

# RETRO RATED

» WATCH OUT MIDWAY, YOU HAVE COMPETITION

## TAITO LEGENDS 2



SO MANY GAMES,  
SO LITTLE TIME...



- » **SYSTEM:** XBOX
- » **PRICE:** £19.99
- » **RELEASED:** 31 MARCH
- » **PUBLISHER:** XPLOISIV
- » **DEVELOPER:** TAITO
- » **PLAYERS:** 1-4
- » **ALSO AVAILABLE FOR:** PLAYSTATION 2, PC
- » **FEATURED GAMES:** Alpine Ski, Arabian Magic, Bonze Adventure, Cameltry, Chuck 'N' Pop, Cleopatra Fortune, Crazy Balloon, Darius Gaiden, Don Doko Don, Dungeon Magic, Elevator Action Returns, The Fairyland Story, Football Champ, Front Line, Gekirindan, Grid Seeker: Project Storm Hammer, Growl, Gun Frontier, Insector X, Kiki KaiKai, Kuri Kinton, Legend Of Kage, Liquid Kids, Lunar Rescue, Majestic Twelve - The Space Invaders Part IV, Metal Black, Puchi Carat, Puzzle Bobble 2, Qix, Raimais, Rastan 2, Space Invaders 95, Space Invaders DX, Violence Fight, Wild Western, Bubble Symphony, Cadash, Pop 'N' Pop, Rayforce



**Publishers take note, if you want to tempt us with your compilations this coming Christmas you've got your work seriously cut out.**

Xplosiv's *Taito Legends 2* is finally with us and delivers a stupid amount of games – 39 in fact – for a ridiculously cheap price that sets a precedent by which all future compilations will now be judged.

What makes this second compilation a must-have purchase is the fact that many of its titles never appeared in the UK (at least as far as home conversions went) and those that did make it to Japan will now cost you a pretty penny to buy from importers or eBay. *Taito Legends 2* therefore allows you to savour plenty of obscure delights without having to shell out a small fortune.

Of course, the most obvious question you'll want answered is how well the actual games are emulated. Rest assured, whilst you'll encounter the odd niggle here and there (some sound effects seem a little off and a few of the later Saturn titles don't look quite as nice as we remember them) what you have on offer is of a very high standard indeed. We hate to use the term, but those of a more 'hardcore' orientation may have a few problems with *Taito Legends 2*, mainly because it fails to offer many of the tricks that the likes of MAME supply. There's no option to use different filters or scan-lines, vertical games don't employ a TATE option (the ability to flip the games on



» There are some fantastic shooters on *Legends 2*. Those with a fishy bent may want to check out *Darius Garden*



» Think of *Bubble Bobble* on steroids and you'll be instantly at home with *Bubble Symphony*

their side, and thus keep their original aspect ratios) and you can't reconfigure any of the controls (bar adjustments to sensitivity etc).

It's not all bad news though, as *Legends 2* still has plenty of options to choose from. It's possible to adjust the position of the screen, there's the useful option of keeping the original aspect ratio (although this is at the cost of big borders on the vertical games), the games run at 60 hertz and you can even have the original arcade startup mode for that added



### OPINION

Wow, I was impressed with *Taito Legends*, but Xplosiv has really excelled itself with this sequel.

What you have here is some of the finest games that you'll have ever played (and quite a few that possibly passed you by completely). Forget those measly efforts that offer you the same old games and treat yourself to *Taito Legends 2*, you'll be sorted till Christmas.

Simon Phillips

authenticity. Credits are inserted with the white button (we've tested the Xbox version), while the black is used to start each game. While it's impossible to reconfigure the buttons, most of the offered games only use a couple anyway and many are sensibly placed. Then there's the lovely presentation to consider. Each game is represented by its original arcade cab and gives you a little background info on the title in question. A few bonuses like flyers are included, and while interviews would have been nice this is still a resoundingly solid effort that perfectly captures the nostalgia of the original titles.

While the options aren't as impressive or as lovingly put together as those seen on the two PS2 Japanese *Taito* packs, what is on offer is perfectly acceptable for those that just want to play some great games – and *Taito Legends 2* is saturated in retro gaming goodness.

The pick of the bunch is surely *Elevator Action Returns*, a hellishly addictive update to the 1983 hit that features a choice of different



» Above: *Don Doko Don* was previously available for the NES and PC Engine, now everyone can play it



» Whether you know it as *Puzzle Bobble 2* or *Bust-A-Move* it remains a classic puzzler





### OPINION

Maybe, I'm too set in my ways, but *Taito Legends 2* didn't really click with me like the first compilation. Maybe it's because I don't recognise that many of the games on offer, or it could be that *The New Zealand Story* hasn't been included for a second time. Nevertheless, there's no question that this new compilation is fantastic value for money. Time to play some *Bubble Symphony*...

Damian Butt



If you're like us and find the original *Space Invaders* a little dull, *Space Invaders '95* is sure to get your juices flowing



Don't own a Saturn or a PC Engine? Worry not as *Liquid Kids* is now available in a far more accessible form



characters, some beautifully animated sprites and the sort of frenetic gunplay that wouldn't look out of place in a John Woo flick. Add in the fact that the Saturn version normally sells for around £60 and you've already achieved fantastic value for money and there are still another 38 games! Those with an interest in shoot-'em-ups would do well to check out

### ALL COMPILATIONS ARE EQUAL

BUT SOME ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS...

As we mentioned in last month's news, one of the most annoying aspects of *Taito Legends 2* has nothing to do with how well the games are emulated, or whether it could have benefited from more options. No, our biggest gripe is that Xplosiv has decided to spread 43 games across two different consoles.

While 35 of the available games can be found on both versions, each console has four exclusive titles. Xbox (and PC owners) are treated to *Cadash*, *Pop 'N' Pop*, *Rayforce* and *Bubble Symphony*, whilst PlayStation 2 owners get to play *G-Darius*, *Balloon Bomber*, *Ray Storm* and *Syvalion*. This means that you'll have to buy both the PS2 and Xbox versions if you want the complete set of games. Let's hope we don't see repeats of this in the future.



the amazing *Rayforce*. While it looks slightly rougher than the Saturn version we have in the office (we sadly can't afford the arcade version) there's no denying that the all-important gameplay has remained intact. Other shooters worthy of note include *Darius Gaiden*, *Grid Seeker*, *Metal Black* and *Space Invaders '95*.

If you're more of a platform fanatic then you're really spoilt for choice. *Don Doko Don* is a super little title in the style of *Bubble Bobble*, but switches bubble blowing for hammer bashing, while *Bubble Symphony* is a glorious update to *Bubble Bobble* that features two extra dinosaurs, greatly enhanced visuals and plenty of extra power-ups. Our pick of the bunch though is the delightful *Liquid Kids* (which was only previously available on the PC Engine and Sega Saturn). It's a great little scrolling platformer and will instantly appeal to fans of *Rainbow Islands* and the aforementioned *Bubble Bobble*. Other highlights of *Taito Legends 2* include *Qix*,

*Cameltry*, *Cleopatra Fortune*, *Puchi Caret* (a bizarre cross between *Arkanoid* and *Puzzle Bobble*), *Football Champ*, *Crazy Balloon* and *KiKi KaiKai*, but to be fair, there's more than enough stuff here to appeal to even the most fussy gamer.

And that's *Taito Legends 2*'s greatest strength. Even if you forget the frustrating lack of options, the odd missing (or incorrect) sound effect and its Japanese-centric games, this is still one of the greatest compilations that we've ever played. Good luck to anyone hoping to top this little beauty, you're seriously going to need it.

### IN SUMMARY

Yes there are a few little niggles, but to be honest, they don't detract from what's easily the best value for money compilation we've ever seen. Pick up *Taito Legends 2* today; it's easily the best £19.99 you'll ever spend.

RATING

95%

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