





**H** **FORMAT:** PS3 **PUBLISHER:** Sega **DEVELOPER:** Rebellion **PLAYERS:** 1-16  
**ONLINE OPTIONS:** Aliens vs Predators vs Marines **ETA:** November

# ALIENS vs PREDATOR



Online everyone can hear you scream, and shout 'Bastard Alien!' down the mic as yet another noob tears your chest out. Ready for the bloodiest and most brutal new shooter of the year? Not squeamish are you?

**A**rtistically there have obviously been massive steps made in the last ten years with the level of detail and expression of characters, realism of environments, and the behaviour and interaction of AI characters," say Jason Kingsley. He knows what he's talking about because along with his brother Chris, he founded Rebellion Developments in 1991 and their first commercial game was *Aliens Versus Predator* for the Atari Jaguar or, as history remembers it, 'The Worst Console Of All Time'. On a system smothered in shoddy product, 1995's *AVP* stood out and still does, rightly so, because when the battle royale was adapted, improved, and expanded through more multiplayer for PC gamers in 1999 it showed *Doom* lovers that the FPS could be far more than shooting galleries with eyes-of-the-killer attitude. It defined a new direction for the genre.

Spin on ten years and there have been two enjoyably bad *Aliens Vs Predator* movies, a slew of comics, a PC sequel to Rebellion's original *AVP* and still, fans want more. They want *Aliens Vs Predator*, the new PS3 shooter that's

**It'll be the easiest *AVP* to play and will let players get the most from each species**

morphing into the best new FPS of 2009. Fanboys want *AVP* the way they remember it, so does Sega, that's why Rebellion has been tapped up to reinvent its classic shooter on PS3.

"From a gameplay perspective, it's not just about what the hardware allows us to do, but the shift in gamer expectations over the last ten years. This will not only be the easiest *AVP* game to play, but it will also allow players to get the most



**OH-OH!** A close encounter with a Predator isn't recommended

from each species," continues the Rebellion CEO and *AVP* veteran. "That's not to say it's going to be an easy game, rather we've deliberately focussed on ensuring that every player will be able to enjoy the vast range of different abilities each species has to offer."

## Clash of the titans

Aliens, Predators (that are also aliens) and Marines (who you could call aliens if you were a Predator or an Alien) will form three distinct character classes, just like they used too, and each one has their own unique style of slaughter slicked via modern gaming technology.

"The Marine has the standard USCM kit you would expect, with a pulse rifle, shotgun, lots of flares and so on. The Predator has his wrist blades, so we've worked hard to ensure that close quarters melee for him is key and one of the main areas we're most proud of. Naturally, the

Predator has a few more toys at his disposal that fans will recognise from the films and previous games. The Alien is a weapon; the key to success is taking advantage of this creature's abilities and getting to the right place before attacking." Guns, grenades and bell-bottomed trousers (probably not) for the Marines; speed, claws, jaws and a stabbing tail for the Alien and the Predator will get a toy box of destruction viewed through multiple modes together with his trademark optical camouflage.

"In many ways it helps a lot that each species is so different from the others that it allows us to create great rock-paper-scissors balancing for them," adds Kingsley. If it bleeds you can kill it, but its acid blood may kill you – and you might not be able to see it. Bring it on.

Balancing classes is central to any great multiplayer shooter (and slasher), but the *AVP* of 2009 isn't going to gallop





**BITCH:** Aliens use their body as a weapon, acid blood and tail whips...

down the *Team Fortress 2* route of simply, yet elegantly, providing multiplayer maps for online players.

### Single story arc

"There is a single story arc told from the perspectives of the three species – Marine, Alien and Predator. The Alien player gets to witness things right from the start, while the Marine and Predator join in the narrative a few weeks later on. All three stories conclude together," adds Kingsley. Each class or 'species' will have their own single-player campaign too. "The gameplay will vary depending upon the species you are playing and the section of the game you're at," says Kingsley, reinforcing that this *AVP* will have a core single-player campaign to play through. "All three campaigns span a variety of different environments, each offering new experiences and a range of key opportunities to the player," he adds.

### HIGHLIGHT

Each class will play differently, some like the Marines will have an inherent squad feel, while Aliens will need to work cooperatively to ambush the prey, Predators look to be lonesome, glory hunters out for trophies.

The story will dovetail directly into the 20th Century Fox movies, too. "There are plenty of film connections that fans will get, but as the recent movies have done, we also dig deeper in to the origins of the Weyland Yutani Corporation and add more detail of their methods, interests and motivations. The game is set about

30 years after *Aliens* on a new planet. It has been colonised for around 20 years and already had a breathable atmosphere, and it's rich in important minerals.

As the Colony continued digging for minerals they discovered ancient ruins that immediately caught the attention of Weyland Yutani, who began doing a more thorough sweep of the rest of the planet. That was seven years ago, and recently the company found what they were looking for, but couldn't contain it..."

Could the opening Alien level see players ripping their way through a helpless colony just like they did in *Aliens Special Edition*? The Alien has always

## THEY'VE BEEN HUNTING YOU FOR DECADES

Here's exactly why Rebellion made the greatest games to feature *Aliens* and *Predators*



### ALIEN Atari 2600/1982

To be fair, the 1979 movie *Alien* was a little bit like *Pac-Man* without ghosts and with improvised flamethrowers, but considering the Atari 2600 couldn't even do *Pac-Man* properly, *Alien* had a snowball's chance in hell. It was games just like this that caused the gaming industry of the early Eighties to crash spectacularly, and rightly so. It was awful and as much fun as a stomach-burster.

Score: 0/5



### ALIEN 8-bit computers/ 1984

By perfectly capturing the atmosphere of the movie, *Alien* gave Spectrum and Commodore 64 owners one of the most terrifying games of the time and arguably an early example of Survival Horror. When played in the dark it really could put the willies up you, but then again, the Spectrum's colour palette was the thing of nightmares all by itself.

Score: 4/5

### ALIENS THE COMPUTER GAME



### 8-bit computers/ 1986

By enabling the player to control all of the film characters simultaneously via multiple screens, *Aliens* managed to capture the mood with a unique style. Listening to the motion tracker beeps provided audio terror and watching as each screen turned to static as your squad was picked off was frightening.

Score: 4/5



### ALIEN<sup>3</sup> 8-bit computers & home consoles/ 1992

The third *Alien* movie took the series back to its roots and so Ripley had to deal with the xenomorph without any guns – or hair. Not that the game gave a damn about such details and instead was content to be a platform-based shooter with a vast arsenal of automatic weaponry. It was a fair shooter, but it wasn't the *Alien* you were looking for.

Score: 4/5



INTERPLANETARY  
CLASS WAR!

## MARINE ■

*"I wanna introduce you to a personal friend of mine. This is an M41A pulse rifle. Ten millimetre with over-and-under thirty millimetre pump-action grenade launcher."*

The Colonial Marine is 'just a grunt' and as such provides AVP with its most easily understood character. Marines are soldiers, soldiers have guns – soldiers point guns at targets and kill them and most certainly will not be able to get into their dropship and nuke the entire nest from orbit.

Expect Marines to be mean mothers at long range, but incredibly prone to gory splattering should an Alien or Predator get close. I just hope they'll also get to deploy sentry guns and create defensive perimeters. That would rock.

## PREDATOR ■

*"Stick around... Sti, Sti... Stick around."*

Predators are all about a totally warped concept of hunting sportsmanship that allows the use of optical camouflage that render them near invisible, but at a cost to their power supply. While they're able to use projectile weaponry, see through multiple spectrums of light and zoom in on distant targets, their inherent need to show off means that they're also fierce with spears, bladed claws and that daft weapon from *Predator 2* that combines a Frisbee with a chainsaw.

You can also expect them to be incredibly agile, and to be able to steal unwary players high into trees where they'll get skinned and have their skulls polished. I'd like to see them have the ability to record other online players' headset chatter and play it back while stalking from the shadows.

If you want to make a Predator laugh, get them to set off their auto-destruct sequence and see if you can make like Arnie and outrun a nuclear blast. It's the only joke they get.

## ALIEN ■

*"Their battle cry sounds a bit like an two-ton elephant stepping on a lion's tail."*

The Alien's strength is in its numbers, and its 'acid for blood.' Kill one face-to-face with a boomstick and your face will melt. And since they always attack at close range, Predators and Marines will always be trying to keep them at a distance. A whip of their tail can kill, but should they miss, their claws and jaws most certainly will not. Worst of all, they don't really want to kill you, but rather immobilise you in a cocoon so you can be thoroughly molested by an incredibly phallic facehugger and be made the surrogate mother of yet more Aliens. The Weyland-Yutani Corporation thinks they can use 'em for their bio-weapons division. They're wrong.



## YEAR ZERO

A re-booted *AVP* game is just what fans are slaving for and it looks like it's on course to be a standout addition to the series in 2010. As the new game pays debt to classic entries in the cannon as well as referencing key plot moments in both *AVP* movies, there should be plenty for fans of the genre to relish. Another year of polishing also bodes extremely well.

▀ been the easiest class to kill throughout the *AVP* games, but we were able to gain extra lives by cocooning humans for face-hugger insemination. As Sergeant Apone once said, "It's a rescue mission, you'll love it. There's some juicy colonists' daughters we have to rescue from their virginity." Well not if the Aliens get there first, just to bag some extra health.

### Single story arc

Sega are so confident that Kingsley's *AVP* will maximise kickass in all directions that it has held back the release of *Aliens Colonial Marines* (developed by *Brother's In Arms'* Gearbox Software) until after Rebellion's release. Doesn't such schedule shifting put an extra squeeze on a project that already has its own heritage to live

up to and supersede? Kingsley gives a modest response. "There's always pressure when you're working on a game that you're so excited about – but the pressure is from the team itself. *Aliens Vs Predator* is the game that Rebellion is famous for. With our past work on *AVP* we have set ourselves incredibly high standards to surpass."

So what concepts will make it from the Nineties classics through to the 2009 PlayStation 3 release? According to Kingsley: "The previous *AVP* games are important milestones in Rebellion's gaming history, and we still have team members who worked on both of the original titles. Both games innovated so

***AVP* is the game that Rebellion is famous for. With our past work on *AVP* we have set ourselves a range of incredibly high standards to surpass**

Well it's undoubtedly looking tasty, as the screenshots prove, and even 1999's *AVP* with 2010-grade graphical improvements would be enough to keep fans happy, but Rebellion are raising their own bar beyond flourishes in graphics.

many things, and we've seen many of them copied by other games over the years. However, we always had many more ideas that we wanted to put into the previous games, but were limited by the hardware of the time. Now we have been

### Alien and Predator games (continued)

#### PREDATOR



**8-bit computers, NES/1987**

This piece of hacked-out fodder let you play Arnie in his role as Major Alan 'Dutch' Shaefer and have all the fun of making him amble from left to right while shooting dumb Colombians. Excitingly, the Predator's targeting reticule would appear and you'd have to dodge it – but then you'd be back to the walking bit.

Score: 1/5

#### PREDATOR 2



**8-bit computers, PC/1990**

You are Danny Glover playing Lt Mike Harrigan playing Operation Thunderbolt. What would you do with the concept of an invisible alien that stalks gangs in a sweltering city? Probably not decide on a sideways-scrolling tin can alley. At only four levels long, it was over quickly.

Score: 1/5

#### ALIENS VS. PREDATOR 2



**PC/2001**  
F.E.A.R. publishers Monolith were the chaps to thank for *AvP2*. Better multiplayer modes and a campaign that made sense of the storyline, the ability to play the Alien in any of its forms as well as being able to save your game anywhere, were some of the perks found in this superior sequel.

Score: 5/5

#### ALIENS TRILOGY



**PSone/1996**

More than just *Doom* with Aliens for enemies, this early PlayStation FPS placed you as Ellen Ripley as she fought her way through the first three films by being sneaky. *Trilogy's* dingy corridors and reliance on the sound of a motion tracker kept the mood just right. Original PlayStation pads lacked thumbsticks, so without DualShock-related sticks it handled like a bitch.

Score: 4/5



## FROM THE MOVIES

Here's what Rebellion could adapt from the various movies

**Alien<sup>3</sup>**

Despite featuring more bald men than a Greek sauna, *Alien<sup>3</sup>* did at least show us the Alien-dog hybrid, a red-ish, fast-moving canine mash-up.

**Alien Resurrection**

The French slant on the fourth *Alien* movie was a stylish flop, but it did have swimming Aliens. If the new game can include this, it would rock.

**Aliens Vs Predator Requiem**

This was a fun popcorn movie. It also introduced the Pred-Alien into the mix, an Alien born in a Predator to mix the species. A must.

able to push things far further than before. So there's plenty of inspiration and features from the previous games, including the key, iconic weapons and equipment from the 1999 game forming the basis for the latest version's gameplay."

The power of the PS3 is going to take what Rebellion did back in 1999 and make it feel even more dynamic. Now you will be leaping from tree to tree and branch to branch as the Predator in first-person. The Marines skulking below won't know what has hit them as you pounce and take them back into the trees. The Aliens' tail whip is another class specific attack that looks spectacular running on PS3. The animation as the tail whips out and strikes a Marine through the chest is

impressive. Again, Aliens can run up walls and ceilings, and move in true 3D around the environment. They're tricky to get to grips with at the best of times.

*Aliens Vs Predator* was a classic. Just remembering some of the original game's shocks still puts an icy shiver down the spines of those who have played it. It's a game that defined a great British studio that has since gone on to own the comic *2000AD* as well as *Tomb Raider* originators Core Design, but it's also a studio whose only PS3 game so far was the foul *Shellshock 2*.

Rebellion's future relies on their past glories. Rest assured, it's not going to be just another mindless bug hunt. **Ian Dean**

## ALIEN RESURRECTION

**PSone/2000**

Just as the original PlayStation was about to bow out it goes and gets an excellent game that was based on a woeful movie and had been years in development. Its pitch-perfect atmosphere and clawing claustrophobia (with limited ammunition) created a title that was a genuine FPS fight for survival.

Score: 4/5

## ALIENS VS. PREDATOR REQUIEM

**PSP/2007**

The shoulder buttons spin the camera and gameplay soon becomes a chore of run for a bit. Stop. Open map. Close. Run for a bit. Stop. Open map. Close. It's a shallow game that fails to make the most of the PSP and the AVPllicence. Tosh of the highest order.

Score: 1/5

## COLONIAL MARINES

**PS3, PC, Xbox 360/2010**

Now, considering that it's developed by Gearbox, and they made the *Brothers In Arms* series, do you imagine that *Colonial Marines* might be a little bit *BIA*, but set in space? Swap the WWII setting for the *Aliens* universe and already you've got a game worth looking at, and with another year in development it has oodles of time to be far more.

Score: Find out in 2010