

- **TEAM:** 4MHz, JGNAVARRO (Coding), SAD1942 (GFX), McKlain (Audio/SFX).
- **INFO:** Download from <https://www.4mhz.es/2016/12/16/el-tesoro-perdido-de-cuauhtemoc/>
Physical version also available.
- **REVIEWED BY:** CPC4EVA

EL TESORO PERDIDO DE CUAUHTEMOC

(THE LOST TREASURE OF CUAUTHEMOC)

Lost treasures, the search for gold, diamonds, rubies, the excitement of becoming rich beyond your dreams, it's the stories of legend. Many movies telling of such incredible adventures are part of today's popular culture, the most famous of modern times is the Indiana Jones franchise by Steven Spielberg and George Lucas.

Game developers have been inspired to create games based on explorers setting off on legendary adventures searching for lost treasures, in the 8-Bit scene, the most memorable of this kind of gaming for me is Rick Dangerous (Firebird 1989 - AA#48 overall rating 83%) and Rick Dangerous 2 (Microprose 1990 - AA#62 overall rating 97%). Those two Amstrad CPC games had a massive influence on my love for run 'n jump adventure platformers that still remains to this day.

27 years on, The Lost Treasure of Cuauhtemoc by the 4Mhz group, stirs up all those awesome, wonderful gaming memories. The thrill of exploring, the excitement of reaching a new section, setting off bombs to break bricks allowing you to discover new pathways, the agony and ecstasy of timing your jumps to perfection, the bewilderment of solving a puzzle..... It's all there, platform gaming addiction at its finest.



Jump to the far right platform avoiding the flying fish, then quickly jump back to the higher platform on the left to get the gem.



If you fall in the water, you won't die straight away, you'll lose part of one of your hearts for each of your five lives, ingenious lastability factor.



Hmmmmmm another new enemy - I hate snakes! There's a lever to press on screen 5, can you get to it? Hint you need to jump up.



New enemies on screen 2, an exit to the right of screen and a ladder leading down but how do I remove that rock blocking the ladder?



Climb down the ladder and it gets all dark and creepy, there's a decomposed skeleton of an explorer past, new enemies and more gems to collect. Looks like another lever to press.

It has been written in history, that before his defeat at the hands of the Hernán Cortés army, Cuauhtémoc, the last ruling King of Mexico, built a crypt to hide his most valuable treasures. Centuries have passed, but to this very day, nobody has ever found King Cuauhtémoc's glorious hidden loot. Some say, the crypt of hidden riches has never existed, it's just another myth, however a newly found codex sheds some light on a possible location of the crypt inside an ancient Aztec temple. Countless explorers before you have tried to find King Cuauhtémoc's vast treasures never to have returned because the temple is filled with traps, secret passages, mummies, and serpents. Can you find the secret crypt of the temple and be the first one to

discover all of its riches? Sound familiar to you? It's like the very beginning of Indiana Jones and Raiders of the Lost Ark, where Indiana Jones enters the lost temple to find the golden idol.

If Amstrad Action magazine thought Rick Dangerous one and two were fantastic games, The Lost Treasure of Cuauhtemoc, would have set their pulses racing just as high, oh boy what a game, an absolute 8-Bit gaming standout in 2017. There are so many references and similarities to the Rick Dangerous games, perhaps one could be forgiven for thinking it is Rick Dangerous 3 in disguise.

Even though the main character with his distinctive hat, looks like a carbon



Loud bang, cool explosion but a waste of a bomb as the wall remains.....

copy of Harrison Ford in the Indiana Jones movies, coupled with the same exact movements of the Rick Dangerous games of running 'n jumping, climbing ladders, crawling on the floor, pressing levers, avoiding enemies and setting off bombs - I would like to think that The Lost Treasure of Cuauthemoc is its own game, in its own right.

I found it very hard to find any faults, it plays like a platformers dream come true. Running and jumping onto platforms in all environs above the temple and below posed no problems, it's all so smooth. Sure you will come a cropper often falling off or being stung by a bee or get bitten by a creepy spider but that's just you not getting the timing right. What's more if you happen to fall off a platform into the water or get bitten by a flying fish then you don't actually lose one of your five lives, instead you lose part of one of three hearts for each life. It's an ingenious way to provide stability and enjoyment which both Rick Dangerous games did not have, thus avoiding much frustration at constantly having to repeat the same thing over and over again. It's sheer enjoyment not having to do that in this game.

I was informed by 4Mhz there are 87 individual screens in all to explore. You will be amazed by each one of them I can assure you. The 27 colours of the CPC's mode 0 graphics palette are put to full use, in anyone's terminology graphics, artwork, sprites and animations of The Lost Treasure of Cuauthemoc are unbelievable, you would be forgiven for thinking that this is an Amstrad plus game utilizing all those lovely extra colours and features but its not. Add in some fantastic tunes and sound effects from legendary musician McKlain, you really do feel like you are lost in an Aztec world, those sounds add so much enjoyment to the game, I couldn't decide which was the better the music or the gameplay?

There's more to the game than just running 'n jumping about or avoiding enemies, solving the puzzles adds a much greater challenge and increases the difficulty. When you see a lever to press, unlike the Rick Dangerous games it doesn't actually do anything on that screen. You either have to backtrack your movements or go forward to solve the puzzle of what pressing the lever actually does. As you solve each new puzzle the game becomes more interesting, you discover new rooms filled with gems to collect, weapons to use such as a gun or dynamite and new enemies to avoid.

The lower you go in the temple, the greater your discoveries and rewards. Falling through the water sees your character turn all blue, with a snorkel displayed in the HUD (head up display) at the bottom of the screen, you're exploring, collecting gems and shooting at fish with ease, it's all so crazy good. At the bottom of the HUD screen there are four blue shapes which are filled when you collect one of the special gold coloured stones needed to enter the final treasure chamber - you find these when you uncover more screens, as you get closer to finding the lost crypt.

I can't help but be super impressed, the gaming is just pure joy. I love platform adventure exploring type games when they are done right, The Lost Treasure of Cuauthemoc is more than done right, it's almost as close to faultless as I have seen.

Once again the Spanish brigade of CPC coders and developers prove just how amazing the humble Amstrad CPC machine is. They did it back in the 1980s - 1990s with Dinamic Software et al, and they continue to do so today. Yes it may frustrate you and seem high on difficulty at first, these as I found quickly disappear as you appreciate the total awesomeness of it.

The 4Mhz team has put together an absolute cracking game in every



Turning all blue as you explore under water with your snorkel.



The first sign of collecting bombs.... The exploring is so much fun.

respect. Colourful is an understatement. Attention to detail depiction of a hidden Aztec temple is incredible, the thought that you are an "Indiana Jones" type of character searching for the Lost Treasure of Cuauthemoc is how I felt all throughout the game. Fantastic and amazing fall short to describe the gaming experience. The only thing that is missing that could elevate it even higher is the inclusion of cut scenes with a series of different levels as found in the Rick Dangerous games, but this is not the story of Rick Dangerous, this is the legend and story of The Lost Treasure of Cuauthemoc! An absolute stunner of a game to play and enjoy.

VERDICT

PROS

- Unbelievable GFX.
- Instant grab factor.
- So much staying power, so many screens to explore.
- 5 lives but you don't die instantly, you get many chances per life.

CONS

- I really can't think of any to list.
- I encountered a section where you fall into spikes and can't get out that probably is a bug / needs to be corrected.

99%

- TEAM: Rafa Castillo, John McKlain (Music and SFX)
- INFO: Download from <http://cpcretrodev.byterrealms.com/en/>
- REVIEWED BY: CPC4EVA



BABA'S PALACE

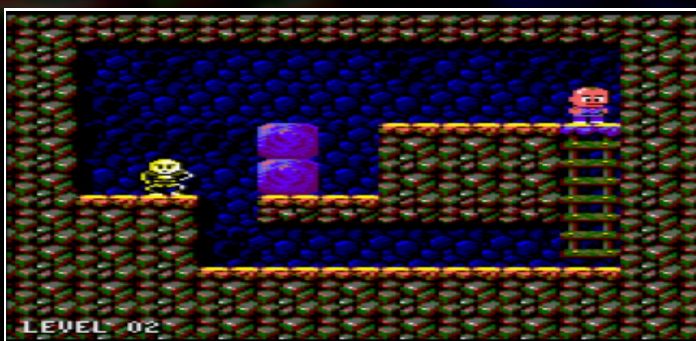


Past winners of the Amstrad #CPCRETRODEV, game creation contest, have shown just how awesome games can be using only 64kb of memory. Baba's Palace, continues that tradition taking out the overall top placing, in emphatic style.

It may only be a simple puzzle / strategy game of moving blocks about a single screen, which I am sure most gamers would have experienced playing so many of in the past. The presentation and enjoyment that you get out of playing Baba's Palace is what sets it apart from the rest of the games in this genre.

From the gorgeous cutscene introductory mini movie with musical score during the loader, to the simplicity of the opening levels and then the game becoming a greater challenge to unlock the puzzles in later levels, Baba's Palace gameplay is faultless.

What is Baba's Palace you ask? The story unfolds with Shaolin Kid, an experienced apprentice of martial arts, on a quest to improve his fighting techniques so he can help those oppressed by the injustices and abuse of the powerful in a far away land. One day, he witnesses the death of Little Indian's father at the hands of a soulless assassin. Unable to help revive Little Indian's father, a quest to find the magical elixir of life begins. Shaolin Kid and Little Indian travel the lands, crossing high mountains, vast plains and lush forests in search of the magical elixir. Their travels bring them to a remote village where one of the natives informs



Walk to the left and push those huge stones into the hole...



Now take out the skeleton!!!



Getting harder... Climb the ladder on the left...



Land on the skeleton's head...

them of the fantastic powers of the witch known as Baba Yaga, who actually holds a magical potion, called the elixir of life that will revive Little Indian's father.

In desperation, Shaolin Kid and Little Indian knock at the front door of Baba Yaga's Palace. An old grey haired, evil looking witch opens the door slowly, "what do you want?", she yells at both of them. "We come in peace and request the elixir of life from you, great witch Baba Yaga, to revive the death of Little Indian's father", they both plead. Baba Yaga says "I am no fairy godmother, I am a real witch, I just don't give out my elixir of life potions for free. You have to enter my Palace and defeat my many henchmen over 100 different levels". With nothing to lose, everything to gain and no other choice, Shaolin Kid and Little Indian accept Baba Yaga's incredible challenge.

To pass each level you, must eliminate all the henchmen of Baba Yaga's Palace that appear on that level. In the early stages, henchmen remain grounded (ground enemies), later on, as the game gets harder there are also flying enemies. All you need to do to eliminate any henchmen, is control Shaolin Kid in any of the four directions, up, down, left and right, walking through each of the henchmen will destroy it / make it disappear. In the earlier levels you only control Shaolin Kid, but later, the game's difficulty increases as you will be required to control both Shaolin Kid and Little Indian to solve the puzzles, you can only control one of the characters at a time though.

An essential element of what makes a game a great game is the enjoyment you get out of playing it. I am so used to playing 8-Bit games with lots of blasting away or timing jump after jump, Baba's Palace has none of those, yet, I couldn't be happier. The puzzles from levels 1 - 6 you can complete easily, then as you progress, the difficulty starts to increase ever so gradually, make a wrong decision, you're going to be stuck. That's ok though, as coder, Rafa Castillo, has installed an option to restart the level, its brilliant innovation, as most games in this style, if you get stuck, you can't restart and all the enjoyment is sucked out of the game, better still there are passwords for each level allowing you flexibility, if you can't pass a level or are too busy at the time you can come back to it when you want to.

Frustrations I have experienced in similar types of games in the past, are still there but they certainly don't feel like frustration at all, more a feeling of "I can do this, I just need to think about it more", I got this feeling because there is no pressure to complete a level, you can complete it at your own pace to solve each of the puzzles, there's no time limits nor any other elements that may get on your



Level 1, so easy, just kill that orange thing by walking into it, push the block in the hole and kill the other orange thing!

nerves. The name of Baba's Palace game is trial and error, using your brain thinking about your strategy is what will get you through all 100 levels. Moving a stone to fill a hole or to get to a ladder, then working out how to reach the henchman, sounds rather easy, but there is much more appeal to the game than that, as each level is composed of different elements with which you can interact to achieve the goal of completing the level.



Now take out the skeleton!!!

Sand blocks can be removed that can either help or hinder you, decisions need to be made, do I climb the ladder or is it possible to move through one of the solid blocks to get to a stone and push it down a platform first? There is also the element of thinking outside the square, normally you would think pushing a heavy stone from height would crush anyone underneath it, but you can use such a tactic to your advantage, as the stones will remain on top of whatever is underneath them, be it Shaolin Kid, any of the henchmen or other stones.

Graphically speaking Baba's Palace is presented so gorgeously from the opening sequences and all the way through the game after that. Rafa Castillo should be very proud of his creation, there is great variety of henchmen, the main character sprites both look so cute and move quite fluidly. Each level looks basically the same, just a different floor plan with many more henchmen, yet the artwork beautifully captures the storyline. I always feel great games must be accompanied by great music. The great one, prolific Amstrad CPC musician, John Mcklain, does it again, Baba's Palace

appeal is enhanced with fantastic music & sound effects.

How often is it that simplistic games to play, end up being great games? It's so cliché perhaps, but it certainly does work. If you look at the past as an example, many of Hewson Software's 8-Bit releases (Nebulus, Anarchy, Netherworld, Impossaball) received such high acclaim, because these games oozed playability with simplicity at the heart of the gameplay. Baba's Palace, is ever so simple, yet it is completely addictive, with more staying power than you could ask for, I mean who challenges your brain to solve 100 levels in a 64k games these days? I don't think that even happened back in the golden age of 8-Bit gaming during 1980's and 1990's? If you love games of thought, that provide an excellent challenge, then you can't go wrong here, Baba's Palace is irresistible 8-Bit gaming of the very highest quality.

VERDICT

PROS

- Simplistic, addictive gameplay.
- Huge staying power, 100 levels will keep you challenged.
- Excellent GFX and SFX.
- Very cute sprites.
- Varied henchmen.
- Excellent intro mini movie.
- Able to restart levels or use passwords to come back to play later.

CONS

- Extremely hard to fault.

98%

- CODING: 4MHz, JGNAVARRO, LordFred (GFX), Sad1942 (Levels), John McKlain (SFX)
- INFO: Download from <http://cpcretrodev.byterrealms.com/en/>
- REVIEWED BY: CPC4EVA

PROFANATION 2: ESCAPE FROM ABU SIMBEL

While C64 owners get a port of Dinamic Software's original Abu Simbel Profanation in 2017, Amstrad CPC enthusiasts got its sequel with Profanation 2: Escape from Abu Simbel. Personally I think both sets of 8-Bit communities would wish they hadn't. Once again you play the odd looking cursed blob formation known as Johnny Jones. Having broken the curse from the first game you would think Johnny Jones would return to his human form, but that is not the case - already it's weird and awkward. This time Johnny has found himself falling down a long shaft into the temple of Abu Simbel, from which he must escape and get to the north pole. The opening animation sequence depicting Johnny Jones falling down the shaft in a mini movie, is the highlight of the game for me, no I am not being sarcastic either.

As platformers go the graphics and sound are very nice, excellent atmospheric tunes again from McKlain, this is where anything nice about the game ends. If you thought the original game of the series was difficult, you don't know what difficult is until you play it's sequel. From your very first moment of trying to jump from one platform to the other, you may as well not even bother with your 9 lives, just give up, walk away, go play the awesome Baba's Palace, or do something better with your time. Don't even get caught up with the pixel perfect timing required with the jumps or be concerned with solving the puzzles, do yourself a favour and walk away from it. I don't enjoy being negative about any games, however if there is flaws in a game, I will 'run the knife' through them without any favour or fear of backlash.

If there was ever a game that didn't deserve its second placing at any

computer game creation contest, then it has to be Profanation 2 - Escape from Abu Simbel. I am very sceptical at why this game was awarded so highly by the judges, I question whether they actually played the game at any length, I get the strong feeling the judges only looked at the colourful graphics or listened to the nice tunes, because if they played the game, they would realize, it's totally unplayable! Not being able to get past the first screen, makes it unplayable!

Constantly I have tried to find something to like about this game, I couldn't. I wondered was it me, am I being too harsh, or does the game really suck so badly? I have chatted about the game to some serious, experienced game players who have actually gotten somewhere in the game, their reaction is that it's the most impossible 8-Bit game they have played in a long time.

I searched online to look for other people's opinions. I saw that on the CPC GAMES REVIEWS website, cpcgamereviews.com, Nich Campbell who reviewed the game felt the same way, I think his overall score of 4 out of 10 was very generous as he stated "Even with nine lives, I have only managed to see the first four screens without resorting to cheating!" I then looked up videos and watched other people playing the game on YouTube, the same result, they struggled to get past the first screen, let alone make it to the fourth.

The game is extremely difficult, yet I read on the "CPC POWER" website, that the team behind the game had started working on it from 2016, well in advance of the 2017 #CPCRETRODEV closing date. Surely they would have had ample time for play testing and making the game better than what it is, surely they



Very colourful and attractive graphics, but the gameplay is so awful!

would have? At first glance, it does not appear so. I am sure they did spend much time on play testing, the end result though is a game that is unplayable. Profanation 2, is such a disappointment, I can't believe 4Mhz released The lost Caves of Cuauhtemoc in 2017, which is such a fantastic game and then they follow it up later in the year with the unplayable Profanation 2: Escape from Abu Simbel - I just can't work that one out? So bitterly disappointed after playing this game.

VERDICT

PROS

- Nice GFX and SFX.

CONS

- Unplayable.
- Extremely Difficult.
- Don't bother with it.

17%