

# NEWS

## JANUARY RELEASES

Something old, something new, something borrowed...

### MICKEY MANIA

Conversion from the rather playable Super NES original. See news story for further details.

### PHILOSOMA

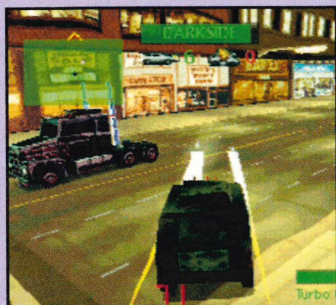
Rather average hybrid of horizontal and 3D scrolling shoot 'em up sections. Available on import for some time now, and already looking a little tired.

### ASSAULT RIGS

Yes, again. SIE's classy variant on the old VCS classic, *Combat*, has suffered a delay, but should now appear midway through January. Awarded 81% in *PSP2*.

### TWISTED METAL

Playable but limited racing game. Sony give the player the chance to chase other vehicles through suburbia and blow the shite out of them with an array of weaponry. Awarded 82% in *PSP3*.

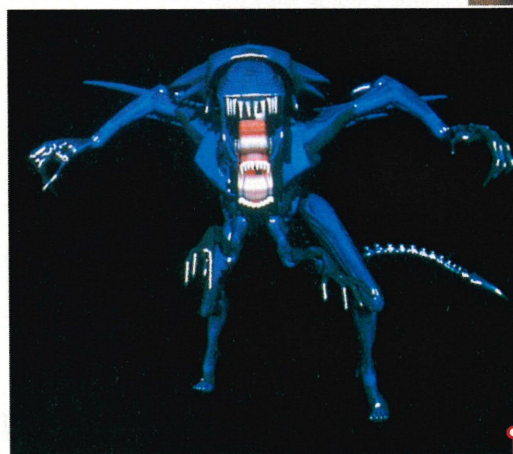


### STARBLADE ALPHA

Another victim of slippage, Namco's perfect conversion of their less than perfect coin-op is finally due to hit these shores in January. An enhanced version is also included on the CD, with fancy shading and light effects.



**THE SIDE ELEVATION OF AN ALIEN WARRIOR. THE LIGHT SOURCING IS PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE AND REACTS TO THE DIFFERENT IN-GAME ILLUMINATION.**



**THE ALIEN QUEEN — COMPLETE WITH EXTENDING PISTON JAWS. THE LARGEST SPRITE IN ALIEN TRILOGY.**

## TOY STORY

Having recently knocked *GoldenEye* from the top of the US cinema charts, *Toy Story* is preparing for the leap to the PlayStation — with Disney's new software arm at the helm. Set in a world where toys are living, breathing creatures, *Toy Story* tells of a war between playthings in a child's toyroom. The film details the time between the kid's birthday and Christmas, and the angst felt by the toys as they wonder if they are set to be replaced by the new batch. The main rivalry is between a cowboy called Woody (voiced by Tom Hanks) and an astronaut, Buzz,

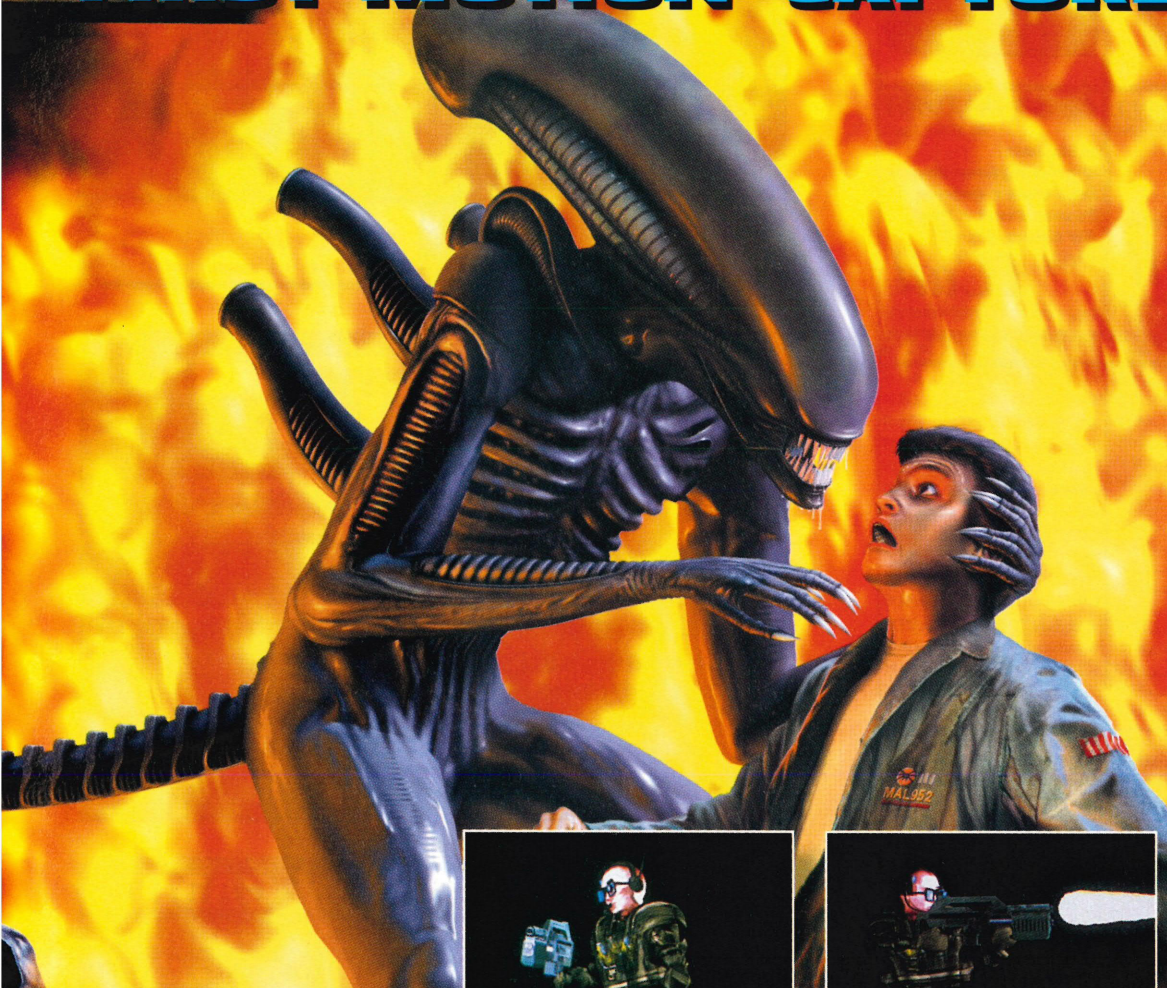
who doesn't realise he's a toy (the voice of Tim Allen). The story revolves around their ongoing feud. The difference between *Toy Story* and past Disney efforts is that everything in *Toy Story* is computer-rendered, with the toys all developed on SGI workstations. The 16bit versions are platform affairs, but we are told that the PlayStation game will look a lot closer to the film with larger



sprites and spot-on backdrop recreations. No sign of a release date, as, at the time of writing, nobody has signed it up. Expect Virgin or Sony to be the main contenders, though.



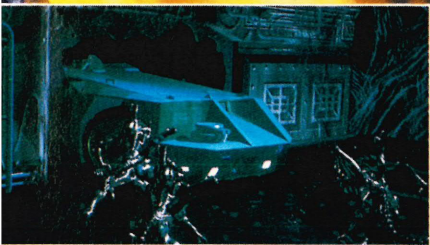
# ALIEN TRILOGY: FIRST MOTION-CAPTURE SHOTS



Following Issue 2's exclusive shots of Acclaim's forthcoming *Alien Trilogy*, we can now unveil the first motion-capture sprites to be incorporated into the final game. A joint production between Probe (who Acclaim recently bought in-house for a huge fee) and Acclaim US's division, Probe are handling the 3D routines for the game itself, with the US division using blue screen projection techniques to recreate the creature's movement as faithfully as possible.

In the version of the game used in our feature, the sprites detailing the aliens, company reps and rogue marines were rough positionals while Acclaim awaited the results of the motion-capture tests. Now, however, the finished sprites are ready for inclusion, with Probe taking delivery of a full set of alien warriors, marines and — best of all — a bloody huge alien Queen, who will form the final obstacle in the game. Acclaim's motion capture technique has only been used twice before in commercially release titles (*Batman Forever* and *Big Hurt Baseball* for the Super NES), but *Alien Trilogy* has proved a lot more complex than either. Motion detectors are positioned on key parts of the body (and tail!) of an actor wearing a recreated alien suit, and the information from these is recorded on a series of SGI workstations. As the actor goes through the motions — in this case, running, scrabbling across the floor/ceiling, and lunging towards the player — the key points are linked together as a wireframe skeleton. With this as the sprite basis, the skeleton is then supplemented with a fuller, physiologically-correct outline of the alien which is in turn rendered to recreate the final beast.

As can be expected, the process is very long-winded indeed, but the final results promise a game where the player can freely blast away at creatures in a manner akin to the action in James Cameron's *Aliens*. Cool.



## PLAYSTATION TO TOP 80,000 BY CHRISTMAS

By the time Christmas is over, Sony will have 80,000 PlayStations in UK homes — with a pan-European sale of 130,000! This means Sony are well on their April target of 180,000 machines across Europe, and they have also gathered more than \$34m in sales of software, hardware and peripherals worldwide. And just to add insult to the likes of the Saturn, 3DO and Jaguar, sales reports indicate the PlayStation is outselling key rivals between a 3:1 and a massive 11:1 ratio!

