

For the ~

Atari ST
Amiga
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Spectrum
Amstrad

ACE

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The new
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Reviews

*Top games get the
ACE treatment*

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How to Win!

Sight & Sound

*Dedicated music and
graphics sections*

Adventure

Follow the Pilgrim

**BUYERS'
GUIDE**

50 games you've
got to have

WIN an ST!

3 complete
Atari systems
up for grabs - see
page 28

**WHICH
CONSOLE?**

Atari
v.
Sega
v.
Nintendo

MUSIC

String up
your
computer
with Casio's
MIDI guitar



SIDEWALK

SUPPLIER INFOGRAVES VERSION TESTED ATARI ST

YOU are in deep trouble, man. Your motorbike has been stolen, dismembered, and its parts distributed about town. At 10 p.m. you need it to take your girlfriend to a Band Aid concert if you don't have it she'll go with that slimy creep John. On top of that, you still haven't bought any tickets — and getting those can be something of a problem.

In order to recover your bike you must wander the streets of a seedy French town interacting with its various inhabitants. The screen is displayed in monochrome and you may move forward into backwards out of, or left or right against the very detailed street-scene backdrops. These are very well drawn and give the game that cartoon/comic look typical of much French software. There are also two windows at the bottom of the screen: the first showing the bike parts you have so far collected and the second displaying the other objects you are carrying, such as money and concert tickets.

Interaction with the characters you meet is rather limited. You are faced with a picture of the individual and three options: run past them, talk to them, or beat them up. If they are potentially violent you are also told their size and strength.

If you choose to talk you are presented with three or four questions you can ask: one or more of which may produce some useful result. There are some people you must talk to in order to complete the game, but for the most part the beat'em up option is the most useful and achieves the best results (it's also the most enjoyable). In a fight your opponent appears on the screen with you and starts to lay in to you with whatever weapon he is carrying. Although these include such nasty pieces of hardware as a ball-hook and a fist, your vigorous punches, kicks and head-butts will usually gain the upper hand. A nice touch is the way your strengths are represented by filled pint glasses whose contents disappear as you are hit, and the way that once a fight is over you can replenish your energy by buying a drink at the bar.

Despite the very limited time the game gives you to complete your task, the actual problem-solving, bike and ticket-collecting part is so easy that within a few goes you'll know how to collect almost everything you need. The only problem is getting to the right places to collect it and this is where the game becomes very frustrating. While on a single screen the game's movement system works very well, but as soon as you move from location to location the situation becomes very confusing, the controls caus-

ing you to lose all sense of direction and rendering the game almost unmappable.

Sidewalk's graphics are its main attraction, and they're certainly worth a look. The caricatures of the various characters you meet — The Crazy Guitarist, the sumo wrestler, the girl in the record store — are all superbly drawn. Unfortunately the game seems to lack the logic the French are reputed to have so much of: buy one ticket in one place, two more in another and you'll still have only two tickets afterwards!

Granted it's all very original, interesting stuff and the presentation's very stylish, but problems like these do undermine the game's realism. Add in the frustration of trying to find your way around and you could be left a bit less than satisfied. It's a great game to look at though, and the fact that you're not trying to get rich or save the galaxy must count for something.

Release Box		
Atari ST	\$19.95	IMMINENT

There's no need to be rude!



VISUAL EFFECTS

Black and white and good all over

AUDIO

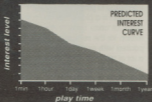
Nice tunes, poor effects

IQ FACTOR

Will require some pondering

FUN FACTOR

Very engaging — but it just doesn't last



ACE RATING 708



A tough customer - time to run!