

ARCADE MOTORBIKE RACERS

ARCADE MOTORBIKE GAMES: SCALEABLE SPRITES & SIMULATION

By 1986, having played *Out Run* and *Hang On* the previous year and having played them lots more again, you had to wonder if games could ever get any better. If you ever sneaked a peak behind the cabinet as they were (and they often were) being repaired then you'd see not a few microchips, not even a few dozen but nearly a hundred or more chips on the boards. Since *Out Run* and *Hang On* were still leagues ahead of what we had at home, it was always interesting to find what new games had arrived since your last visit to the arcades. The games did keep coming, despite our childhood fears. Lots of them as well but more often than not an update of an earlier type of game with different graphics. It was the cabinets of strange design that caught your eye. Cabinets like the gun games with laser disk running video to shoot at. Or a big yellow monster like *Enduro Racer*.

ENDURO RACER

In 1986 after the success of *Hang On*, Sega came back with another bike game—not only did the bike lean but you had to pull wheelies as well. It ran on two 16-bit processors.

It's not in the same league as *Hang on* but a really great fun game. And that cabinet was great.



Arcade Instruction promises

By manoeuvring the motorcycle upwards, downwards and sideways at just the precise moment, the player can achieve perfect timing, thus allowing him to truly experience firsthand the simulated realism of jumping, landing,

That big yellow cabinet was very easily located in them dimly lit arcades!

What a difference a few years made. In 1989 the bike games continued. Not from Sega as you'd expect, but from Taito, with their new bike game *World Grand Prix*. They had followed up their success of *Chase HQ* not with a cheap knockoff follow up, but a first person bike simulation with quite a number of tracks. Saying that, it would not have been possible without Sega first pioneering the hardware that Taito used. The game used a special hardware chip which allowed the whole screen to rotate, giving an excellent feeling of movement on the bike. It had glitz and glamour, damage to the glass shield, rain effects (in first person this was new) and more to the point it was easy enough to get a good ride for your money. You would only need to back off on corners to do well, and throttle on again to the next bendy bit (not too early though as too much too soon would throw you to the outside of the corner into inevitable crash).



Following on from Taito, in 1990 Sega released their own super fast bike game, *GP Rider*. As with Taito's follow up to *WGP*, the game was third person and as the 1989 hit was so good, it seemed like a backwards step.