

For reasons no one can fathom, McDonald's has released a new Game Boy Color game

Krool Games regularly develops new games for Nintendo's 25-year-old handheld.

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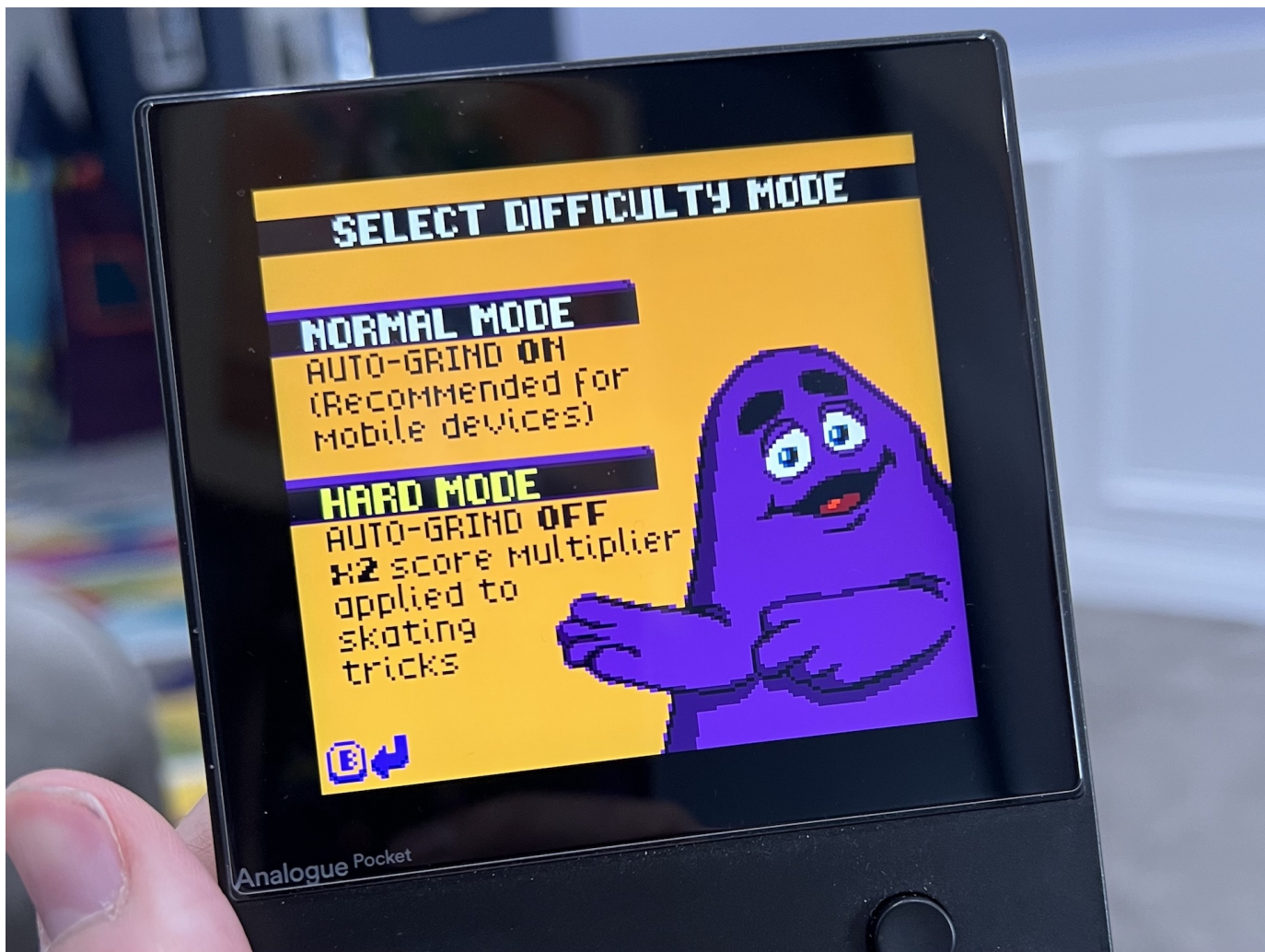
[Enlarge](#) / We couldn't get it on genuine hardware on short notice, but the game runs fine on the Analogue Pocket using a Game Boy Color FPGA core.

Andrew Cunningham

Infinite monkeys working at infinite typewriters would have trouble coming up with the sentence I am about to write: Fast food giant McDonald's has released a new retro-style game featuring Grimace, the purple milkshake blob. While it's clearly meant to be played in a browser on a phone or computer, it's also a fully working Game Boy Color game that you can download and play on the original hardware.

Grimace's Birthday was developed by Krool Toys, a Brooklyn-based independent game studio and "creative engineering team" with [a history of creating playable Game Boy games](#) as unique PR for music artists and brands. The game assumes you're playing in an emulator via a browser window—you can play that version of the game [here](#)—but we also got it running on an Analogue Pocket thanks to a Game Boy Color FPGA core and a downloadable ROM [hosted on the Internet Archive](#).

The game is so period-authentic that there's even a screen telling original monochrome Game Boy owners that the game "[requires a color device to play](#)." Even on Game Boy hardware, it still makes references to people "playing on mobile devices."



Obviously we ran to play it on actual hardware as quickly as we could, but the game knows most people are going to encounter it in a browser via an emulator.

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The game involves simple 2D platforming and skateboarding, not unlike some sections of the Game Boy Color *Tony Hawk* games; Grimace needs to collect milkshakes and do sick stunts as he tries to track down other McDonaldland characters so he can party with them. It's short—there are only four levels and one bonus round, plus score attack and free-skate modes—but the pixel art is legitimately great, and the levels that are here are cleverly designed.

Indie developers have been [embracing the Game Boy recently](#), thanks to beginner-friendly tools like [GB Studio](#). As McDonald's promotions go, this one is only slightly stranger than the [officially licensed Tetris-McNugget](#) recently released by McDonald's China.

For those of you who aren't aware of deep McDonaldland lore, Grimace is a giant fuzzy purple blob who has been described in official materials as a "monster," a "taste bud," and "the embodiment of a milkshake." He was originally depicted as "[The Evil Grimace](#)," a four-armed thief who stole milkshakes, but he lost the lower pair of arms, and did a heel-face turn as a lovable doofus in subsequent ads.

Grimace faded from most McDonald's ads and marketing materials in the early 2010s (the McDonald's fan wiki says he "vanished from public life," which is a hilarious way to describe the quiet retirement of a secondary corporate mascot), but the company has trotted him and various Grimace-themed merchandise back out for a social media campaign to celebrate the character's anniversary.

McDonald's isn't the only company to pull off a retro-gaming-themed PR gambit today. Atari is also releasing a new game for the Atari 2600, an announcement that also served to drum up interest in its upcoming title [Mr. Run and Jump](#). If Halliburton announces a new Sega Master System game about fracking in the next 24 hours, I'll know someone is messing with me.



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