Top Hunter: Roddy & Cathy

By Aaron Vark

# Top Hunter: Roddy & Cathy – Neo Geo, Neo Geo CD, Virtual Console (1994)

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| Developer | SNK |
| Publisher | SNK |
| Genre | Beat em up/Hack n Slash  Platforming  Action: Sidescrolling |
| Themes | Alien Worlds  Player: Robot  Player: Alien |

SNK created many notable franchises during the reign of the *Neo Geo*, such as *Fatal Fury* and *Metal Slug*, to name a few. One that never seemed to catch on, however, was a beat-em-up known as *Top Hunter: Roddy & Cathy*. This game is one of the few games to declare itself as “The 100 Mega Shock,” a term used during the first half of the Neo Geo’s life to describe games that use over 100 Megabits in RAM. From the cool, crazy, and quirky bosses to the non-stop action with exciting visuals that goes on, this game’s 100 Mega Shock power definitely shows.

The first player plays as Roddy, while the second player plays as Cathy. Both players have the ability to extend their arms outward a-la Bionic Commando, with Roddy’s coming from his alien heritage while Cathy’s comes from cybernetic implants. Both are bounty hunters who are trying to hunt down their targets through planets consisting of single biomes. The player is given the ability to choose between going to the fire planet, forest planet, ice planet, or wind planet, before having a faceoff with the big bad in his dreadnought.

The A button is the regular attack button. Holding it makes the player’s arm extend, while can be used to grab items and enemies. Some of these items and enemies can be thrown by hitting the attack button again. The player can also use this arm to pull levers.The players arm can also be stretched upward, allowing the player to pull themselves up ledges, pull items down to them, or pull handles to cause events such as rocks falling on enemies. The B button makes the player jump, and the C button makes the player switch between background and foreground. This switching mechanic is integral in getting through some parts of the game. There are also secret special moves that can be activated with certain commands, most of which are references to fighting games. Mashing the attack button will make Roddy and Cathy go into a combo, with Roddy eventually letting out a flurry of punches, while Cathy does a Hyakuretsukyaku/Lightning Kick move. Doing a quarter-circle forward motion and hitting the attack button very precisely will make the player do a Ko’ouken (or a hadouken with one hand) attack, while doing a shoryuken motion will make the player do a shoryuken/koho attack. The player can also do Terry Bogard’s power wave as well.

Throughout the game, there are several collectables to be found. Players can equip rifles by hitting down while over them, and then shoot them by hitting the attack button until they run out of ammo, at which point they are thrown like a projectile. One of the big additions to the game, however, is the availability of pilotable mecha. By defeating an enemy in one or finding one lying around, players can jump into a mecha that gives them more power. The mecha can also pick up guns as well. However, the mecha also has health, and the player will be forced out of it when it starts flashing. This can be seen as an influence to the *Metal Slug* series, which is built around these pilotable mechas. There are also bonus games in *Top Hunter*, which can be found through secret areas in the level.

Each planet consists of two levels. The first level ends with the players facing off against a dictator figure who has an uppercut and occasionally a vehicle or mecha. It is unknown if the dictators of each planet are the same guy, identical troops, or clones. The second level ends with the players facing off against their bounty, who also have a pilotable vehicle by their side. Fans of Treasure games such as *Gunstar Heroes* would enjoy these boss battles, as they are filled with multi-sprite enemies and nonstop fun action. The final area has the player going up against all the previous bosses before fighting Captain Klapton, the final boss of the game.

As said before, the game pushes the Neo Geo to places it has never been in 1994. The graphics are outstanding and have a nice anime vibe to them with a great amount of slapstick thrown in. The sound effects are all clear, and the music, while probably too quiet in the arcade version to hear over the sound effects, is also excellent. As said before, fans of *Gunstar Heroes* might enjoy this game for its bosses and nonstop action, while fans of *Guardian Heroes* may enjoy this game for its plane switching mechanic. It really feels like a Treasure game made by SNK. Some might find the game a bit on the easy side, but there’s enough fresh content that it doesn’t really matter. The game was also released on Neo Geo CD, which has louder and clearer music at the cost of longer loading times. The game has also been released on the Wii Virtual Console as well. Since this game’s release, Roddy and Cathy have made cameo appearances in *King of Fighters 1994*, *King of Fighters 1997*, and *King of Fighters 2002: Unlimited Match*. Both have also appeared as cards in the *SNK vs. Capcom: Card Fighters Clash* games, and Cathy has made a cameo in *Neo Geo Battle Coliseum*, so it’s clear that SNK never forgot about this franchise. *Top Hunter: Roddy & Cathy* is one of the best hidden gems for the Neo Geo, and is still worth playing today, especially if one can find a friend to play it with.