



1985 was the year of a hitherto unexplained increase in jaw damage. Behold: It was in fact caused by the thunderous dropping of jaws across worldwide arcades. The 'tech gap' between home and arcade games didn't just widen, it found a new paradigm.

In America there was talk of a 'collapse' of the industry the previous year. That didn't bother us gamers in the UK: We knew very well that arcade games were years in advance of our Speccy or 64. We knew that if we wanted to play the best games we needed to get to the coast for the day or better, for a weeks family holiday. If you were on holiday at the coast late in the summer of 1985, you probably had one of the best Summers ever.

It wasn't the first motorcycle game, but in July, **Hang On** was released and **Sega** had started a new trend, which it learned would be a very important difference between home and arcade. Their **cabinet design** was different to stand up machines. Hang On had a 'real enough' motorcycle on which you would sit. The gamer would twist the throttle for power and pull real brake levers to slow, but most importantly, to steer would mean leaning on the bike. The feeling of speed, quality of animation, superior sound and best music yet meant that this machine was the highlight of any arcade experience available.

Hang on achieved this greatness with two weapons:- Firstly the hardware consisted of 2 X Motorola 68000, both running at 10 Mhz, along with a Z80 and a custom chip to control audio. Hang on graphics had a higher resolution than previously found - 320 x 224 was substantially better than previously seen games running typically on 256 x 224. The second weapon in the Sega armoury was the software, crafted by one **Yu Suzuki** who would later become a well-known figure within Sega and the industry for this and his subsequent efforts. The 25 year old joined Sega in April 1983 as programmer and producer. This was his first game.

Hang On offered really nice 'parallax scrolling' backgrounds. The animation was smooth and the audio loud and thrilling. Taito had parallax scrolling in the previous year's Kick Rider but this was more impressive.

Hang on was the first worthwhile racer to offer something other than Formula One type machines. It had taken manufacturers eleven years to realise that not everyone wanted open-wheel racing.

HANG-ON

