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GAME MANUAL

Dave's
**RETRO
FORGE**

BuBBLE BoBBLE

REMASTERED V1.1

INTRODUCTION

Bubble Bobble Remastered is a fan-made passion project: a radical enhancement of the Commodore 64 version of Taito's arcade classic.

Originally developed by Software Creations in 1987, the brilliant C64 port now returns as a fan-made mod with fully redrawn graphics and stylistic updates, designed to close the gap with the arcade original and make it shine on modern displays. Also included are fan-requested quality-of-life improvements to make the experience even more enjoyable today.

And hey, if this reinterpretation doesn't match your personal taste, no worries: the original game is still there, ready to deliver its classic magic.

But our hope is that this version gives both new and veteran players a chance to enjoy a great classic with renewed energy — almost like peeking into an alternate past where the original team had a little more time and resources to bring the C64 closer to the arcade.



C64 REMASTERED



ARCADE



C64 ORIGINAL

I see no difference.
Actually, it's worse!



KEY IMPROVEMENTS

- **Completely Redesigned Graphics**

- Bub, Bob, enemies, the final boss... everybody got a full makeover: redrawn and animated pixel by pixel, straight from the arcade original!
- Most levels have been completely redesigned; the rest got a nice polish or color tweak. Some even proudly strut in 3 colors instead of just 2!
- Food and bonus items are 100% juicier and some even got swapped out for fresher ones!
- “Pon” is back when you pop bubbles (because yes, it matters)!
- And the font? 100% Taito arcade approved!

- **Gameplay Fixes and Miscellaneous Improvements**

- Enemy and item positions, platform layouts and bubble airflows have been adjusted to improve arcade fidelity and overall playability.
- Popped enemies drop the right goodies (yes, peaches and grapes!).
- Secret Doors and Teleport Doors each have their own graphics now.
- Fixed several inaccuracies (potions, bombs making the screen flash green, big and small diamonds colors not matching...).

- **Continue System Fix**

- Forget the old split-second continue! Now you can press the button anytime after Game Over — credits permitting.

- **2-Button Controls**

- You now have the option to jump using the second button, just like on the original arcade cabinet! Hooray!

- **New Intro**

- A beautiful fan-made loading picture kicks things off in style.
- A brand new rendition of the iconic arcade tune to get you in the mood.



BONUS SOUNDTRACK

Version 1.1 includes a **special side bonus SID soundtrack**, provided as a **separate listening experience**: a brand-new rendition of the original arcade Bubble Bobble music, expertly converted by Aldo Chiummo (of A Pig Quest fame, among other titles).

The soundtrack consists of **12 tracks** and is provided in **two optimized versions**, one for **SID 6581** and one for **SID 8581**, to ensure the best possible sound on both chip revisions.

This is not meant to replace the original, immortal C64 soundtrack converted by Peter Clarke, but rather to offer an alternative with a fresh take on the arcade music. One day, we would love to integrate this new soundtrack directly into the game as an optional choice, but for now it can be enjoyed through a dedicated SID player.

Consider it a glimpse of what might be possible in the future!



MUSICIAN SPEAKS

BY ALDO CHIUMMO

I worked on the *remastered* soundtrack of **Bubble Bobble** much like I did with **Toki** and **SNK vs. Capcom**: I aimed to create **conversions rather than covers**, using ripped files from the original arcade soundtrack as a reference and doing my best to respect every note and every pause, without cutting anything out.

Unfortunately, that wasn't always possible—especially in the tracks that could only use two voices, namely the **in-game tune (Tune 2)** (where I had to remove the string section) and the **boss tune (Tune 3)** (where I removed the drums. I tried to merge them with the bass line, but the note lengths were so short that the bass was barely audible). I also had to fight against a **5,138-byte size limit**, but I managed to fit all the tracks into 4,924 bytes.

Overall, my task was easier than Peter Clarke's: the arcade soundtrack had already been ripped (I only had to rip one tune myself—the jingle that plays before the real ending theme, Tune 8—which meant actually playing the game and reaching the true ending on my own!), and I had access to a modern PC and tools such as **foobar** (and its plugins), **Audacity**, and last but not least, **GoatTracker**.

Peter Clarke did a great job with his covers, infusing the tunes with his own distinctive style. Without his same level of proficiency, but with far more powerful tools at my disposal, I set myself a different goal: to preserve as many elements of the original tracks as possible and to make the SID chip sound (almost) like the **YM3526 / YM2203 chips** used in the **Bubble Bobble** arcade machine. This included techniques such as **ring modulation** (in the boss tune, Tune 3) and **filters** (in Tune 11, Secret Room, and 12, False Ending). In fact, the use of filters is the reason why I created two versions of the soundtrack, one for each of the two main SID chip models. I hope my effort will be appreciated.

CONTROLS

Button 1 on **Joystick in port 2**

= Start a 1-player game

Button 1 on **Joystick in port 1**

= Start a 2-player game

Joypad owners should start a game with **Button 2** instead, doing this will deactivate Up to Jump and leave Jump to Button 2 only

Left or **Right** = Walk

Button 1 = Fire a bubble

Button 2 or **Up** = Jump

Keep buttons pressed to Shoot or Jump repeatedly

KEYS

Commodore Key = Pause

Q = Quit to the home screen



ARCADE



C64 REMASTERED



C64 ORIGINAL



CHEAT

Did you know?

You can activate the Super Mode by holding down the following keys at the same time at the title screen (the one with the Credits):

S, U, P, O, R, Commodore Key

If done correctly, the border of the screen will briefly flash red, then the home screen will appear. Start the game the usual way, but be prepared for stronger enemies right off the bat!



CREDITS

BUBBLE BOBBLE REMASTERED TEAM

Graphics, Gameplay Fixes & Coordination: Davide Bottino
Rev. Engineering, Coding & Editor: Victor Widell

Intro screen: Simon Marson
Intro Music & Bonus Soundtrack: Aldo Chiummo
Intro Code: Antonio Savona

2-Button Control Mod: Salvo Cristaldi

ORIGINAL C64 VERSION TEAM (1987)

Coding: Stephen Ruddy
Graphics: Andrew R. Threlfall
Music: Peter Clarke

SPECIAL THANKS

Aldo Chiummo, Antonio Savona, David Simmons, Simon Marson,
Luca Antignano, Daniel Hotop, Vinny Mainolfi, Andreas Larsson

...and everybody who donated or supported the project in any way!

You are the best!



AFTERWORD

BY DAVIDE BOTTINO



“ The C64 version was my first encounter with Bubble Bobble, and it’s with this version that I built some of my fondest memories. I was 11 when, at a friend’s house, I first saw that little bootleg cassette titled Bolle Bolle. **It was love at first sight:** lively graphics, quirky characters, tons of bonuses and power-ups, cheerful music that stuck in your head, and stellar gameplay. Every run felt like an epic adventure, with hours flying by in the delightful yet desperate attempt to clear all 100 levels. I had to rush and get myself an original copy.

Years later, I stumbled upon the fabled arcade cabinet. It was a revelation. The game was more frantic, with a bonus system that responded almost magically to the player’s actions. The C64 version remains an **incredible technical achievement** — a solid recreation of the arcade original and an **excellent game** for our beloved breadbin, still enjoyable to this day.

However, to be fair, it’s not a “perfect” port by any stretch. The simplified mechanics mean that the spirit of the arcade original didn’t fully carry over, and while the graphics are overall very nice, they could have been more faithfully adapted. Even the player characters could use a slight speed boost.

That’s why Bubble Bobble C64 Remastered was born. My goal was to **bridge the aesthetic and stylistic gap with the original**, giving it a refreshed, vibrant look — both visually and in audio. A new take on this timeless classic, bringing it renewed energy and **making it shine like never before**.

“

At the very start of this journey, around February 2025, I was fortunate enough to meet Victor Widell, a fellow C64 Bubble Bobble enthusiast who had already made impressive progress in understanding Stephen Ruddy's original code. Without Victor's relentless hacking and coding work, none of this would have been possible.

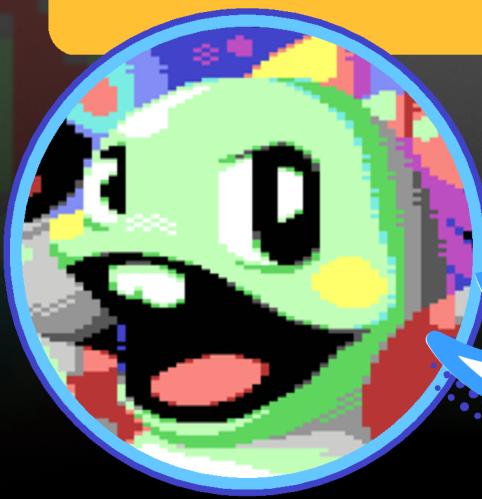
After months of intense reverse engineering and pushing against the limits of the original engine, all that groundwork finally led to the release of version 1.0 in October 2025. Following that milestone, Victor continued developing his custom editor, unlocking new possibilities that had never been accessible before. I was then able to finally work on the game itself, adjusting level layouts, enemy and bonus placement, and even bubble airflows!

By analyzing each level and comparing it meticulously with the arcade version, I developed an even greater appreciation for the **remarkable faithfulness of the original C64 conversion**. At the same time, I noticed a few inaccuracies — most minor, but some significant enough to impact gameplay.

Most of these issues I addressed in version 1.1, which introduces numerous **refinements to enhance both arcade fidelity and playability**. It also offers optional **Two-Button Controls** and a **bonus SID soundtrack**, featuring the complete arcade music expertly converted by Aldo Chiummo.

One day, with a bit of luck — and with the help of passionate, talented sceners (if you're listening, get in touch!) — we might eventually bring this amazing soundtrack directly into the game, and perhaps even enhance the gameplay under the hood. That would truly be the ultimate dream.

If there's one thing Bubble Bobble taught me as a kid, it's that teamwork always leads to the best things.



Have fun!

“





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DISCLAIMER

This project has been created in good faith and with the utmost respect for Taito and their work. It is an unofficial hack of the existing official Commodore 64 port from 1987, with the goal of enhancing and celebrating a video game classic while preserving the spirit of the original game. The project is entirely free of charge and is not for profit. It has not been created or authorized by Taito and does not intend to infringe upon any intellectual property rights. It is a tribute to the game and its cultural legacy.



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