

ALIENS VS PREDATOR

"My mommy always said there were no monsters. No real ones. But there are..."

INFO

020

GENRE First-person horror shooter DEVELOPER Rebellion PUBLISHER

WEB www.sega.co.uk

SPECulation

What will it take to run this game? Here's our best guess » CPU: 2.4GHz dual-core » RAM: 4GB » GRAPHICS: 512MB GeForce 8800GT

in development and by then another generation of cards taking advantage of Window 7 and DX 11 will be around. Aliens vs Predator will be a good reason to upgrade. the hot as hell in Freys's Prospect. The sunceptive on the accursed colony was breathable when the miners took up their picks 20 years ago, but the savings on terraforming went straight into the director's pockets—plantary air con is a lurury. Besides, that money isn't nearly enough to compensate the colonists and their families since the nains were discovered seven years ago and something nastly, something deadly, crawled out of it. But it's neither the mining corporations the ugly, taloned and toothed bugs with acid for blood that are the biggest threat to human file on this godforsaken planet. It's the almighty buck in the form of Weyland' Vutan Jean the planet in the Poymer deplenering monater took a seen interest in the Poymer deplenering monater took actenitive than the Poymer deplenering monater took and enterest in the Poymer deplenering monater took and enterest in the Poymer deplenering monater took when there is not provided to the poymer deplenering the provided to the provided of the poymer deplenering the provided to the poymer deplener to the poymer deplenering the provided to the poymer deplener to the poymer deplen

It's been nearly twenty years since Rebellion was founded, ten years since the UK studio released its first AvP game on PC and eight years since Obsidian developed an equally successful follow-up. But despite focusing more

on Allens Versus Preddir, comic books than videogames in the last decade. Repellion has not lost sight of a third episode in the series. "We ve always wanted to revisit the Allens and Preductor universe after our initial alguar version." CEO Jasion Kingsley told us. "but up until recently we've been incredibly busy with other projects, like Singler Elite and Rogue Trooper. We have always kept an eye on Fox and the possibility of doing more with the worlds, so we were deligited to be approached to take another look at the game."

The previous AvP games were set on barren and rocky planets like the original Aliens films, but this third episode lands the player in a bug-ridden Cambodian style jungle. It makes no odds to the Aliens, it's an ideal hunting ground for the Predator and adds unbearable heat, trench-foot and general discomfort to the fear and inevitable death for the Marine. The plot will sound very familiar to those steeped in AvP comic book and film lore; set 30 years after the original Aliens film, planet BG-386 along with its resident mining colony has been overrun with the Xenomorphs, so the marines have been called in to clear them out. Unfortunately, the humans get caught between an ancient species' rivalry as a Predator ship answers the hunting bugle and lands to stalk their traditional prev before they decide to collect a few







"Hardened FPS players are going to have to rethink their tactics when they can no longer assume their opponents are on the floor"

■ human trophics while they're at it. "The plot of the game has been inspired by everything Allens and Predator." Tim Jones, Rebellion's head of art and design todus, "from the movies to the comic books, but especially the movies Allen, Allens and Predator. There is a huge volume of material for the Allens and Predator universe out there and we strive to travels sure that our story remains consistent with the established love. Being true to the spirit and atmosphere of the original movies was much of the driving force behind the design for our little APP games, and the same is true for this cone;

Predator and Marine narrative idea as the first two PC titles, which remain separate for most of the game and converge at appropriate points. In the past you only got the full picture of the plot by playing all three species, and this is no less pertinent a concept today. Rebellion has once again gone to great lengths to provide three FPS

experiences as distinct from each other as three entirely different games, going way beyond mere differences in weapon rosters and HUD to the point where they could easily be packaged as different titles.

easily to plackaged on directive times. As a straight up FPS, the Marine is the most standard of the disk of the control of a pulse rifle. And you can expect a more bed wetting survival horror experience than either the Allen or Predator narratives. You will be spending lots of time in the daw, instead to the control of a pulse rifle. And you can expect a more hot wetting survival horror experience than either the Allen or Predator narratives. You will be spending lots of time in the daw, insteaming to the unsetting plip of your Motion Tracker, your vesion at the ready. Each of the three species has their own strengths and weakness. The Marine is very vulnerable to the powerful physical meliee attacks of the Predator or Allen — If they get close enough to touch you, you are probably as good as dead!" Within minutes of responding to the colony distress call and landing, you and





Fighting against the aliens is almost a lost cause while moving around in near darkness – so though you're a sitting duck in the safe zone, you're meals on wheels if you stray away for too long. You can't depend on automated turnets alone and Xenos are far more effective at picking marines off in the dark, so you'll have to trust in floodlights and other light sources in addition to your Motion Tracker to a letr you to incoming death. The Xenos will realise this and will try to countreact any efforts to illuminate the 30 and will try to countreact any efforts to illuminate the 30 and will try to countreact any efforts to illuminate the 30 and 30



LOCATIONS



Replete with air vents and tunnels, the colony has be

ravaged by the Xenomorphs But sentry turrets can detect human friend from foe.



JUNGLE

Predators are most at home in the jungle, hunting from the canopy and using their camouflage suits. Marines are most vulnerable here.



The Predator's sacred hunting temple stores Xenomorph eggs and a Queen Alien. This location will be

area by destroying fixed lights, while fleeing to dark, area when hurt. Rebellion has paid particular attention to lighting for the Marine narrative because of the crucial part it plays in atmosphere and gameplay, so your utility bet comes complete with flares that flood a wide area in a dim red hue and a forch that has a bright, but very narrow, core light. Despite his pathetic bloogical disadvantages, the Marine sint totally helpidess and he works well as a part of a fame. Plus, if he debects an enemy in time and can sustain a good lift rate on their approach, then he's got every chance of surviving until the net encounter. "The constant challenge for the Marine player." Tim tells us, "will be to ensure that no Alienso or Predators creep up on you from the shadows or ambush from unexpected directions..."

now, presumably because it was the most difficult and criticised of the three in the previous AvP games, but we do know that the Alien storyline begins several weeks before the Marine or Predator appear on the scene in Freya's Prospect. No doubt you'll begin as a relatively defenceless hatchling, or maybe even a Facehugger looking to rape and impregnate some poor colonist's face. We're expecting to have the same bug-eyed alien perspective as the last two games and, of course, its incredible speed and dexterity. Aliens have the ability to cling to almost any surface and have a three-dimensional range of movement, so couple that with insane speed and even the twitchiest Unreal Tournament player will have trouble orientating themse over any distance. This was the case for the original AvP games, but Tim hints that a new prey tracking system may help, "That's definitely one of the biggest challenges of development this time around. The Alien as a playable character is genuinely unique with its ability to cling to any part of the environment - even tracking its prev as it crawls along the ceiling. We're working hard to ensure that the Alien character will retain this powerful (arid fun!) advantage with a control system that allows gamers of all abilities to scurry over every surface in the game without any difficulty."

The Alien has zero technology, but has been gifted by evolution with weapons that make it a deadly monster to the Marine and worthy prey to the Predator. Apart from being a wall-crawling speed freak and an ambush specialist, it has a tail that can impale or disembowel an opponent, plus deadly teeth and talons to tear either the Marine or (with substantially greater effort) Predator apart. Let's not forget the acid blood either - enemies will pay dearly if they dare to go toe-to-toe and injure you. Blood acid trails feature in the single-player game and, undoubtedly, multiplayer too, "We're particularly excited about the Alien as a playable character in online multiplayer," Tim told us. "We can see it being a very big hit with gamers as it offers something that isn't out there in other games. Even hardened FPS players are going to have to rethink their tactics when they can no longer assume their opponents will be on the floor!"

The final narrative in the trio is the Predator, a very different experience to the Marine's survival horror and the Allen's frenzied FPS. Though the Predator takes advantage of the abundance of prey to go bunting on BG 386, the dropship hunting party has a higher purpose thun a joily family outing. Summond by a beacon activated when the colonists released the Xenos, the Predators have come to defend their sacree Pyramid and rid their hunting grounds of the defliers. The Predators is a much steatither and more calculating ambush attacker than the Allen, with all the technological advantages of the Predator featured in the films and in the original AVP He has an esoteric wrist computer that can be used to back looked doors. a



arge a fortune

shoulder cannon and triangle targeting, a bio-helmet that detects infra-red, ultra-violet, air pressure and low-light, plus the Predator's famous camouflage suit. The latter three can easily be used to surreptitiously pick targets off from a distance, while flicking through a rainbow of different wavelengths will give you the best possible visual perspective to track your quarry. It's the Predator's wrist blades that have got us most interested though, as these can be used to extract trophies from prey. He'll use it to tear the proboscis-tongue from Aliens and pull the heads from Marines, stroking the spinal column as the life drains from their still-twitching faces. The AvP franchise has never been aimed at anyone but adults, but these trophy kills

Aliens vs Predator is a game we've long anticipated and almost gave up hope of seeing. Rebellion doesn't appear to have made huge advances on gameplay, but the triplenarrative concept is still fresh and exciting in our minds PC and gaming technology has made a massive leap in the last decade, which Rebellion cites as one of the reasons for returning to the series after such a long absence: "Given that we've moved on ten years in gaming technology we're able to create a far more realistic and visceral gameplay experience than the original game. This is the AvP game we always wanted to make, but never dreamt would be possible ten years ago. Our overriding goal with this game is to create an experience as close to the Aliens and Predator movies as possible, through the graphics, sound and gameplay. The original game is still well remembered by fans so we know there are a lot of people watching this game very closely, and we're having fun bringing the classic AvP experience up to date so we can give the fans what they've been waiting for." Ben Biggs

AVP GAMES

ALIEN

ALIEN



» DEVELOPER: Act



ALIEN VS PREDATOR

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ALIEN VERSUS PREDATOR

» DATE: 1999 » FORMAT: PC

ALIEN VS PREDATOR 2

» DEVELOPER: M Monolith was given the Alien vs Predato





Rebellion may have shocked gamers with the rather poor ShellShock 2: Blood Trails, but it's ready to shoot its way back to the top, as boss Jason Kingsley reveals...

ome games don't always work out as you'd want them to," says Jason Kingsley, CEO and creative director at Rebellion, sitting by the River Thames as the heat of the sun bears down. He shifts slightly uneasily, his head turning to look across the water. "I don't want to name any names, but yeah, sometimes you can be disappointed by the way a title turns out and factors outside of your control can sometimes

He smiles. He appears slightly wary. He's talking, of course, about ShellShock 2: Blood Trails, an ugly looking first-person shooter with zombies and poor controls that seemed at once outdated and half complete. For a developer as proud as Rebellion, for programmers who have a reputation as being among the finest Britain has produced, it's not easy admitting that they produced a decidedly ropey game that struggled in so many departments.

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"To be honest, I know it was badly received but it's not actually that bad a game," he says. "The guys worked really hard on it and, you know, some things are just difficult from the very beginning. It was an ambitious game, too ambitious, and we failed to reach the target we set, but there were inherent problems in that we bought the studio making the game and got the title half way through."

"It was a difficult time for Eidos and there were changes we wanted to make that we couldn't But making a horror first-person shooter is hard, especially when it's set in Vietnam. Making it scary is hard to do - you can't really delve deep into the supernatural. You come out of these situations much wiser, though.

It is rather telling that ShellShock 2: Blood Trails is not mentioned on Rebellion Development's website. And the thing is, it

Jason Kingsley on... tax subsidies

"I would like to see no tax subsidies at all, anywhere in the world. Then we can all work on an even playing field and gaming would look after itself"

doesn't really need to be. The company is massively successful with so many great games behind it that its great name could never be sullied by one poor title. With Aliens vs Predator in the making and earmarked for release in 2010, Rebellion is about to make the mother of all comebacks, bouncing off the ropes with panache and ready to fight against the likes of the forthcoming Modern Warfare 2.

"We always wanted to go back to AvP," he says, "One of our competitors got the sequel and we were happy with that at the time. It was good to see what someone else would do with it. But above all we know what makes a good AvP, and having most of the staff who made the original game on board for the sequel means we're really confident that we're going to do a great job. In fact, it's shaping up to be a brilliant game – one of the best we've ever made.

Jason draws comparisons between AvP and StarCraft, discussing the different races and the three-way multiplayer that he says will raise the bar of first-person shooters. Freed from the restrictions of PC hardware when developing the original AvP ten years ago, Rebellion is able to unleash its creativity and bring on board ideas that were shelved a decade ago. It's going to be set 30 years after Aliens.

Gamers will be able to play as the Alien. Predator or Colonial Marine and indulge in different, interweaving single-player campaigns all hooked around the discovery of an ancient

pyramid hiding a dark secret by a colonist mining group searching planet BG-386. As warriors seek to discover what lies within and hunters aim to keep it sealed, something stirs inside the pyramid after centuries of laying dormant.

Rebellion is working with Sega, the latter having unveiled a series of Aliens games Sega bought the electronic rights from 20th Century Fox, but already there has been some controversy - mainly centred on Aliens: Colonial Marines that was officially announced in February 2008, more than a year after it was revealed a new game based on the franchise was being planned but has since been delayed. Although developer Gearbox says the game will still go ahead, it will be after Rel llion's muchanticipated follow up.

"Sega is a great company to work with and we have no problems with it whatsoever," says Jason, "They understand games and allow us to get on with things, and what we're doing is listening. We're popping on to forums, seeing the suggestions people make and think, 'that's a good idea. We then see if we can do something with that or whether the idea would be constrained by time or money. It's something we do with all of our games because we understand how important the thoughts of gamers are."

If there is one thing Rebellion has on its side, it's experience. The company was formed by Jason with his brother, Chris, in Oxford in 1991, releasing Alien vs Predator on the Atari

Rebellion gameography





















Jagus four years later and, four years after that, releasing the game on the PC. Over the past decode, Rebellion has set about snapping up many gaming developers, from Corne Design (now Rebellion Derby) to Strangelite (now Rebellion Liverpool) and Awesome Developments (Rebellion Banbruy). Rebellion also owns a fair few publishing companies too, cauging the rights to the 2000AD in 2000, thereby giving it the rights to Judge Dradd. Hale Janes and Strontium Day. Unsurprisingly, Rebellion has produced games based on this intellectual proposition.

And were these all planned? No. Each one was opportunited and yet it has brought some of the country's top development talent together, in doing so, it is able to work on multiple games at once – thereby spreading the risks involved in making one at a time and the able in 50 product vous projects each year. To do so it needs to have four developments orgging at any one time.

This has had a massive impact on the gaming industry. Develop magazine says Rebellion is probably Europe's largest independent developer, but what is more concrete is Chris and Jason's love of games. Indeed, Chris actually built his own computer when he was just \$11 and both ventured into games programming

as freelancers before – post Oxford University – deciding to set up their own company, bagging franchises such as *The Simpsons* and *Star Wars*

trancinses such as *i ne simpsons* and stair wars. The gaming industry in Britain is so important to Jason that he is the vice chairman of Tiga, the body which represents the gaming industry in the UK. Tiga has long pushed for tax breaks and Jason is a staunch supporter of this.

"Tax breaks are important. Yes, there may be more important things in the word, but it is still important to look after the garming industry in the future." In easy. "It just always seems low on the list of priorities though. The thing is I like Britain, and the garming industry is an unsung success. It's an upstart industry that is young and self taught. It's a shame it is not recognised more. but it says a lot about the presence of garming in the Uff that we've been able to sit on the terrace at the House Of Commons having caught the imagination of some MFs who have gone on to set up a cross-party group the "office that the reference is the six a certain recognition for the reference is a certain recognition for the

If there is one thing Jason is fed up of, however, it's seeing gaming being blamed for the world's lills. And as the maker of a first-person shooter, albeit one involving allens, such accusations are felt strongly. "I'm tired of being the kicking boy for when things go wrong." he says. "It's like the

Elvis pelvis thing – everyone was revulsed by Elvis Presley when he was seen as being overly sexual. Games are just the latest thing to upset people and it makes me wonder what I will be

quality or price or skill. But if there are subsidies abroad it becomes harder to persuade a publisher to back it"

alarmed about when I'm 60."

Jason says he often received phone calls from people trying to persuade him to move Rebellion abroad. "We're after tax breaks in Britain so that we can compete gaginst countries that already offer them," he says. "It's easy to be complacent and think that gaming is thriving here and that it always will, but I get calls from people saying: "fixen move to such a class country like that people saying: "fixen move to such a class even will get tax."

and think that gaming is thriving here and that it always will. but Jee calls from people saying: "if you move to such a place you will get tax breaks and X or incentives." That would mean uprooting the company and seeing people with young families either come with me or leave the company. As the owner of Rebellion I have a responsibility for my staff and I want to remain in Britain."

David Crookes

The Next Frontiery 2009 – Coming this autumn is adventure title Rogue Warrior based on the fiction novels by Richard Marcinko. the real-life leader of several covert Navy SEAL teams. Originally planned as a tactical FPS, the game will be set in the Soviet Union and North Korea in 1986. Mickey Rourke will Voice Marcinko.

