

HOMEBREW

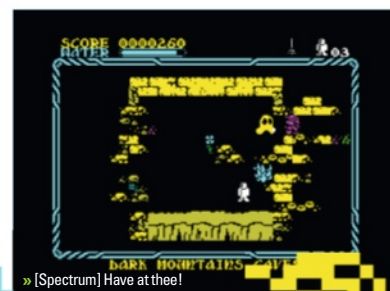
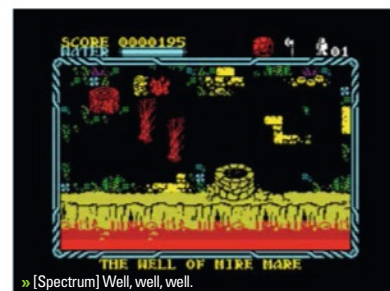
>> The scene's latest news and reviews



It was nice to see an actual NES game entered into the NES Jam last December, these retro-themed competitions like the Speccy Jam might not be expecting people to enter games written for the hardware but I'd love to see this happen more often. Thinking about it a little more, perhaps there's room in the market for some kind of Retro Jam where 8- and 16-bit developers could take part?



FORMAT: ZX SPECTRUM
DEVELOPER: LUCA BORDONI
LINK: KIKSTART.EU/MIRE-MARE-SPEC
RELEASE: 2014
PRICE: FREE



LAND OF MIRE MARE

DON'T GO WALKING SLOW ON YOUR OWN

Enter the long-lost and mystical Land of Mire Mare, where an ancient curse threatens to destroy everything by forcing three volcanoes to erupt. These powerful curses require something equally potent to cancel them, so long-term adventurer Sabreman must locate three magic jewels and dump them into the Mire Mare well, break the spell and prevent the area being engulfed in lava. These shiny trinkets can't just be picked up because that would be too easy, so a spot of *Indiana Jones*-style swapping of them for a 'pledge' is required, and these items can be pretty much anything found lying around from a mystical moonstone to an old boot.

Sabreman must also either avoid or deal with energy-sapping enemies roaming the screens as well and there are also weapons to collect which work on ranges of enemies – energy is represented by a gauge labelled as "water" on the status bar, so getting a drink will top up the levels for his current life. The only nasties completely immune to Sabreman regardless of weapon are the

guardians, which prowl around the screens where the jewels can be found, so these need to be avoided. There are also doors between sections of the map as well and, although there are keys to find, they're only good for one pass and disappear from the inventory so an alternative will be required to complete the mission... something like the axe perhaps.

Quite a few readers will be aware that the inspiration for this game, *Ultimate's Mire Mare*, was unreleased with the name appearing as a teaser on the completion screens of other Sabreman adventures. That means there's not much in the way of useful information on what the game was meant to look like, and this is developer Luca Bordini's take on what it could have been, mostly based on the previous games in the series. Some of the graphics were created by Jarrod Bentley – partially based on the mock-ups of *Mire Mare* he created previously for a *Retro Gamer* article – and the Celtic-sounding title

music comes courtesy of beeper musician Mister Beep.

Land Of Mire Mare does have a lot to live up to; the Sabreman titles are held in high regard by fans so trying to produce a new instalment will always stand a chance of being ripped to shreds. Fortunately it holds together pretty well and is also a demonstration of what can be achieved with Jonathan Cauldwell's *Arcade Game Designer* with some patience and experimentation. In fact the only complaint we have about *Land Of Mire Mare* is that the game was over too quickly and, after a game or two to acclimatise to the controls and learn the layout, we found that it was possible to romp

through the jewel collecting process in under ten minutes.

85%

“The only nasties completely immune to Sabreman regardless of weapon are the guardians”

