

WEYLAND-YUTANI BLUES

Aliens vs. Predator 2's storyline is slightly convoluted — which is inevitable given that it needs to tell the same tale from three perspectives. The aliens have nested on the remains of a human civilization on LV-1201. Once again, humans from the Weyland-Yutani Corp. arrive and begin “weapons research” involving convicts as hosts for facehuggers, provoking the aliens to attack. Colonial marines are sent to the rescue, and as if things weren't complicated enough, a pack of predators chooses that moment to drop in and enjoy its favorite hunting grounds. Incredibly, most of the predator pack is captured by the human researchers, so in that storyline you play a lone predator trying to rescue them. These three plot lines weave together to create the larger story tapestry. “You're always finding nuggets of story that pertain to the other species,” says Fox Interactive Producer Dave Stalker.



■ A LithTech engine, which made *No One Lives Forever* campy and colorful, now makes *Aliens vs. Predator 2* gory and gruesome

■ PC

ALIENS VS. PREDATOR 2

■ Publisher: **Sierra/Fox Interactive** ■ Developer: **Monolith** ■ Release Date: **November** ■ Origin: **US**

Welcome back to LV-1201. Life still sucks here

➔ *Alien vs. Predator* was one of the few Jaguar games worth owning. Both it and the PC rebuild that followed defied the caffeinated, Doom-spawned FPS paradigm by slowing the pace down and subsequently increasing the tension. Now in the hands of Monolith, Fox Interactive's second installment is simultaneously bringing the graphics up to current standards (courtesy of the latest LithTech

engine) and incorporating more modern FPS gameplay techniques.

Perhaps the most significant addition is a well-told storyline (see sidebar). Relayed through in-game cinemas and plenty of scripting, the plot details three intertwined perspectives on the events that take place, one for each race.

Each race also handles the action in a unique way. As a marine, you have a

shotgun, a knife, a grenade launcher with tracking mines, and an EMP shell that can reveal cloaked predators. You can also use welding torches and drive a specially modified loader with machine guns in place of vice grips. The aliens come in several playable flavors, ranging from the standard drones to the dog-like quadruped from *Alien 3*. If you thought alien wall-walking from the original *AvP* was a gamebender, wait until you see their powerful pouncing ability, in which they suddenly attack from a distance or leap from one wall to another. The predator is equipped with a net gun and spear, as well as a portable charger for the cloaking device.

AvP2 clearly isn't trying to beat *Half-Life* at its own game, but it doesn't have to. If the team at Monolith can keep the tension high and the story tight and involving, the game's great license will more than handle the rest. — Tom Chick

■ Aliens come in many forms, but they all need to be killed — lest they give you one hell of a punch in the gut

