

ALIENS VS PREDATOR 2

★ £29.99 • VU Games • <http://avp2.sierra.com/>

Aliens vs Predators vs Marines online.

Martin Korda finds out who comes out on top

It's one thing being frightened by a game when playing it single-player, and a whole different thing when you're playing online against a bunch of jumped-up self-obsessed gits, intent on insulting you unless you play the game exactly how they

view modes along with an array of long-distance weaponry to take out your opponents.

This style of play works best in AvP2's Hunt mode, where a set number of Predators take on a higher ratio of marines. However, once a Predator is taken down, he and his assailant swap places. And you

“Contrary to popular belief, you can spot a cloaked predator fairly easily”

demand. AvP2 is no exception. And while its online game types are highly varied, and for the most part extremely entertaining and tense, it's nothing short of baffling (not to mention off-putting) when someone starts having a go at you for remaining cloaked when playing as a Predator. Surely that's the point of playing as one, utilising stealth, thermal imaging and infrared

can only score points as a Predator. Hunt is best played on the larger, erratically lit levels, and playing as a marine can become incredibly tense as you mistake friendly blips on your motion sensor for the enemy and start firing wildly into the night. Contrary to popular belief, if you look carefully enough you can often spot a cloaked Predator fairly easily, but holding your nerve as you

desperately try to take them down is a totally separate challenge. Playing as an outnumbered Predator is even more enjoyable, as you're required to think tactically if you're to survive, especially against some of the well-organised teams of marines I came across online.

WHEN THREE TRIBES COLLIDE

DM and TDM games vary in quality, and rarely work as well when there are three sides (marine, Alien and Predator), providing far more satisfaction when two races go at it. Surprisingly, Aliens often appeared to have the edge over the other two, as well-organised groups of drones would literally scythe through

the opposition, utilising their sheer speed and agility (wall-walking is an invaluable skill to master), while their pounce attacks seem a little too powerful. Perhaps some further balancing is required to even things out.

Survivor and Overrun games are rare, but often entertaining. The first is ultimately a last-man-standing competition, while the latter is a team based round-game not too dissimilar to *Counter-Strike*, where races must annihilate the opposition in order to score a point. However, both seem to wane in interest fairly quickly (not helped by the dearth of servers), and it struck me as surprising that the excellent Evac games (marines must get to a dropship, aliens must stop

them), rarely had more than one server running it at a time.

There are unfortunately two concerns which blight this otherwise entertaining online shooter. Firstly, lag. Even with an ADSL connection this proves troublesome and makes close-up combat virtually impossible for anyone still chugging away on a 56K modem. The second problem lies with the small choice of maps, which are for the most part, fairly uninspiring.

It's unlikely AvP2 will challenge *Counter-Strike* as the king of online shooters, as its complex, tactical nature will put many casual gamers off. But there's plenty of variety on offer, and you'll soon find yourself carried away by the tension of it as you sneak up behind someone, and vindicate your playing style by ripping their head off with a well-placed wrist blade swipe. **AVP**



“OK... put... the mop... down.”



“Excuse me, could you please direct me to the Gentlemen's room?”



What a stunning tail you have.



Catch a Predator in the open and he's easy pickings.

PCZVERDICT

UPPERS Three races to play • A different approach with each race • Varied game types • Tense gameplay • Scope for teamwork
DOWNERS Too much lag with 56K modems • Too few quality maps • Some chipping problems

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
Lagging excellent

FEEDBACK

One of the biggest games of the year, gets one of the biggest responses. **Martin Korda** sifts through your opinions

IT'S YOUR SHOUT!

Feedback is here to offer you, the player, a platform to voice your opinions on any of the games reviewed in **PC ZONE** over the last three months. Whether you want to sing a game's praises or simply give it a verbal beating, we want to hear from you. Remember to keep your comments between 50 and 150 words and include your name, address and age.

WRITE TO Feedback, **PC ZONE**, Dennis Publishing, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1P 5FF

EMAIL Or you can email them to us at letters.pczone@dennis.co.uk with Feedback in the subject line

ALIENS VS PREDATOR 2

REVIEWED **PCZ #110**,
Christmas 2001
SCORE 93%

What we said

"Whether *AvP2* is better than *Half-Life* will, in the end, come down to personal choice. And for me that choice is this. If I had to play one, I'd play *AvP2* – but it's a bloody close call... *AvP2* may lack the wide variety of enemies of *H-L*, and yes, *Half-Life* did do all this first, and in some departments better. Three years ago. But we mustn't be afraid to move on, especially when a game this good comes along, and as games journalists and gamers, we must have the courage to overcome the fear of saying so when something appears that can stack up to what has now become a virtually untouchable game."

What you thought

Well done **PC ZONE** for another spot on review. *Aliens Vs Predator 2* is superb, without a doubt the most frightening and atmospheric game I have played. Cheers lads

for pointing me in the right direction to a classic, yet again.

Matt Jones (aka mooncalf29)

★ I have just played one of the scariest games ever, *Aliens Vs Predator 2*. This game is so dark and scary I am going to be sleeping with the light on tonight. It beats any other game I have played. I may regret saying this, but I think this even surpasses the master of all FPSs, *Half-Life*. There, I've said it. Now go and buy this game before you become one of the people who misses out on a gaming experience like no other. Sweet dreams.

Sean Roalfe

★ Well I never. For once, I've really been pissed off. I was looking forward to my new issue of **ZONE** a little more than I normally do, as I knew the review of *AvP2* would be in it. I wouldn't usually buy a game before I read your review but this time I changed my mind. I had already bought and completed the Marine and Predator missions in *AvP2* before I read your review. I also knew that you would be so far up

it that not even a small nuclear device would prise your pathetic excuses for genitalia out of it. Martin Korda was in my opinion right with a lot of what he wrote, but better than *Half-Life*? No way.

AvP2 is well worked. It has its moments. The levels are well made. The tension as you enter a room and hear a Predator was enough to make me soil

my pants so much that I now wear nappies. However, the AI for the human guards is rubbish. I even encountered Aliens that get trapped behind stair railings, and so make easy targets. You fight a Predator only once properly and he is hard as nails. (When you play as a Predator, however, you are picked off after taking only a handful of pulse rifle rounds). As for the story, it could have been amazing, but again I felt let down. It has great potential, but from what I have seen, the developers appear to have considered it an afterthought.

Half-Life was epic. In scale, graphics and most importantly, its story. A great game must immerse you in the world it is trying to create. Just looking good does not cut it. *AvP2* has many qualities. But as Richie Shoemaker says in the second opinion, *AvP2* is not groundbreaking.

I agree very much with what Martin says at the end of his review: We must not be afraid to admit when *Half-Life* is knocked of its throne. However,

conversely we must not consider every big name FPS that hits the shelves as the next *Half-Life*. So what if *HL* is still the best? Just because nothing has yet beaten it is not the game's fault. It is down to developers trying to copy what Valve did instead of coming up with something innovative.

Sorry to rant. Your mag is class, but I am worried that my beloved **PCZ** is becoming easy to predict when handing out Classic awards. I hope that this Christmas cheer will be short lived and soon you'll be miserable as sin again. Cheers.

kboon

★ Brilliant, brilliant, brilliant,





AvP2, one of the scariest games of all time.

Martin Korda was right when he said that it would come down to personal choice when deciding whether *AvP2* was better than *Half-Life*. And my choice is that it most definitely is.

I've never written to Feedback before, simply because no game in the past few years has made me feel passionate enough, until now. The AI is good, the level design great with superb lighting and detail. The graphics and sound are also great, with the Monolith boys pulling out all the stops and the Littech engine looks mighty impressive. But where would all that be if you didn't feel any emotion when playing? This is where *AvP2* really shines, with the storyline and atmosphere really drawing you in, and for me at least, more than *Half-Life* ever did. If you like FPSs, go and buy this now and you'll remember what it feels like to

play a good FPS, and realise what we've all been deprived of these past few years.

Lee Garindan

★ Once I read your review on *AvP2*, I thought that I must get the game. After installing it, I got into playing as the Predator, at which point, the tiny little cogs in my head started turning, and I thought, "Wow". It's great fun bashing people's heads off and taking them as trophies. But then the section of cogs in my head that control my loyalty to *Half-Life* started turning. All I could think was, could this be better than *Half-Life*? And I came to this conclusion. No. It is just as fun and entertaining, but in *AvP2* you don't have the satisfaction of pulverising a soldier and seeing all the blood where he lies. However, being able to cut up your enemy in *AvP2* as a Predator is quite fun. It's also loads of fun

to run across walls and chasing after little scientists who shit themselves in front of you as you stand over them when playing as the Alien. The graphics are good and the fear factor is quite high, which is a huge bonus. *Half-Life*?

"If you like FPSs, go and buy *Aliens Vs Predator* now and you'll remember what it feels like to play a good one"

Lee Garindan is pretty pleased with AvP2

You call that scary? Hahahaa. So *AvP2* is now tied first with *Half-Life* as the number one FPS, and I feel sure it will remain a No 1 game. Let's just hope the add-ons are better than *Blue Shift* was.

Lewis Labram (Grim Fandango Maximus)

★ I have been a reader of your magazine for two years now, during which time *PC ZONE* has helped me choose some truly

great games, and I have always trusted the *ZONE* team for their honest comments, until I read your review of *AvP2*. To even mention this pile of poop in the same breath as *Half-Life* is, quite frankly, outrageous. After reading your review and seeing your award of a *PC ZONE* Classic, I rushed out to buy the game, but boy was I in for a shock.

A tired storyline, with some truly dreadful scripting, poor AI and just two days to complete the marine level (the best of a bad bunch), I was left wondering what was going on. Personally, I would have given the game about 78 per cent, and I certainly don't buy games that only get 78 per cent. The free demo you gave away was very bad, so I wonder how many loyal readers went out and wasted £30 on this game only to be truly disappointed. A very sad day for *PC ZONE*.

Paul Matthews

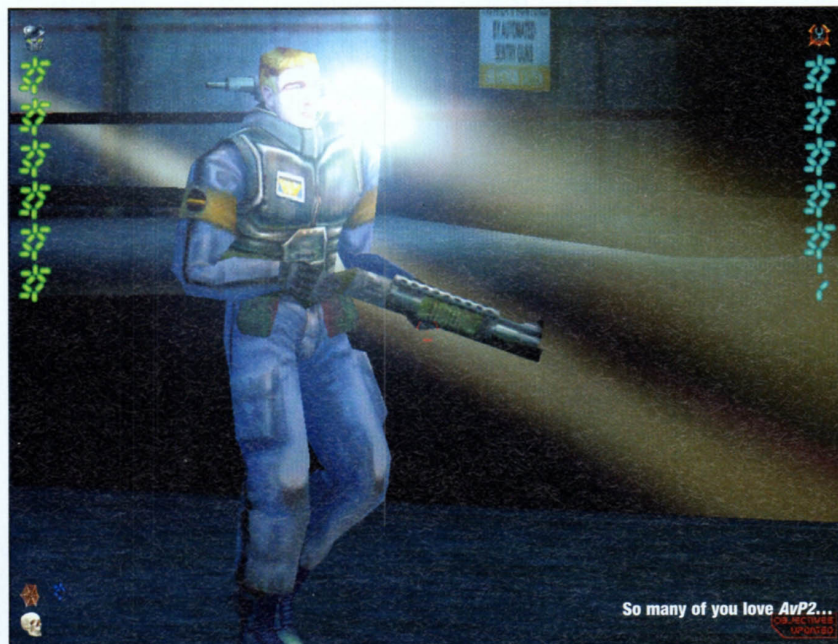
★ I just had to let the guys at

this tremendous title, and with three different characters to play as, it should satisfy even the most hardened gamer in terms of longevity. The only downside I can see is the endless stream of drunken pub arguments that will no doubt surface. Is *AvP2* better than *Half-Life*? I don't know, but I will say that if *Half-Life* was the best, then *AvP2* is most definitely in its face now.

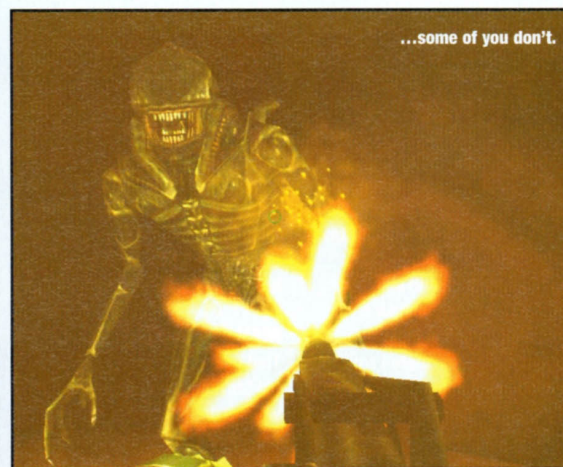
Richard Bamborough

Comment

Every time we give out a *PC ZONE* Classic, we're inundated with letters of varying opinions, but not since *Black & White* have we had such a passionate response to a review. Your replies have not only been hugely varied, but on the whole, superbly argued, with opinion split about 70/30 (a proportion which we've tried to represent on these pages) in favour of the game. In fact, it has been surprising just how many of you think that *AvP2* is as good if not better than *Half-Life*. However, a fair few of you have been highly critical of both our review and the game. As we said, it's down to personal choice and preference, and it's at times like these that Feedback really comes into its own, as it's always good to hear a wide spectrum of opinions on big name games. Like we said, *AvP2* is not groundbreaking, neither is it the perfect FPS, but it is supremely entertaining, stunningly immersive and chillingly terrifying. And if there are two things that the majority of you do agree on, it's that *AvP2* is one of the top two FPSs of all time, and one of the scariest games ever. Now if that's not an endorsement of its quality, then I don't know what is. [K]



So many of you love AvP2...



...some of you don't.