

PINBALL CONSTRUCTION SET

Ariglesoft, £9.95 cass, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys.

Pinball Construction Set is a pinball table designing utility, allowing you to design, create and play your very own pin table. Anyone who's seen *Night Mission* and *David's Midnight Magic*, both constructed using this device, will realise what a powerful utility this is.

The program requires **NO** programming knowledge at all to work it, a cliché that seems rather over used when it comes to any designing game but here it is one that is definitely true. *Pinball Construction Set* is an icon-driven program so using it is simple and designing a table takes very little time.

STARTING OFF

When you load the program it starts with the screen divided into two. On the left is a picture of a very basic pin table with the border and drop chute. On the right is a box containing icons and pieces of a pin table. Using these you can start to design your table.

THE ICONS

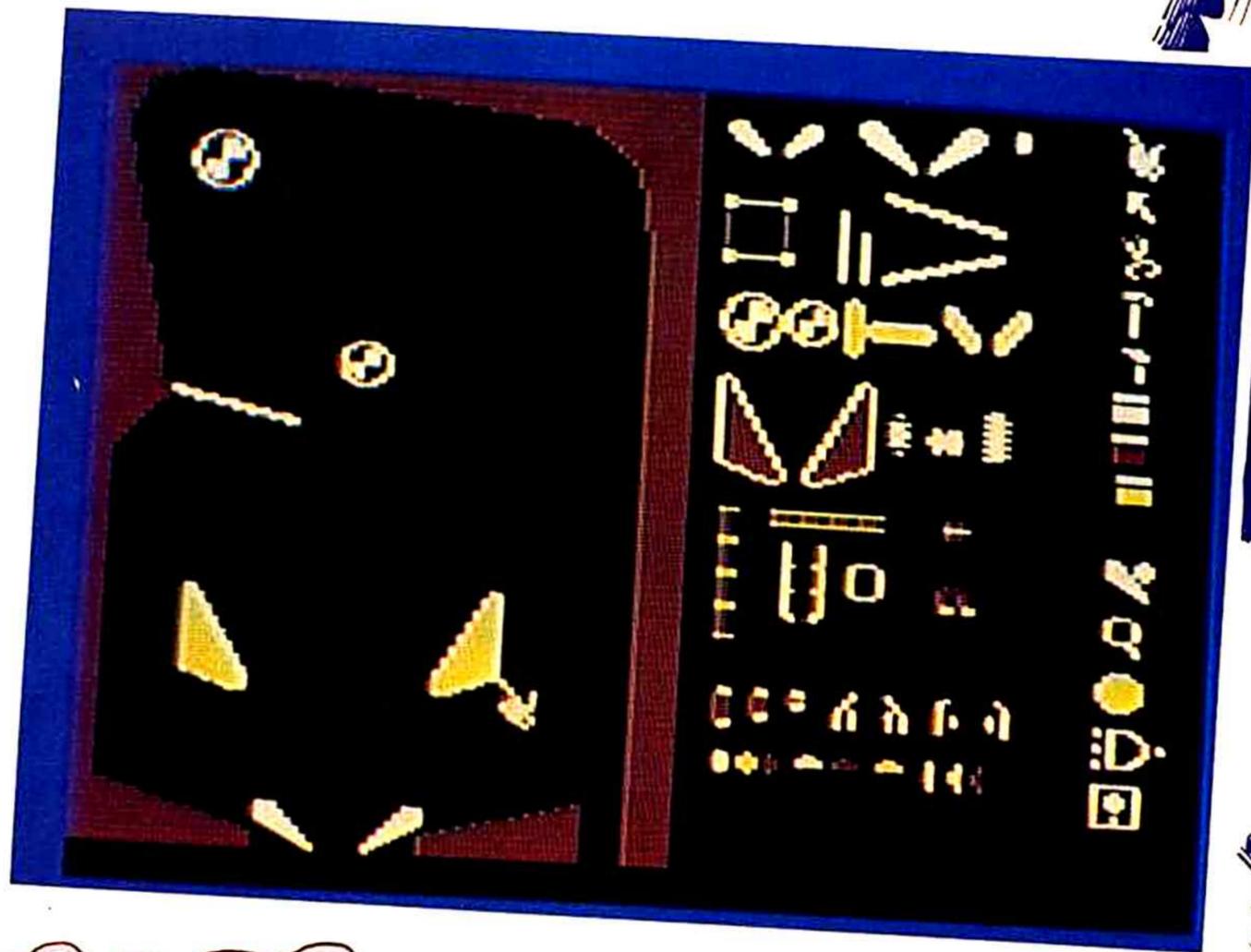
During the construction of a table everything is controlled using a 'hand' icon. To use another icon, say the paint mode, you have to put the hand over the paint pot, press fire and then you can use the paintbrush icon. All icons are accessed in a similar way and are used with the joystick and fire button.

SHAPING

There are three icons which you can use to redesign the actual shape of the table. Using the hammer and arrow icons you can drag the sides of the table around giving its surround an entirely original shape, and thus make the final product a far more exciting game to play. If you happen to make a boo-boo (happens all the time) then you can use the scissors icon to 'snip' out your mistakes. There is also another very clever device which allows you to take a square of four dots and put it anywhere on the table and use the hammer and arrow to pull it around to make an isolated bumper for example. You can shape this to suit your requirements and make oddly shaped bumpers, tunnels or drop targets.

DESIGNING THE TABLE

Once you have an idea of what you'd like your table to look like you can start to design it using pieces from the bits box on the design screen. Simply move the icon over a piece, flippers for example, press fire button and keep it down. You then can



This is a really BRILLIANT utility and using it is dead easy, even for a non-programmer like me. All the actions are done via the joystick and icons and within a few minutes from loading you can get together the basics of an original, exciting table, or even a copy of an arcade one! Putting together a REALLY excellent table might need a bit of thought and time but the results (see the two available on the market (David's and Night Mission) can be really stupendous).

It's surprising how enthralling using a utility can be and I was surprised at my reaction to this one—I didn't want to put it down until I'd finished a table. If you want to take time over a table then you can always save your half completed version for future use which comes in handy. I've really taken to this program, it makes a change from blowing things up or solving a game and I found it incredibly rewarding to sit down, design my very own table, play it and challenge my friends to a game.

I know that the idea of designing your own pinball machine may not grip you in the places that count, but that is probably too simplistic a label to put on this game anyway. The facilities it provides are staggering—not just all of the normal gates and obstructions that you would expect to find on a pinball machine, but you can even alter the sound effects, the scoring system, the speed and the elasticity of the ball.

The number of options open to you are huge, and very easy to use. I would think that this could keep an imaginative mind busy for some time, after all it is perfectly fair to look upon the package as some sort of art/graphics program that moves. There aren't many graphics packages that allow you to play the final product. If the game subject appeals to you then you could do a helluva lot worse than pick up a copy of this.

move the piece into position and let go of the fire button. It will now fall into place on the table and will play an active part in the game if you want to try it out. Once you have laid out the table you can start polishing it up.

FINISHING OFF

There are several modes which you can use to add a really professional touch to your table. Firstly you can adjust the table's gravity, rather like increasing or decreasing the pitch of it. You can also adjust the elasticity of the bumpers and flippers, the speed of the ball and the 'kick' that the sides, bumpers and





Pinball Construction Set has been around for some time now and has spawned some excellent pinball tables such as Broderbund's David's Midnight Magic and Sublogic's Night Mission. Ariolasoft previously released the former of the two and have now decided (thankfully) to make its 'father' just as widely available.

The package is incredibly simple to use and quality results can be achieved remarkably quickly, with relative ease—the multitude of icon driven options to hand make it so. Once you have got to grips with things some really classy tables can be produced and you're only limited to what you can do by your imagination. Despite its age, PCS is a wonderful utility that shouldn't be overlooked by any pinball fan.



writer. Using the program you can design your own tables or even make computer copies of some of your favourite arcade pin tables. We are currently searching for *The Black Night*, Bally/Midway's *Spy Hunter* and *Ghost Hunter*, and the Williams *Space Shuttle*, some all time favourite pin tables to photograph so we can transfer them to the Commodore!

flippers actually give. Once you have set these parameters you can then set the scores and bonuses of the drop targets, spinners, bumpers or anything you want. You can also define the jingles when the ball hits anything which is a nice touch.

POLISHING THE TABLE

Once you are really happy with what you've done you can finish the table off using the 'zoom' mode. When you go into this mode you will get a box on screen that can move about. On the right is a large panel and you will notice when you move the square about the table the panel will show a large magnification of the pixels the square is over. You can use the icon to add or take away pixels and thus really smooth the sides of the table, or even engrave pictures or your initials somewhere on the playing area. Using this you can also draw on the playing area or reshape the objects on the table to give your design that extra professional look.

WHAT CAN I MAKE?

The utility allows you to make an infinite amount of tables and then use them independently from the Construction Set itself, rather like *The Quill* adventure

Presentation 99%
Excellent instructions and on screen lay-out.

Graphics
Quality depends upon the user.

Sound
Quality depends upon the user.

Hookability 92%
Very easy to use and get into.

Lastability 96%
Unlimited pinball tables at your disposal.

Value for Money 93%
Definitely worth it if pinball is your 'thing'.

Overall 94%
An excellent utility for all pinball fans.

