



HARDCORE PINBALL

Be a pinball wizard without flares

There's quite a few pinball simulators on the Game Boy Advance, since the machine is a perfect fit for it. The ultimate factor in deciding which one is worth your hard-earned quarters is how fun the tables are so it is good to see the ones in *Hardcore Pinball* are top quality.

As the name suggests, the four tables on offer are designed with hardcore players in mind. Just hitting the ball randomly will yield few results—it's only after you know the tables back to front that you can really rack up the points. Each table is full of secret areas, bonuses and neat little tricks designed to boost your score through the roof and keep the challenge high. The theme of the table extends beyond the background graphics, which is pretty cool—for example, knock the television on the retro board too much and the screen will go black and white for a while.

Of course good table design means nothing if the ball physics are sup-par, and *Hardcore Pinball* does not disappoint. The ball reacts to the table and flippers exactly how you would expect, meaning that you have nobody but yourself to blame when you make a mistake. **B**

—Camron Davis



Unlike real pinball machines, the tables in *Hardcore Pinball* aren't covered in human filth.



Soccer, pinball and Game Boy Advance—what a winning combination.

POCKET DATA

PUBLISHER: Telegames
DEVELOPER: Paragon Five
GENRE: Pinball
PLAYERS: 1
RELEASE DATE: Out Now
ESRB RATING: E

POCKET SCORE

GRAPHICS

Each table is full of colour and, most importantly, pretty blinking lights. The ball stands out well.

GAMEPLAY

It's pinball, so you already know if you like it.

SOUND

Authentic bells and whistles keep the sound effects real.

OVERALL

Pinball doesn't get much better on the GBA. All that's missing is the ability to shake the handheld around to cheat.

9.0
OUT OF TEN



HAMTARO HAM-HAM HEARTBREAK

Ham-Ham Heartbreak is a role-playing game oozing with tasty, sugary cuteness. The story focuses on the exploits of an evil hamster named Spat, who has turned all of the ham-ham pals against one another by instigating squabbles between them. Hamtaro and Bijou are the only "hamigos" (best pals) not affected by Spat's antics, so they're enlisted to rekindle the friendships between the 30-some pairs of disenchanting ham-hams.

In most RPGs, you use magic spells to defeat enemies and earn treasure. Here, ham-chats allow you to communicate and perform various actions. For example: By saying "hamba" (hello) to a strange hamster, you can learn how to "offdoff" (take) a battery and how to "putput" (place) it into a toy speedboat—which you're then able to drive. Other ham-chats provide similar opportunities. You can ride a roller coaster, participate in a volleyball game, and even enter a dance contest.

There are seven "mega-q" (large) areas to explore—including a theme park, tropical island, and haunted house. Aside from the main quest, you can also amuse yourself by changing costumes in the photo-booth, creating and trading songs in the Ham-Jam room, or by playing games at the theme park. **B**

—Frank Provo



Hop into the speedboat to rescue Bijou.

POCKET DATA

PUBLISHER: Nintendo
DEVELOPER: Nintendo
GENRE: RPG
PLAYERS: 1 (2 Linked)
RELEASE DATE: Out Now
ESRB RATING: E

POCKET SCORE

GRAPHICS

There are plenty of animated sequences involving your favorite Hamtaro characters.

GAMEPLAY

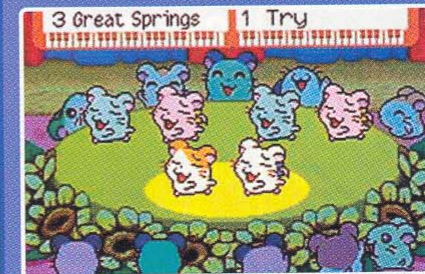
Players use ham-chat to solve riddles, run errands, and interact with the ham-hams.

SOUND

You'll recognize the music from the cartoon, but the sound effects are "ouchichi" (painful).

OVERALL

The sheer amount of variety makes up for the game's simple design, and the story is positively adorable.



Hamtaro and Bijou use ham-chat to participate in a dance contest.

8.0
OUT OF TEN