

[ballyalley] Crazy Climber Arcade Controller

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My mission here, was to finish my Bally/Astrocade arcade controller trilogy, so allow me to present my newest masterpiece:

Crazy Climber Edition - VVG Enhanced Controller



Its probably pretty safe to say that nobody has ever built a twin-stick arcade controller for the Astrocade before. But as the Crazy Climber port on this contemporary console is the only one which features a proper arcade control scheme, I felt I needed to build this. Artistically I opted to replicate the Nichibutsu upright arcade cabinet control panel, versus the more common, and more plain, Taito silk-screened aluminum control panel. Due to my controller enclosure only being 17" wide, versus the original cabinet being ~24" wide, I had to crop and modify the artwork/controls slightly. An original example is below:



The central character artwork remains full sized, and the center-to-center distance between the joysticks remains an arcade accurate 8". But as I didn't have the same overall width of the arcade control panel, I did have to make a few small changes. First, the Astrocade port doesn't need P1 and P2 start buttons like the arcade original. But it does need Knob and Trigger controls for the console menu's game selection, and the in game control scheme selection. So rather than install these to the left of the "Left" joystick in a vertical column (like the original P1/P2 start buttons), which may interfere with my left hand when playing, I installed them in a horizontal row, centered above joysticks. So the upper left control is the Knob control labeled as "Select" and the upper right control is the Trigger control labeled as "Start." I opted for a knob and a pushbutton that had black outer edges with a red center, to mimic the look of the original "Single/Double" start pushbuttons. I then shrunk the large instruction card to the right of the "Right" joystick, and placed 1 of these smaller versions on each side of the main artwork, for symmetry. Then for the joysticks, as the arcade originals are near impossible to find, I selected a model that could closely mimic the look and feel of the originals, as much as possible. For these, I chose vintage late 80s Happ joysticks which I have modified. Originally these were bat lever joysticks, so I cut off the bat tops, and threaded the shafts to accept threaded ball knobs. Then I installed lightweight springs and custom designed actuators, which loosen the overall feel, and allow for much more responsive actuations, which also shortens the overall throws. These are microswitch joysticks that also feature square physical restriction like the originals, and I even cut square joystick clearance holes in the panel, to mimic those on the original panel. Here are the details:

** Hammond 17" x 11.50" aluminum sloped top enclosure (braced, reinforced, & weighted)

** (2) Happ 8-way joysticks, w/ Cherry microswitches, w/ lightweight springs, w/ threaded shafts, w/ GGG Hand Candy midnight slate ball knobs

** Bourns potentiometer, w/ black/red knob

** NKK LP01 pushbutton, black/red

** Rear-mounted cord cleats for cable management, w/ twin 10' custom crimped controller cables, w/ port ID labels

** Nichibutsu Crazy Climber arcade cabinet inspired, CPO artwork

So there it is, my new Crazy Climber controller, to add to my collection with my ICBM Attack controller, and my "general" Bally/Astrocade arcade controller...which allows to me play the entire Bally/Astrocade game library, with high quality arcade controls. Enjoy!

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