



Apologies dear reader, but now we need to get really geeky and talk about the Radofin 1292 Advanced Programmable Video System - first created in 1976. Actually, lets get the boring stuff done...43 bytes of Ram, 4.43 Mhz Signetics processor, 208x108 pixels, 9 colours, 4 sprites and monophonic beeps only. Fairly okay for 1976 gaming at home before VCS/2600.

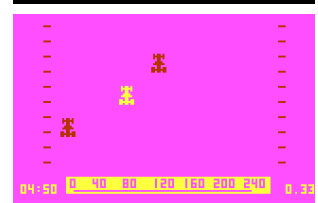
However there's a huge BUT. A really huge BUT. Radofin, a German company were more concerned about making money than gaming so they didn't actually release it in 1976. They spent time selling licenses to manufacture to other people—such as Acetronic, Prinztronic, Fountain, Grandstand, Audio Sonic, Hanimex and Lansay, all of whom used the basic design—sell the console cheap and sell cartridges to go with it. That was the business model quickly adopted after the masses of Pong machines. It's certain that hardly any of these machines made it to retail before very late seventies, more likely early eighties by my recollection. In fact, by March 1982 C&VG were reviewing the 'Grand Prix' cartridge—notable because it was topping the Acetronic charts but wasn't a space game. (available since launch too).

So whilst history is clear that it was a 1976 invention, but by the time this was out, most players were engulfed in their VCS and playing some of the reasonable racing games available at the time...

...well in the USA they were. Those lucky Japanese racing game fans were doubtless enjoying Nintendo's rare foray into racing games... their 1978/1979 aptly but horribly named TV Color Racing 112. Little is known of the type of racing games, but there was 112 variations. It seems inevitable it was like the Radofin cartridge, having both the Gran Trak like game and a top-down racer and various time allowances, colours etc making up the full 112 games. Not just that though—a steering wheel and gear shifter. What a shame us consumers were unable to import back then...



Do you know what that picture is down there at the bottom right corner? It's not JUST a Bally Astrocade, it's the epitome of seventies design, the symbol of Atari's dominance and a reminder that folk in the seventies just didn't understand a darn thing about videogames. Obviously Bally didn't market and sell this thing properly either because if they did, it would have brought gaming onward leaps and bounds at the time. It had limited USA release in 1978 and along with it came Cart number 1—a two Kilobyte fine conversion of their Datsun 280 Zzap game plus a second game Dodgem. Now you don't get much in 2048 bytes so the programmers must have been quite amazing people. It was a heck of a shame this machine and it's great controller didn't make it to our shores...but remember in Europe we didn't buy into Intellivision either, so what chance did Bally have with us tough punters!



280 ZZZAP/DODGEM 2001

ACTION/SKILLS SERIES

Two different high-speed car races demand quick response and raw courage. Enter your racing time into the computer—floor the accelerator—and go for speed and distance. 280 Zzap challenges you to hold a road filled with dangerous hairpin turns! Dodgem puts you up against other cars driven by the computer. The sharper your driving skills, the more mileage you'll get!



Top to bottom: 280 Zzap, Dodgem, Astrocade and controllers