

OLD!

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO CLASSIC GAMES

retro GAMER



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CHAMPION CODER

BRIAN 'MORNING TOAST' VAUGHN

<INTRO> PROGRAMMING SINCE HE DISCOVERED QBASIC IN SEVENTH GRADE, BRIAN IS AN ENTHUSIASTIC PICO-8 ADVOCATE </INTRO>

<INFO FROM: COLUMBUS, OHIO IN THE USA WEBSITE: MORNINGTOAST.ITCH.IO/ FORMAT: PICO-8 PREVIOUS GAMES: STEEL HUNTER, BUSTIN', INVADER OVERLOAD WORKING ON: CHAIN OF HERCULES, TINY GUNNER, MANDALORIAN-THEMED GAME >

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN USING THE PICO-8, BRIAN?

Since 2016 when I got a PocketCHIP. I was hoping it would become what the Playdate is today. The built-in tools are very handy, but I mostly use Pyxel Edit for art and VS Code. I don't typically use any post-processors or other plug-ins.

WHAT INSPIRES YOUR GAMES?

Sometimes it just starts as a cool title when chatting and joking with my family. Other times I'll see a game (often in *Retro Gamer*) with a fun mechanic and think about how I could use it. *Steel Hunter* was one where I played the old Atari game *Sea Chase* and had fun but felt it could be more. I took its core concept and added to the story with some new action.

WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY WORKING ON?

I'm always bouncing between several projects. My most recent is a hook-and-spin shmup with the working title *Chain Of Hercules*, while another is a

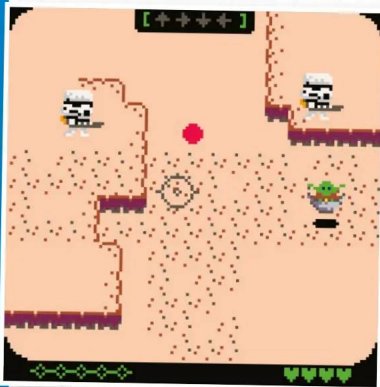


<!-- BRIAN RECENTLY UPDATED STEEL HUNTER WITH A NEW EVASION TACTICS HIGH-SCORE MODE. -->

Mandalorian-themed game where you escort baby Yoda through a maze. There's also one that has the player manning a turret to stop an onslaught of aliens while saving colonists. I try to finish at least one game per year, so we'll see which one gets far enough along to get released next.

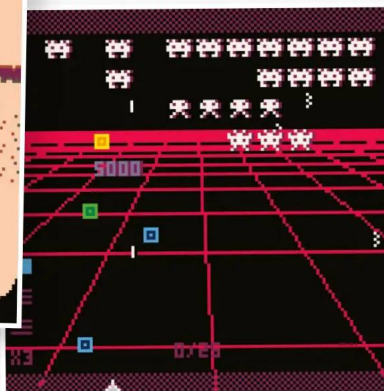
WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DREAM PROJECT OR COLLABORATION?

Shmups and bullet hells have been a lifelong love, and I haven't really made one yet. Racing/driving is also a favourite genre that I haven't tried. Working with one of the outstanding pixel artists would be a lot of fun. Teaming with a musician would be a bonus. The PICO-8 community often feels like one big collab because it's filled with great folks who love to share, help, and play. None of my games would have crossed the finish line without the support of many people I'll probably never meet. The PICO-8 scene is one I'm proud to be a part of.



<!-- PICO-8! GUIDE THE CHILD THROUGH A DANGEROUS DESERT AVOIDING FIRE FROM STORMTROOPERS IN BRIAN'S INCOMING GAME. -->

<!-- PICO-8! THE EXCELLENT INVADER OVERLOAD INGENUOUSLY USED BACKGROUND EFFECTS FROM A 1K PROGRAMMING JAM. -->



DATA BURST

JUMPING AT SHADOWS

<INFO FORMAT: ATARI JAGUAR CREDITS: REBOOT (CJ, ANDERLEX, ROALD STRAUSS), PHYSICAL CART BY ATARIAGE PRICE: TBC WEB: BIT.LY/JUMPINGATSHADOWS (DEMO) / ATARIAGE.COM (PHYSICAL) >

<BODY> In a dystopian future, our hero is imprisoned by robots – but two friendly droids called LAURA and ERNIE teach him how to escape. You can jump and double-jump and can utilise a handy dash move (horizontally or vertically), but it does take a couple of seconds to recharge. Contact with robots, their bullets, spikes, and electric fields will kill you, sending you back to the start of the level or the last activated checkpoint. Moving platforms and Bounce Bots help you reach higher areas, while keycards are needed to open locked doors. At the end of each section is a portal activated by collecting Orbs. Escaping leads to a hub with multiple portals needing a minimum number of Orbs; levels contain extra Orbs, so revisit levels to pick up more with progress saved to the cart.

This devious puzzle platformer draws on hits such as *Super Meat Boy* and *Celeste*. The graphic style is excellent, with brilliant lighting effects such as red alert bulbs, mist, and darker sections to explore. The robots are cutely animated – especially the large boss robot when it falls apart, while the music throughout is superb with some great FX. The difficulty level is high throughout, but it's so satisfying when you make it through a section in this impressive Jaguar release that we don't mind. </BODY>

SCORE:

87%



<!-- ATARI JAGUAR! DAMAGE THIS LARGE ROBOT BY JUMPING ON ITS HEAD AND BLOWING IT UP WITH A BOMB. -->