SNK NEOGEO Pocket Color Console in Ocean Blue



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Look out, Game Boy Color. When it comes to serious portable gameplay, there's finally some legitimate competition for the popular Nintendo system (which has sold over 80 million units). If you dare to be different, consider the NEOGEO Pocket Color, a hand-held system created by the Japanese company SNK.

The screen is 10 percent bigger than Game Boy's, but the overall machine has roughly the same convenient pocket-sized dimensions and light weight as the Game Boy. The NEOGEO Pocket Color provides up to 40 hours of continuous fun on just two AA batteries. The 16-bit graphics are crystal clear--making it easy to tell the difference between humans and animals, friends and foes, and walls and doors--and easily viewed in both bright and dim lighting. The color palette has three times the range of its competitor's, with 146 possible shades. There is

also a built-in calendar, daily horoscope, alarm clock, and global clock that can be accessed even without a game cartridge in the slot. Two players can go head-to-head with a simple cable connection (sold separately). NEOGEO is available in six different casing colors: silver, clear, blue, ocean blue, stone blue, and anthracite.

The only drawback is that NEOGEO is new and, therefore, playing catch-up to Nintendo's well-stocked list of titles, which boasts A-list offerings such as *Super Mario Brothers*, *Pokémon Pinball*, and *Tetris*. But SNK scores points for the few titles that it does offer for the system. Among the better titles for NEOGEO are *Dragons Wild* video poker, arcade classics *Bust-A-Move* and *Pac-Man*, and your basic serve-and-volley *Pocket Tennis*. Most of these games are pretty addictive and perfectly suited to the well-designed, thumb-friendly, eight-position joystick. *--Carrie Bell*

Pros:

- Better graphics than other portable players
- Very good visibility in bright sun and dim light
- Variety of fun colors

Cons:

- No *Pokémon* titles yet
- Response of the joystick isn't the best on games (such as *Crush Roller*) that require sharp, quick turns

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