

Marathon 2: Durandal

Marathon is one of those rites of passage games that all true Mac gamers must attempt. Only those who have fought and figured their way through its labyrinthine levels can say they did, indeed, dive into the melee. No others can claim to have wielded superior firepower. They alone have endured.

And now they can do it all over again with the bigger and brasher sequel. More weapons, more aliens and more opportunities to be reduced to a splat of gore, *Marathon 2* is no less challenging than its predecessor. So for those expiring in *Ex Cathedra*, being wasted in *We're Everywhere*, and totalled in *This Side Toward The Enemy*, here's part one of the ultimate *Marathon 2* players' guide.

Tony Smith



1 Waterloo Waterpark

When you've inserted both control chips into their respective slots, go exploring. When you get to this room – above right – you should head for the corner furthest from the stairs. There is a secret door in the wall, behind which are some Pflor-infested corridors and a shotgun. When you've got the

gun, move away, wait a while, and some extra ammo will beam in.

Go back to the second room, where you first encountered the Drones. Move over to the right-hand watertank, set your back to it, point your assault rifle right down to the floor and fire a grenade. When you're on top of the tank, drop into the water. A lift

will carry you out – when it has stopped, look at the corner of the room and hit your action key. A door will open to reveal an ammo cache at the end of a passageway.

2 Slings And Arrows Of Outrageous Fortune

Finding the computer terminal that will beam you out of the level is just a matter of exploring. Keep an eye on your map and you can't miss it. When you find the terminal, head for the room before the one containing the terminal and move to the third column from the left along the north wall. This is a secret door and there are some Fl'ickta, Pflor and – better still – a Fusion gun behind it.

Now head for the middle column in the room's west wall. Again, this is a secret door and it hides a switch that opens another door in the Fusion gun room, which leads to a room where Fl'ickta and Pflor are slugging it out. You can't get in on the action,

but you can sit back and watch the carnage. Tee hee hee.

3 Charon Doesn't Make Change

Find this room (it's underneath the one in which you started) and, using the grenade hop technique that you used in *Waterloo Waterpark*, get onto the block. At the end is a secret cupboard which holds a second Magnum.

4 What About Bob?

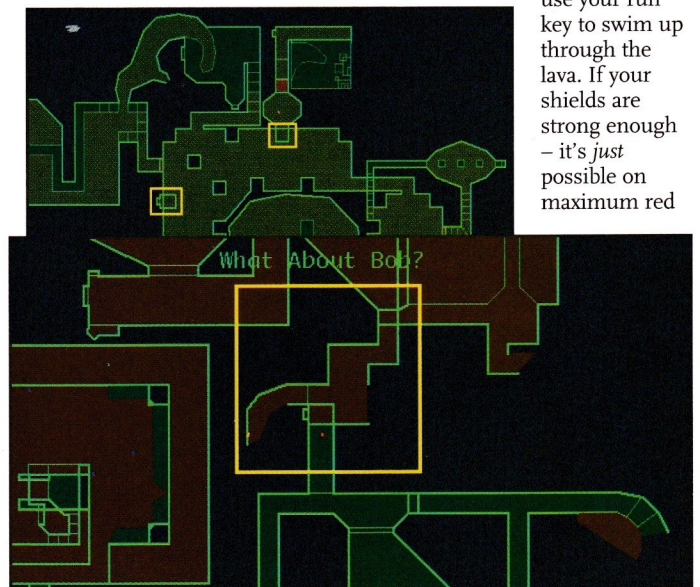
When you're ready to zap the second of the two switches, which you need to destroy in order to complete this level, wait a moment and back up so that the wall abutment is just behind you – as you'll see from the map below. Make sure your run key is not on. Fire a grenade at the switch and, as soon as you've fired, turn to the left, drop into the lava and move through the door in front of you. Follow the left wall round to the far corner, hit the switch, and then

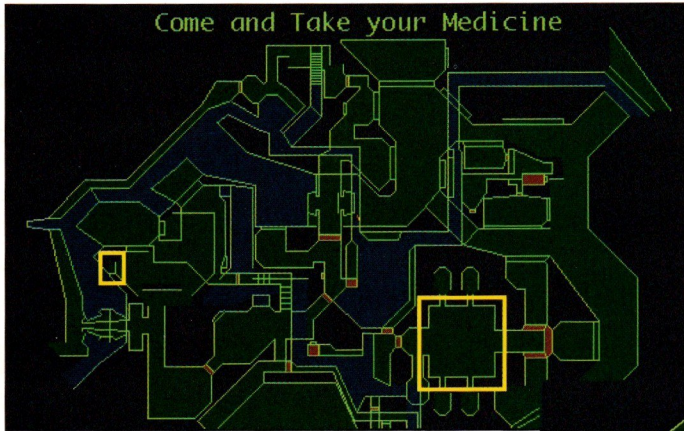
use your run key to swim up through the lava. If your shields are strong enough – it's *just* possible on maximum red

Hints And Tips

There are a number of basic skills you need to master if you're to survive *Marathon 2*. These include:

- Read Durandal's briefings carefully. You get the full story behind the game, and the dear old thing is also quite good at giving full instructions of where to go and what to do. The maps he displays will help you a great deal.
- Learn to recognise the sounds made by the monsters. Whenever an alien beams in, you'll hear its chatter just before it appears, which gives you time to react and find a better fighting position.
- Learn the difference between a monster beaming in and the appearance of kit. Both have different sounds; the last thing you want is to leap out of your skin because a grenade pack has appeared immediately behind you.
- Some weapons are better than others for taking out specific species of alien. Get to know which they are.
- Avoid killing Enforcers with the Flame Thrower, missiles or grenades. If you do, their weapons will be destroyed, so you won't be able to steal them.
- Learn to use doors as a defensive weapon. Yes, I do mean doors. Read the 'Curiouser and Curiouser' section to see why.
- Watch liquid levels: just because your gun is above the surface doesn't mean it's clear to fire. If the liquid level is too high the shots will explode in your face.
- Don't fire grenades or missiles directly at your enemies. Hitting the ground just by their feet or the wall nearest to them is usually much more effective.
- When things get hairy, run for it.





– you can get out of the lava. On the other side, you'll find a solitary Pffhor guard and an ammo cache. Kill the alien, grab the kit and drop off the platform – you're now back on course.

5 Come And Take Your Medicine

Also known as Welcome To Trooperville, this level is packed with armoured, crack-shot brutes. You have been warned.

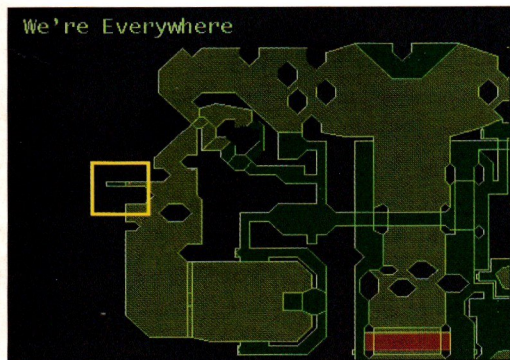
There are no secrets here; it's such a labyrinthine level, it doesn't need any. Durandal tells you how to complete your mission, but if you follow his advice you'll miss 80 per cent of the geography. Just go exploring and see what you find.

Apart from loads of Troopers and Drones, there are plenty of ammo caches to find, including a fire-spitting Alien Weapon. It's in the big yellow box on the map; the smaller box shows the level's only Pattern Buffer.

If you find yourself being zapped by the Troopers, use the level's water channels – they take you to almost every part of the level in relative safety. However, watch your oxygen level, because you'll need plenty in level six.

6 We're Everywhere

There are two major ammo caches here. These are not secret, but they are tricky to find. The first is in the big, outer slime channel, among the huge pillars; you reach



the cache just before you get to the big hangar doors, which you have to open to complete the level. The outer wall has a cubby hole which contains tons of shotgun shells – shown below in the yellow box. To get in, swim up to the wall, turn away from the door, point your assault rifle down and, when you bob out of the slime, fire a grenade to propel you into the gap.

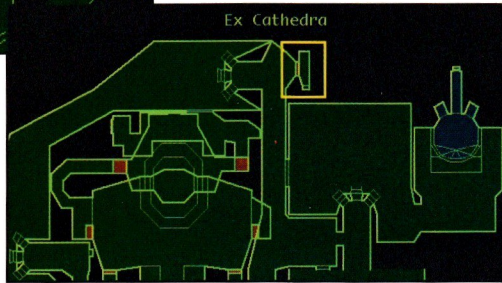
The path to the second cache is more complicated. When you're clearing out the ground floor, you will eventually come to this room, below left. Fire at the lower switch with a fusion-pistol overload bolt, Alien Weapon shot or shotgun blast to flip it. Firing through the fence will take some practice, and so will triggering the switch without destroying it. When you've got it right, a platform will start to rise. Now run all the way back to the stairs you used to get out of the sewage. Drop into the gunge and move into the outer channel. To your right, there is an open doorway which will take you to the moving platform. Get on the platform and, when it's fully out of the slime, run at the platform opposite you. When you're almost there, fire a grenade at the base of the platform; the blast will carry you on to its upper surface. Again,

this may take a little practice – you can always go back down the tunnel to regenerate your shields.

When you're on the second platform, fire a grenade at one of the switches in the wall above you. Take care not to destroy it. The platform should rise. At the top, you'll see the large ammo cache. Follow the passage out of the room to get back to the main complex.

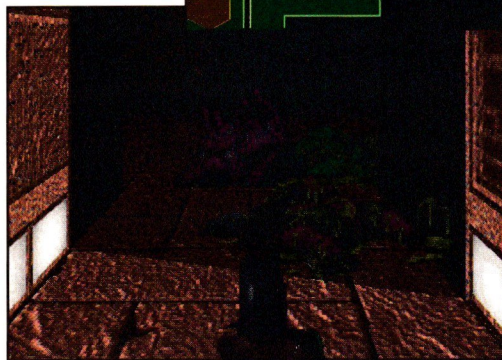
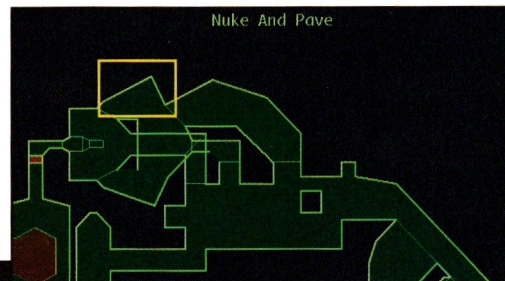
7 Ex Cathedra

It's Trooper time again, so get



ready for some serious combat. You should also get ready to swim – unless, of course, you turn right at the first computer terminal and follow the large corridor right to the end, shown above. There's a secret door to your right, which conceals an Alien Weapon and a switch that will open all the cathedral doors.

It's a good idea to go down the stairs that are opposite the secret room, and kill the Troopers down there first. Stand by the wall to your right and you'll see a window on the wall opposite. Throwing a grenade through the window should 'activate' a whole load of Troopers – more grenades should kill them, which saves a more face-to-face encounter in the level's final room.



8 Nuke And Pave

There are no secret rooms here, but there are a couple of items to watch out for as you're moving through it. The most important is the triple-strength shield regenerator panel. What, you missed it? Well I'm not surprised; it's disguised as a single-strength regenerator and is right next to a double-strength panel.

On top of a pillar in the middle of the room, there are invincibility and invisibility power-ups. To get them, leap on to the large block nearest the 3x shield recharge and drop down the hole in the middle of it. Leap over the lava, dash up the stairs and go through the door to your right. Kill the Troopers and destroy the circuit panel that you see. This activates a lift in the hole that you just dropped down and another beyond it, which will carry you up to the power-ups.

If you have used the cheat application to give yourself a missile launcher and tons of shield points, you can use the launcher to propel yourself up a ventilation shaft – shown below left in the yellow box. When you get up there, you will discover a small ammo cache.

9 And Curiouser

Durandal says you have to destroy a couple of circuits here. In fact, you'll have to smash four of them, which will involve a thorough exploration of the level. Opposing you are Troopers and Cyborgs, but fortunately they're rather vulnerable on this level, and it's possible to dispose of almost all of them without firing a shot. How might this miracle be achieved? By intelligent application of the doors.

Here's an example. When you beam in, open the door in front of you and sprint across to the door opposite. Rush through, turn around, shut the door, and move a short distance away. A horde of Cyborgs and

Troopers will follow you. When they open the door, shut it with your action key. If you time it right, they will see enough of you to fire, but their grenades and bombs will explode in their faces against the now closed door. Repeat this procedure until you hear the last one dying.

To leave the level, you'll need to pop up the stairs at the north of the map and fire grenades at the

switches on the far wall to raise platforms from the sludge below. These will allow you to leap over to the cubby holes: the left-hand one contains the final destroyable switch; the right-hand one leads to the beam-out terminal. If you fall off the platforms, run all the way round the outer sewage channel. There are some nasties around, but there are a couple of ammo caches, or Fusion packs, by some downward leading stairs, and a shotgun two-thirds of the way along, by the outer wall.

10 Eat It, Vid Boi!

There are no real secrets here. There is a kind of secret room, but it's so obvious it barely qualifies for the name. When you beam in, there's only one place to go: through a big door. Behind it, in the far wall and over to the left, you will see a slightly darker section of panelling – that's the secret door. Beyond that, there is a switch which you need to press; a Pattern Buffer; and a communications panel showing Durandal's mission briefing. Explore the notches in the walls of this room and you'll find lifts that lead to a double-strength shield regenerator, and an ammo cache. The room in which you first appear contains a missile launcher and a flame thrower, but you'll need a missile launcher to get them. If you blast yourself up on to the wall between the main building and the tower, the goodies will be yours.

11 The Hard Stuff Rules

This is a relatively straightforward level, but it is made more complex by being set in a tower and, therefore, split into seven floors on top of each other. Navigating by map is difficult and screws up your motion detector: something moving on the ground floor still shows up, even if you're right at the top of the tower. As Jim Morrison said, no one gets out alive.

When you reach the third floor, you'll find it split into two sections. The second section is reached by climbing three blocks and passing through a hatchway. Before you drop down, move across the second half on the five pillars – this way leads to an ammo cache.

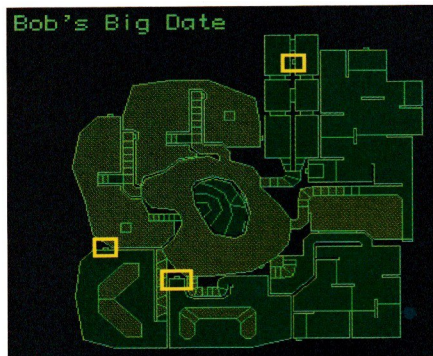
Your mission is to find information recalling the lost S'pht clan. The ancient terminals containing this are found on the fifth floor, which is the largest in the level.

Make sure you try them all, even the flashing ones that look like they're broken – some still work.

12 Bob's Big Date

This is one of the trickiest levels you'll meet. The central room's rapidly oscillating slime pool is decidedly disorienting and all the rooms are full of monsters that beam in very close to you. So, above all, practice listening for their pre-appearance chatter.

The first thing to do is get to the triple-strength shield recharger. When you beam in, run down the



stairs and use the rising slime to swim round to the right and into the doorway that you'll see. The recharger is shown above, in the top yellow box. A Hunter and Trooper beam in as you get near the doorway, so have your gun ready.

Once you are clear, you can move out to the other rooms. The rooms on the other side of the central column should be tackled next: they contain a Pattern Buffer and an Oxygen Outlet respectively. Make sure you wander through any slime pools you encounter, as they may contain hidden ammo.

13 6,000 Feet Under

Not suitable for vertigo sufferers, this level features many narrow paths set high above pools of lava, but it is straightforward. You will need to leave the path a few times; the first time is about half way up the canyon wall. You'll come to a red section overlooking some lava and a Pattern Buffer.

Drop down and follow the path round until you see a switch; you should hit the switch after zapping the Cyborg that beams in. This will reveal a second switch below you, which you should also punch. Now, backtrack a little way until you see some stairs across the lava.

Hop over and continue following the path. Further up, you'll encounter a lavafall. Beyond it are some stairs with one step missing. Do not climb them yet, but leap down to the path below you and off to the right. At the end, leap over the gap and through the doorway opposite. Inside is a switch which will reveal a second switch – punch it.

Leaving this room involves dropping down to the path's lowest point. On your way back, stop at the square room that was filled with lava; it isn't any more, so you can cross it. Climb the stairs at the other side and hit the switch.

Now go back to the path, follow it to the end and then climb the stairs. When it stops, look to your left and you'll see a red pathway – leap over it. At the end of the red path, leap down to a platform at the base of the far wall.

The room beyond is full of beaming-in Cyborgs. Go to the corner with the three switches: two switches control the platform;



the third switch floods the chamber with lava and destroys the Cyborgs.

Flip the switch again and the lava will descend, which allows you to follow the path to a point where you'll see four gaps. Leap onto the ledge at the left. Follow its path round and you'll come to a double-strength shield regenerator and a door. Open the door and hit the switch again to keep it open. The next section leads to the exit terminal; it's full of beaming-in Cyborgs. As they appear, you can rush back and use the lava switch to flood the passage and zap them.

14 If I Had A Rocket Launcher, I'd Make Someone Pay

Welcome to the second most-nasty level in

the game – the most evil is covered next month. This one is easier, but it actually confuses more players. However, with some good, quick reactions and a very fast pair of heels, it can be done.

When you beam in, use the triple-strength shield regenerator. Use the terminal to transport yourself to the second section. Spin round immediately and hit the switch that you'll see, then wait. A couple of exploding Bobs will appear, as will a Trooper or two – shoot them. When the big airlock door has descended, move to the right until you hear kit beaming in behind you. Then spin round, grab as much of it as you can and head through the doorway before the hordes of Troopers descend on you.

Now you have two choices. Turn left and you'll encounter exploding Bobs and a few Troopers, but there is a Pattern Buffer, single-strength shield recharger and a convenient base, which you can rush back to whenever things get tricky further on. Alternatively, run up the right-hand passage, turning left at the next junction. You'll find a second airlock door and a switch to flip. Now run along the path a few times, dodging the beaming-in Hunters, their shots and more exploding Bobs. Then hop over the now descending airlock door.

The only route to the third airlock is packed with Troopers and Hunters. The airlock hides the beam-out terminal. You will also encounter the missile launcher, which you can use to blast yourself up into one of the several alcoves that you passed. These alcoves take you back to the first two airlocks and this means you can take out any remaining aliens.

However, take warning: there are about 30 Troopers who will beam in on your first run, and there are 30 more waiting to replace the dead ones, including those you wasted in the final section. Using the missile launcher as a jetpack seriously depletes your shields, so you can't afford to take any hits.

NEXT MONTH

Next Month we'll guide you through the final 14 levels of Marathon 2 and show you how to survive nearly everything, even the loss of all your equipment halfway through the game.

WHERE TO BUY

Marathon 2 is available from all good Mac software stockists and mail order outlets for around £50. If you have any difficulty tracking down a copy, call distributor Softline on 0181-401 1234 for a list of stockists.



Where To Buy

MAC