

REVIEW

It's been over a year since Sega released *Shining Force* upon an unsuspecting public. Not a vast number of copies found their way onto the shelves, and those that did were snapped up. Since then, strategy-starved Megadrive owners have had precious few offerings. Nonetheless, those of us with impeccable taste have waited eagerly for the sequel and, at long last, here it is.

Shining Force II brings all the features of its predecessor to a brand-new thrilling adventure. As with most RPGs, a fair part of the game is taken up exploring strange new towns and dungeons, picking up clues and items in order to progress further into the adventure. However, the trademark of the *Shining Force* series is recruiting people into the *Shining Force* itself, building up a formidable fighting force to take on the hordes of enemy troops you meet throughout the game.

As with the original *Shining Force*, all the action comes from the epic combat scenes. Although the outcome of each round is calculated by the computer, the actual fun is moving your team around strategically and watching the dramatic fight scenes take place.

Apart from the new plot, there's really no difference between *Shining Force II* and its predecessor, of course bearing in mind the game is vastly bigger. It has the same simple graphics, a new, but equally atmospheric soundtrack, a user-friendly control system and the same playable feel. What more could you ask for? Lastability perhaps? Well you've got that too, because the sheer size will guarantee months of playability.

Shining Force II is neither better or worse than its predecessor, it's simply just as good. Whether or not you've got the first game, this is an essential purchase, so go out and buy it. It's about time these games got the recognition they deserve.



▲ Uh oh! Possessed by a evil spirit, the King of Galam has opened a gateway to the World of Evil!



▲ Avoiding the crumbling floor, the *Shining Force* race to the ship where all the townfolk are waiting to evacuate.



▲ Grabbing the fair Princess Elis he intends to enter the dark realms. Our hero tries to stop them, but it's no use. They are gone.



▲ With not a moment to lose, they set sail, heading down stream. As they look back at the fair city of Granseal, a terrifying roar sounds.



▲ Suddenly a earthquake strikes. Racing from the palace, our heroes are halted as huge chasms open up beneath their feet.



▲ And the city plunges into the bowels of the Earth, leaving only the Ancient Tower which seems to point right to the pits of Hell!



▲ The giant Kraken lets loose with a sort of ear-wax attack. Not pleasant.



▲ An evil dwarf, one of the many minions of the dark forces.

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BV:
SEGAPRICE:
£49.99RELEASE:
SEPTSTYLE:
RPGPLAYERS:
1CONTROL:
JOYPADCONTINUES:
BATTERY



▲ She may look pretty revolting, but this old dear isn't so bad. She appears at the beginning of each game and shows you the saved positions. She also reeks of wee.



▲ Medical herbs for only 10 sronks? Now that's what I call value for money.

COMMENT



**RADON
AUTOMATIC**

The original Shining Force still ranks as one of the best console RPGs ever made, so it's good to see the team haven't changed too much of the basic game formula. Shining Force 2 takes the game engine of the original and adapts it to a whole new collection of plot lines, and throws in a completely brand spanking new set of characters, each with their own special abilities (except Jippo the Thief - he's crap). As the plot unravels the game becomes more and more absorbing, and it's easy to spend two or three hours just plugging away just to see what happens next. If you fancy a change of pace from the usual platformers and shoot 'em ups, this comes highly recommended, and if you're a fan of the first Shining Force this is an absolute dead cert must-have type thing.

COMMENT



**TOM
GARSE**

I was completely hooked on the first Shining Force game. It had so many different elements that made it addictive and thankfully these qualities are all present in the sequel. Recruiting new characters, seeing them develop as the game progresses, taking part in the huge atmospheric battles and watching the plot unfold, it's all gripping stuff. What's more, the Shining Force series portrays a great deal of emotion rarely seen in a Megadrive game, from the humorous banter of your team to sadness when a character dies. Shining Force II doesn't add any new features to the format of its predecessor, but it does have an all-new plot and that's exactly what you play the game for. If you've never played the original Shining Force, either of these games come equally recommended. If, like me though, you're a fan of the first game, this is the sequel you've been waiting for.



*My father said...
TOMMY G is nice boy
for me to marry someday!*

▲ Her father, of course, has terminal brain worms. Poor fellow.



▲ Rad Automatic hits the dance floor with his sensational trademark gangle-man dance.



Presentation:

90

A lengthy intro sets the scene with sections of plot development interspersing the game. Ace!

Graphics:

88

The main graphics are simple, but very effective. The combat scenes are smart and the many character portraits are top-notch.

Sound:

90

A whole range of different tunes to match every scene. Plenty of blistering spot-effects too.

Originality:

30

It's identical to the first Shining Force game except for the plot. So, it's not very original.

Playability:

92

Easy-to-use icons and idiot-proof controls. Great fun and very playable.

Challenge:

93

The scale of each battle increases throughout the game, matching even the hardest Shining Force. A perfect difficulty curve.

Lastability:

93

The game is just massive! This one will take you months to complete.

OVERALL:

Just brilliant! Shining Force II is a game you've just got to have!

92