

= Killer Instinct Gold =

Killer Instinct Gold is a 1996 fighting video game based on the arcade game Killer Instinct 2 . The game was developed by Rare and released by Nintendo for the Nintendo 64 video game console . As in other series entries , players control characters who fight on a 2D plane set against a 3D background . Players press buttons to punch and kick their opponent in chains of successive hits , known as combos . Large combo successions lead to stronger attacks and brutal , stylistic finisher moves underscored by an announcer . Characters ? including a gargoyle , a ninja , and a femme fatale ? fight in settings such as a jungle and a spaceship . Killer Instinct Gold includes the arcade release 's characters , combos , and 3D , pre @-@ rendered environments , but excludes its full @-@ motion video sequences and some voiceovers due to restrictions of the cartridge media format . The Gold release adds a training mode , new camera views , and improved audiovisuals .

Rare was a prominent second @-@ party developer for Nintendo in the 1990s , and their Killer Instinct series was produced as an exclusive partnership in response to the popularity of Mortal Kombat . Following the success of the 1995 Killer Instinct port for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System , Rare began a sequel for the same platform but transitioned development to its successor , the Nintendo 64 , upon its unveiling . Gold was scheduled as a launch title for the new console but was delayed until its North American release in November 1996 . It was released in other regions in May 1997 . Gold was later included in Rare 's 2015 Xbox One retrospective compilation , Rare Replay .

Reviewers preferred the Nintendo 64 port over the arcade release , and appreciated its audiovisual enhancements , but felt that its graphical upgrades and memorization @-@ based combo gameplay were insufficient when compared to fighting games like Tekken 2 and Virtua Fighter 2 . Critics recommended Gold primarily for fans of the series and genre , but IGN reported that even fans were upset by changes in the combo system and the absence of several well @-@ liked characters . Gold ultimately did not replicate the success of its Super NES predecessor , and the series remained dormant through its 2002 acquisition by Microsoft until its 2013 reboot .

= = Gameplay = =

Killer Instinct Gold is a port of the arcade fighting video game Killer Instinct 2 . Like other entries in the Killer Instinct series , two characters controlled by humans or artificial intelligence fight in one @-@ on @-@ one matches to deplete their opponent 's health meter . While the characters move and attack on a 2D plane , the background is depicted in pre @-@ rendered 3D and gives the appearance of depth . Players fight with a six @-@ button setup : three punch buttons and three kick buttons , similar to the controls in Street Fighter II . Players can chain together a series of hits into " combos " for increased damage , with some combos requiring a specific , memorized sequences of button presses . Multiple hit combos lead to stronger attacks and brutal , stylistic finisher moves , or " fatalities " . Characters on the receiving end of a combo can interrupt the sequence with a " combo breaker " move . An announcer narrates major game moments with phrases like , " Awesome combo ! "

Gold features arcade , team , and tournament gameplay modes . The game 's new " practice mode " lets players rehearse their skills and follow tutorials . In the new knockout tournament mode , players cycle through a preselected team of characters when their current character is eliminated . Gold features the same characters , combos , and environments available in the arcade Killer Instinct 2 . Players can unlock new character appearances , gameplay difficulty levels , and additional playable character . Gold and Killer Instinct 2 's shared roster contains ten characters in total : three new additions and seven returning from the previous title . Characters include a gargoyle , a ninja , and a femme fatale . Fights are set in spaceship , jungle , and castle settings , among others , and some backgrounds are interactive . Gold features new camera functions that automatically zoom to better frame the fight . The release also includes enhancements to the 3D backgrounds and an upgraded soundtrack , but excludes the full @-@ motion video sequences and some voiceovers from the arcade release due to the Nintendo 64 's cartridge media data storage

restrictions . While Gold 's backgrounds are fluidly animated in 60 frames per second , its character animations have fewer frames than its arcade equivalent .

= = Development = =

Killer Instinct Gold was developed by Rare during a time when the British company was becoming a prominent second @-@ party developer and ally for Nintendo , the game 's publisher . Rare modeled its Killer Instinct series on the Mortal Kombat fighting game series . As a departure from fighting game staples such as Street Fighter , both Killer Instinct and Mortal Kombat championed an aggressively fast pace of gameplay and placed less emphasis on patience and mastery . The Killer Instinct series began as an arcade game (1994) and became known as " Nintendo 's version of Mortal Kombat " upon its release on the company 's Super NES (1995) and Game Boy (1995) . The games industry expected a sequel after the Super NES version 's wide success , with over three million copies sold . Following market demand , Rare began development on a sequel for the arcade . They had a Super NES version in development , but transitioned to Nintendo 's new Nintendo 64 after the console 's announcement . The Killer Instinct development team split itself between the arcade version and the Nintendo 64 release that would become Killer Instinct Gold . The latter began work as soon as Rare received its Nintendo 64 development kit .

The seven @-@ person development team started work on the sequel with the ideas that did not fit into the original . They also incorporated feedback from Killer Instinct players . Killer Instinct 2 's art , design , and programming changed continuously throughout development up until its release . Kevin Bayliss designed the characters and Chris Tilston developed the game engine with feedback from Nintendo 's Ken Lobb . Rare used compression technology to fit the arcade version onto the smaller Nintendo 64 cartridge . While Killer Instinct was planned to showcase the Nintendo 64 's power , the console was more limited than Rare 's arcade setup , and Rare had to optimize the arcade version to run on the console . The arcade version used an animation to give the illusion of the camera panning horizontally , but the console version used static image files with less detail .

The game was originally scheduled to be among the first two launch titles for the Nintendo 64 , but missed the release window . Gold released in North America on November 25 , 1996 , and in other countries the following year , on May 9 , 1997 . Its soundtrack received a compact disc release , which was rare for Western video games in the 1990s . Rare , under contract , ultimately finished its Super NES port of Killer Instinct 2 , but Nintendo chose not to release it .

= = Reception = =

In 1996 , reviewers compared Gold favorably to Killer Instinct 2 , but thought that its graphics were not sufficiently upgraded . Doug Perry (IGN) felt that the Killer Instinct 2 graphics in Gold appeared dated and gave it a " cheesy 80s feel " . He and Ed Lomas (CVG) noticed fewer animation frames when compared with the arcade release . IGN preferred Gold 's crisp music but would have liked more characters and distinctions from the arcade version . GameSpot named Gold the best entry in the series at the time , but other reviewers only recommended Gold for fans of the series and genre and those most desperate for a Nintendo 64 fighting game . Colin Williamson (AllGame) said that Killer Instinct Gold was best for players who want " Mortal Kombat on speed " with a " hyperactive Barry White " announcer .

Within the fighting game genre , GameSpot considered Gold to be better than the other Nintendo 64 fighting game , Mortal Kombat Trilogy . GamePro readers chose Gold as the second best fighting game of 1996 after Tekken 2 . Next Generation and Marcus Hawkins (N64 Magazine) agreed that Tekken 2 and Virtua Fighter 2 had outclassed Killer Instinct Gold . N64 concluded that even in the Nintendo 64 's then @-@ meager catalog of titles , Killer Instinct Gold did not distinguish itself , and thus had a lifespan of " weeks rather than months " . Killer Instinct Gold waned from a celebrated announcement to a quiet European release .

Reviewers highly praised the game 's sound and environment backdrops , but noted blurriness in the character animations . IGN appreciated its stereo sound , special effects , and camera work .

Scary Larry (GamePro) liked Gold 's sound except for the explosion and " death screech " sound effects . GameSpot considered the graphics " near perfect " apart from the character animations . (CVG wrote that characters appeared blurry because of " fuzzy anti @-@ aliasing " when the camera zoomed in .) Game Informer was similarly impressed by the graphics , but one reviewer commented that Gold had few other positive features . As an exception , GamePro praised the " lively " character animations over the " flawed " backgrounds .

While GamePro gave the game perfect ratings in controls and fun , Next Generation considered the controls as awkward as they were on the Super NES and ultimately wrote that the game was " not much fun " . Many reviewers criticized how Gold 's combo @-@ based gameplay diminished the importance of skill . IGN wrote that this shallow emphasis on " archaic " combo sequence memorization prevented creative improvisation . CVG wrote that Gold had little " flow " : every match was focused on huge combos rather than small , strategic moves . Thus , players were forced to train before they could effectively produce combos long enough to win matches . Daily Radar and CVG praised the training mode , which the latter also liked in the game 's Super NES predecessor .

= = Legacy = =

After the 1996 Killer Instinct Gold did not sell as well as the Super NES version of the original , the series went dormant . IGN reported in 2010 that Killer Instinct Gold had upset series fans by changing the combo move sets and omitting " fan favorite " characters from the original . The website added that Rare knew that fans wanted a new entry for Killer Instinct over one for any other Rare franchise . Microsoft purchased Rare in 2002 , ending the acquisition 's prominent alliance with Nintendo . Microsoft and Rare revived the series for the Xbox One platform in 2013 . In 2014 , GamesRadar retrospectively ranked Gold the 35th best game on the Nintendo 64 console .

Killer Instinct Gold was later emulated in the August 2015 Xbox One compilation of 30 Rare titles , Rare Replay . Nintendo Life wrote that Gold 's graphics had not aged well . The New York Daily News reported that Killer Instinct Gold , while " underrated " in its time , had withered into an outdated frustration as the anthology 's biggest letdown . Destructoid singled out Gold as the collection 's worst title , namely because it was a " barebones " Killer Instinct 2 . Twenty years after the original release , Retro Gamer wrote that while Killer Instinct was popular in arcades , it had been outdone by Tekken 2 and Virtua Fighter 2 by 1996 , and ultimately proved mediocre in comparison .