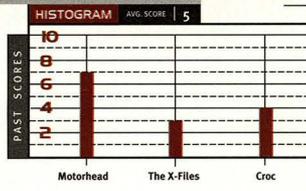




DEVELOPER'S TRACK RECORD



ALIEN VS. PREDATOR

Better really, really late than never

Apparently Fox was actually playing with the idea of making *Alien vs. Predator* into a movie, which would have gone well with the game. This might explain why this game has yet to come out after years of

development (it actually appeared on some old, unwanted console years ago). But whatever the reason, the delay isn't gonna hurt, cuz the two licenses have aged like fine wine.

You guessed it, it's a first-person shooter that lets you play as

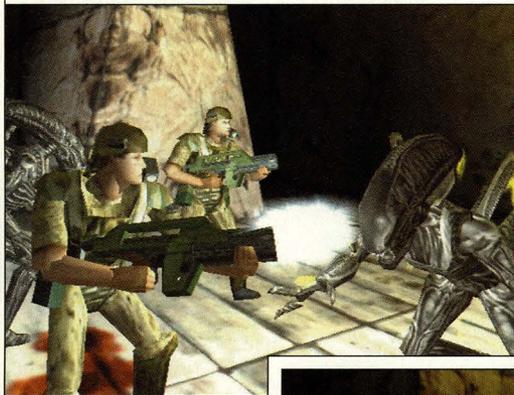
one of three species: the ol' lovable Alien we've grown fond of over the years (no, I don't mean AlF), the warlike Predator best known for its cool cloaking effect, and the hapless but not helpless humans caught in the middle of a war between the other two. Bring it on, baby, sounds like a trip.

Says *AvP*'s comic-book-heronamed Producer, David Stalker, "We're putting the Alien, Colonial Marine, and Predator in an environment that looks and sounds like one of their movies." But hopefully not too much like *Predator 2*. Instead of

simply having different skins and even characteristics, Fox intends these three species to play radically differently from each other.

"It's not about changing your skin, but about changing your whole perspective," says Stalker. The Colonial Marines (the ones getting killed throughout *Aliens*) are the most accessible of the three, and play very much like the legions of *Quake* and other first-person shooter Marines inspired by these memorable supporting characters. Your main weapon is the trusty pulse rifle with a grenade launcher

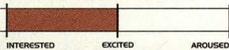
attached, and the motion tracker will let you know where the enemy's attacking from and when. The strength of the Marine is in being able



INFO BOX

DEVELOPER → Fox Interactive
 PUBLISHER → Fox Interactive
 RELEASE DATE → Q1 '99
 3D SUPPORT → Direct3D

INTEREST GAUGE



THE HYPE

I can't think of two better licenses to pit head to head. OK, maybe I can (see sidebar).

THE HURDLE

Getting attention could be difficult. As *Rebellion* so clearly shows, even the best licenses can't save a crap game.

THE HIT

At the very least, you'll get a chance to yell out all your favorite lines from *Aliens*.

In Earl Wong's Manhattan apartment, a couple of mutant cockroaches meet their maker.



Damn! Here I am in the cargo loader, and no alien queens to fight!

to "tool up" with a host of weaponry to fight off the ravenous hordes.

If cloaking devices and scalping your prey is your bag, then the Predator's for you. Its unique arsenal and abilities lend it toward a skulking, sniping style. I foresee plenty of one-shot, one-slash kills in its future.

And finally there's the Alien, which according to Stalker is the "biggest leap" in play style of the

three. You only have your jaws, tail, and claws with which to rip out someone's innards, and you grow stronger and tougher with each kill. But if the natural weapons of the Alien aren't as powerful as the guns and knives of his fleshy opponents, then it makes up for it with blinding speed and its ability to cling to any surface — your enemies won't know what hit 'em. "There's nothing quite like the first time you sink your jaws into someone's forehead!" says Stalker. This could be worth the cover charge right here.

AvP runs under some proprietary business that allowed Fox to implement the gameplay features it needed (like the wall climbing) without having to rewrite a bunch of someone else's code. "It's not intended to be a rival engine to *Quake II*, *Unreal*, *LithTech*, or whatever, and it wasn't built to be

made widely available." Despite this disclaimer, as you can see from the screens, it's no slouch in the graphics department — something I was a bit apprehensive about until now.

The single-player game will be distinctly different for each of the three species, where an overarching storyline ties together the core levels in which the conflict takes place. The multiplayer game sounds like it could be awesome, with the three different classes and playing styles.

"Multiplayer is a hoot," Stalker agrees. "It's really funny how people tend to adopt the character of the species they choose to play. On my way to lunch the other day I passed someone in the office hissing, sticking his tongue out, and trying to jump up to stick onto the ceiling! Obviously some-

LICENSE WARS

AvP could be the start of a hot new trend in gaming: pitting two rival licenses against each other!

THE BRADY BUNCH VS. THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY

CONCEPT → It's the kids who slept with Florence Henderson vs. the kids who sang with Shirley Jones in the ultimate team battle game

WHO'D WIN → A tight match would come down to the final showdown — Battle of the Bands. A stunning version of "I Think I Love You" would narrowly beat out the well-choreographed "Sunshine Day"

MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL VS. ALLY MCBEAL

CONCEPT → Overweight couch potatoes versus anorexic and neurotic feminists in a battle for the hearts and mindshare of the American people. Who doesn't want to see Calista Flockhart get pancaked by Gilbert Bruns?

WHO'D WIN → There are no winners. Instead, many sad PW'ed men have to sip on white wine and talk about relationships when their shadow is swilling beer, sitting on their fat ass, and saying things like "Get up, you pussy!"

BAYWATCH VS. PACIFIC BLUE

CONCEPT → Who needs a concept when you have a collection of hot women in bathing suits? Just get 'em wet, it's that simple

WHO'D WIN → Everybody wins

one had played one too many deathmatches!"

It will take some monumental bonehead maneuvers to mess up this formula: two outstanding licenses, a new graphics engine, and a cool-sounding acronym. Of the three, the acronym is obviously the most important thing. ➤

— ED LEE has a second set of jaws but only uses them to mysteriously open beer when no one's looking.

FIVE QUESTIONS

FOX'S PRISCILLA BOURBONNAIS PUT ON A DISGUISE AND TRIED TO PASS HERSELF OFF AS PRODUCER DAVID STALKER FOR OUR FIVE QUESTIONS (NICE TRY PRIS).

Q: Who would win in a fight, Ah-nuld or Ripley?

A: Ripley — she kicks ass hard!

Q: What makes you smarter, Smartfood or Smarties?

A: Smarties, but not the crappy American kind, the luscious candy-covered chocolate beans from Britain.

Q: Have you ever crushed Smarties into a fine powder and attempted to snort them? Did you get a buzz?

A: Yes, the U.K. Smarties leave chocolate streaks under your nose. And the chocolate buzz was a very messy experience.

Q: What game are you most looking forward to playing, besides your own?

A: Fox's *When Animals Attack*.

Q: How hard was it to motion capture live aliens?

A: Aliens aren't such a problem. But getting all the little white mo-cap balls on the face huggers can be tricky.



The Predator definitely has the intimidation factor going for it.