

Not quite the interior of a Rolls Royce, but much more functional when you're flying through outer space. I wonder if it has a CD player or eight-track tape?

variety of "smart missiles," heavier guns, and proton torpedoes. If you want a faster way to increase your income check out the mission computer at every location.

Planets and Bases

For starters, Privateer boasts more than 50 bases and planets in almost 70 systems, allowing for virtually limitless exploration and trading even after the "main game" is finished. After you land at a base or planet, clicking on a side passage with the mouse or joystick will take you to the Main Concourse. From there you can visit the different places available to you.

Although they vary somewhat, almost all of the planets and bases will have a Commodity Exchange, a representative from the Mercenaries' and Merchants' Guild, a Ship Dealer, a Mission Computer, and a Bar. The Commodity exchange is where you go to buy and sell goods for trade. Prices frequently differ at the various planets and bases, so keeping track of them to maximize profits will save you time and money. The goods you can buy depend on what the location produces or has to offer, and what you can sell depends on what the people need or desire. By exploring a little,



The Main Concourse is the place to get to the different locations on a planet.

you can develop your own lucrative trade routes.

The Merchants' and Missionaries' Guilds have representatives that will allow you to join for a fee. On the representatives' desks sits a computer that will give you access to more missions.

Another place to find missions for free is at the Mission Computer in the Main Concourse. Missions range from simply running cargo to performing missionary acts. The payment for successful completion is displayed along with a description of the goal and where to go. If you accept it, the information is downloaded into your personal computer and the Nav points into your ship's computer.

In the Bar you can talk with the bartender who will be happy to spread the latest rumors in the area. Sometimes there will be a couple of patrons that are looking to hire an ambitious privateer for a "lucrative," but usually dangerous mission. Be wary, though, since their contracts are usually no more than a handshake and often illegitimate.

The Ship Dealer has three types of craft to offer: a Centurion, an Orion, and a Galaxy. The Centurion is the workhorse of the mercenary community. It is a heavy fighter with very limited cargo space, but is the quickest, fastest and most maneuverable. It can also hold more weapons than any other.

The Galaxy is a versatile merchant's vessel with the largest amount of cargo space and capable of carrying enough weaponry to protect itself and its goods from most pirates. Without a cargo expansion, it can hold as much as the Tarsus with one.

Lastly, the Orion is perhaps the safest since it can carry the most armor and shields, but its cargo space is small, its maneuverability and speed limited, and its weapons not too impressive. With a full

options package, though, the Orion becomes a much more desirable option.

A passage from the Ship Dealer will lead you to the Ship Modification room. From here you can trade in your old weapons for upgrades, or repair any damaged equipment. You can also do the same with your ship's software at the Software Booth. By upgrading your tracking system, you can differentiate between friendly or hostile ships while in combat, as well as their type. If you plan to jump to another system, an absolute necessity is to buy a map of the quadrant.

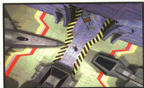
Finally, while on the ground you can access your personal computer to Save or Load a game, view the Active Mission List, check your Finances or the ship's Cargo Manifest. You can also see how many kills you have and of what kinds of ships, and how many missions you've completed.

Know Your Enemy

When you're all stocked and ready to go, you return to the hanger and click on your ship to launch. Once in space, you can access your Navigation Map by hitting the "N" key, and then choose which Nav point to travel to. As long as there are no enemies around, hitting the "A" key will activate the Autopilot which will show a short animated clip of your ship flying by. If you encounter another ship along the way, you automatically exit Autopilot to deal with them. Once the confrontation is completed, you can enter Autopilot mode again and continue on to the Nav point.

Upon encountering another ship, the first thing to do is assess who they are and what kind of ship they are in. If they fire on you, there is not much point in trying to negotiate. From experience you will know how well you can stand up to their ship type, and if you should try to engage them.

All of the ships basically have the same cockpit layout and equipment. The Tarsus and the Centurion have only one MFD (Multi-Function Display) while the others come equipped with two. Seven different information screens can be accessed through any of them, so the advantage of two displays is obvious since you can have two dif-



The Ship Dealer won't give you a song and dance, but he will sell you a new vessel.