Dirk's well and truly in it. His quest, of course, is to rescue the lovely Daffers. But so many treacherous plots and devious traps lay ahead of him that he might be wise and settle for a not-so-lovely wench - the decision, as they say, is yours. **STA**



Obviously your decision to climb the stone stairs was a wrong one. Trying his best to look tough, Dirk finally gives up the ghost.

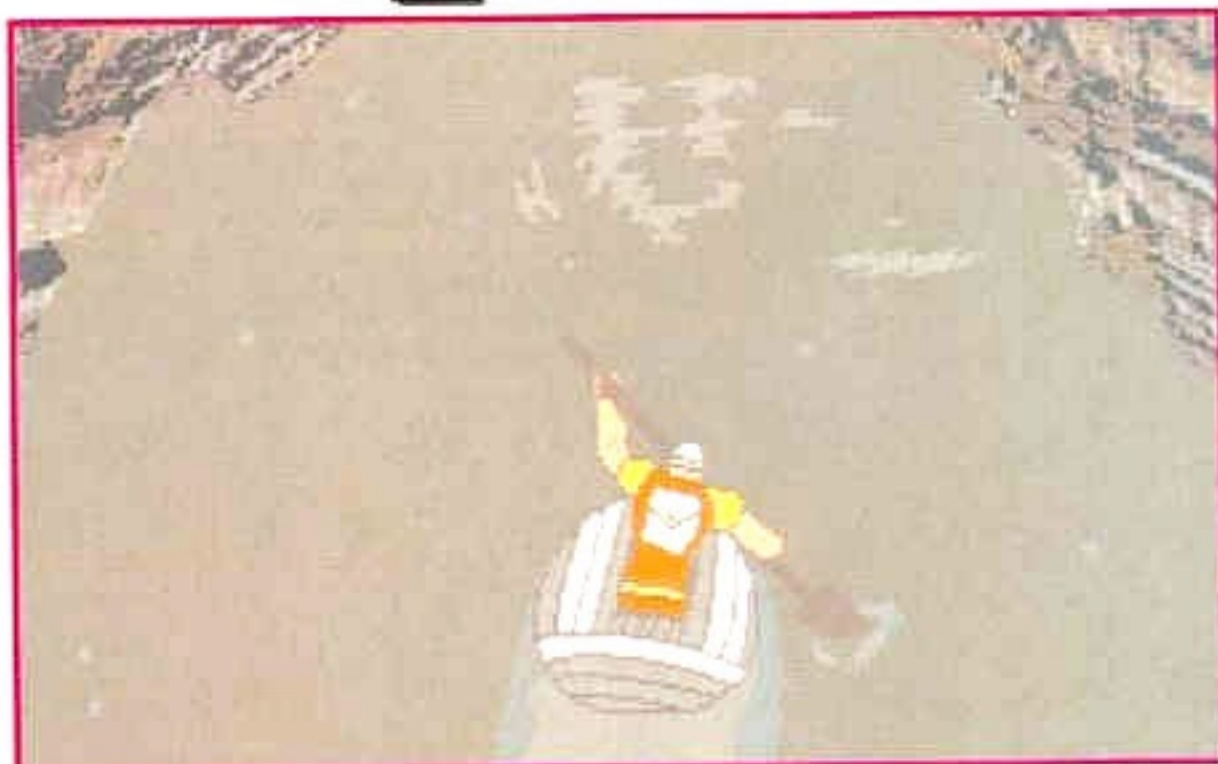
STA  
Rating

64%

GRAPHICS: 93%  
SOUND: 81%

LASTING APPEAL: 57%  
ADDICTIVENESS: 67%

DIFFICULTY: AVERAGE  
1ST DAY SCORE: 12500



He isn't the best of rowers, however, our brave hero must do his best to avoid the deadly whirlpools.