Mad Panic Coaster

By Aaron Vark

# Mad Panic Coaster – PlayStation (1997)

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| Developer | Unknown |
| Publisher | Hakuhodo |
| Genre | Action:Other |
| Themes |  |

You know the mine cart riding level from that one 3d platformer? Imagine that as a whole game. Now imagine it going incredibly fast. That’s basically *Mad Panic Coaster* in a nutshell.

The game was published by Hakuhodo in 1997, an advertising agency in Japan whose only other game is the RPG *Himiko-Den: Renge*. The developer of this game is unknown, as the only company shown before the intro screen is Hakuhodo. However, given that *Himiko-Den: Renge* was developed by Chime Corporation, it is unlikely that Hakuhodo developed *Mad Panic Coaster*.

In *Mad Panic Coaster*, the player plays as a boy and a girl (presumably brother and sister) as they sit in a roller coaster car and go through 15 hellish roller coasters. How these roller coasters even got past safety testing is unknown, as they do not have any rails or barriers of any sort. It is up to the player to steer the roller coaster car using the d-pad to make sure it stays on the track. The roller coasters also have various monsters, traps, and jumps to avoid. To do this, the player uses X to jump. Hitting Square will make the girl throw some sort of yellow ball projectile that explodes at a long range, while hitting Circle will make the boy throw that same type of projectile at a shorter range. Falling off the track or getting hit by something will cost the player health, and once they lose health, they must start the level all over again. Occasionally, a blue gem will show up which regenerates some health. However, it only appears once in each level it is in. Once the player makes three laps around the track, a rainbow with the words “lucky” form around the player as they come to a stop, and the player moves on to the next level. Every three roller coasters, a boss will be fought after completing the third lap. This boss is similar to the regular enemies, except that they take much more hits to kill. To defeat them, the player has to either throw enough projectiles at them or survive another three laps.

The levels take the players through a plethora of locations, ranging from scary castles to the ocean to Wonderland to the inner cities. Each roller coaster has its own unique enemies, and while the game may move too fast for the player to see these enemies in close detail, pausing can show that a lot of work went into these sprites. The music, while slightly limited in terms of size, is fitting for what goes on in the game, consisting mainly of instrumental thrash metal and hardcore punk tracks.

As mentioned before, *Mad Panic Coaster* goes incredibly fast, but sometimes too fast for its own good. The player has barely any time to react to half of what is going on, and just mashing the attack buttons can sometimes be the best strategy. When there’s a jump coming up ahead, it’s usually signaled by a few rows of guitars along the track. While this is fine for the first few levels, eventually the guitars go by so fast that the player may not even notice them. Something such as maybe a red triangle with an exclamation mark over the player would probably be a better signal. *Mad Panic Coaster* is a game where the player will die an excruciating amount, and the fact that the player has to restart the level after they die does not help matters. However, the levels can be memorized to a degree, so with enough practice the player can get through them.

*Mad Panic Coaster* feels like it was meant to be an arcade game, probably in one of those motion simulator cabinets. The fact that the game gets cheaper with the difficulty as it goes on, culminating in a bullet sponge boss fight and a disappointing ending with the two siblings (?) at the beach, and the way it considers health and continues, it was probably originally designed that way. To that extent, *Mad Panic Coaster* is an incredibly flawed game that some may absolutely abhor. However, there is an appeal to all the crazy action that goes on, and there isn’t really a single game that is like *Mad Panic Coaster* out there. One should at least give it a shot if they get the chance. However, given that copies of the game go for a hefty amount of money online which could instead be used to go to a real (and relatively safer) Theme Park, emulation is really the only way to go.