Creature Feature

We sit down with David Brickley and Eric Miller to talk about Rebellion's long-awaited Aliens vs. Predator reboot

David Brickley is the Senior Producer of AvP and has been at Rebellion since the very beginning. All those years ago…

Eric Miller is AvP's Assistant Multiplayer Producer. He's a very talkative and all-round nice fella who showed us how to skewer marines 'properly'.

These guys are some of the biggest Alien and Predator fans we have ever met. If you want to know what really happened down on planet LV426, these are the guys to ask.

The first game was known for its hardcore game style. Is that approach taken in the sequel?

David Brickley: Definitely! One of the cool things is that, despite being called AvP, this is a sequel to a 10-year-old game, one that people still remember very fondly and which was an extremely uncompromising game. I don't fundamentally believe that gamers have changed that much, they still want a real challenge. We want to make sure they are the audience we have in mind.

What sources have you used to harvest information and references for the game?

DB: In a way we were glad not to be tied to the recent film release. It means that AvP means something different to people. This is Rebellion making a sequel to the original game with two-thirds of the original development team. So that's the inspiration, and the desire is to make a game that people will be as fond of as the original.

The real absurdity is that the original game added to the lore in its own way. In the *AvP* movie there was a mode that allowed Predators to see Aliens, which comes from our game. The Fox studio requirement of how that should look was a random thought from one of our programmers. That's an example of these things going full circle. So really we can choose [our inspirations] from wherever we please.

AvP is considered a PC-centric franchise. Have here been any concessions to accommodate parallel console development this time around?
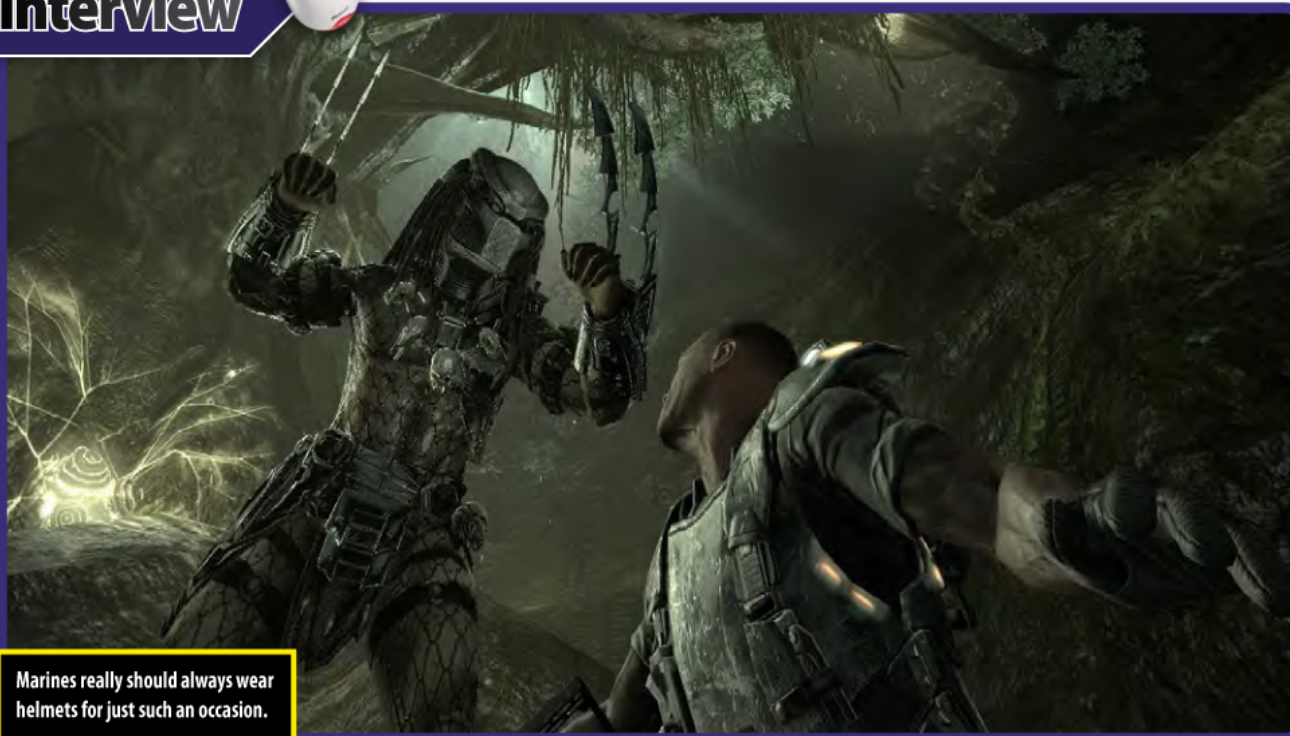
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I am Predator, hear me roar!

They're coming out of the walls!

Aliens can jump huge distances, leaping on prey in an instant.

Marines really should always wear helmets for just such an occasion.

Teamwork is key to any squad's survival.

> Interview continued

DB: Certainly when compared with the original game, where there were no compromises at all. In 1999 there was a console market out there, but we didn't make the transition. That isn't the case any more. You could choose to see the single player in that sense, because in the original we paid a lip service to it. This time we've put a lot of effort into that area, because we feel it's the right thing to do. We'd like you to enjoy the experience and we want to give you a whole campaign, so you can get use to these three different species.
Eric Miller: I think no concession – if you need to use that word – has been made because we are also doing this

game on consoles. We aren't neglecting the PC platform. We're using Direct X 11 and we're one of the first to do that. I wouldn't call that a concession or neglect in any form.

The only thing I can say is that the improvements we've made to gameplay mechanics are partly because of consoles. Why not attract a new audience to PC gaming? As far as I'm concerned PC gaming is dead if you don't attract a continued audience.

So just what does Direct X 11 offer? Is there a significant performance increase?
DB: Absolutely! We've had a lot of support from hardware manufacturers. Getting us the cards early enough to

see what they can do. What has been announced so far is tessellation and it's way beyond that of modern consoles. If your desire is the cutting edge then that's what we need to offer on the PC platform. It's justification for all the money you've spent.
EM: Direct X 11 is a massive, massive leap forward. Visually there's a leap but its more about what else is in there. You're going to get better stuff without any framerate hit and larger resolutions.

Do you think it would it be fair to say that the PC version is the pick of the bunch?
DB: I don't think we are diminishing the other versions by saying that. This is a fact for someone who has invested in a

rig which is far beyond what you'll get out of a television screen.

Will we see any classic scenes from the movies recreated?
SM: Well it's been ten years and the company hasn't been idle. This is the return and the intention is for it to be a reboot that is well supported and that does new and interesting things with the franchise. ●

"Direct X 11 is a massive leap forward. Visually there's a leap, but it's more about what else is there"

◆ **HANDS ON!**

Aliens vs Predator

Makes you glad you aren't a marine…

Merging two of the most iconic sci-fi franchises of all time and spinning them off into their own game franchise is a no-brainer. At least it was in 1999, when Rebellion released the original Aliens vs. Predator. But since then we've had a mediocre sequel from Monolith, not to mention movies that have turned H. R. Giger's iconic creations into little more than schlock horror bad guys.

Fear not. Rebellion has returned to continue the good work they started all those years ago., and whatever's happening in the crazy world of Hollywood is a million miles away from this all-new incarnation.

As you might expect from a noughties first-person shooter, multiplayer is the main focus this time around, but Rebellion has also seen fit to include a single-player campaign, one that threads the three species together on a new planet, designated BG-386. Set 30 years after the events of *Alien 3*, we're assured us that the campaign will retain the original's famously hardcore difficulty, whilst providing a tutorial-like experience that carefully details how to play each highly unique class.

Playing as a Predator is more of a strategic experience, with the added benefit of full body cloaking device promoting a more stealth-based approach. There's also the shoulder-

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ALIENS vs PREDATOR

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Rebellion
Heritage: Rogue Trooper, Aliens vs. Predator
Link: www.sega.co.uk/games/aliens-vs-predator
ETA: Q2 2010

> AvP continued

mounted cannon, which still has the signature three red dots to indicate your target, while an enhanced focus mode enables players to jump from platform to platform very quickly. There are also razor-sharp discs available, which can ricochet off walls and continue, much like the Ripper from Unreal Tournament. You'll have to replenish your energy constantly, however, as the ranged weapons eat through ammo quickly,

The Marines play much like any shooter you've played before, but with one major difference – the motion tracker. Just as in the original, players are dependent on the arc of movement-sensing directly ahead. With the tracker only covering the radius between nine and three o'clock, you're either lulled into a false sense of security or sent into blind panic. One change to the system is that different dots and beeps indicate whether a foe is an Alien or Predator, which feels a little unethical to us. It was better when you weren't sure what was round the corner.   >

"With the motion tracker you're either lulled into a false sense of security or sent into blind panic"
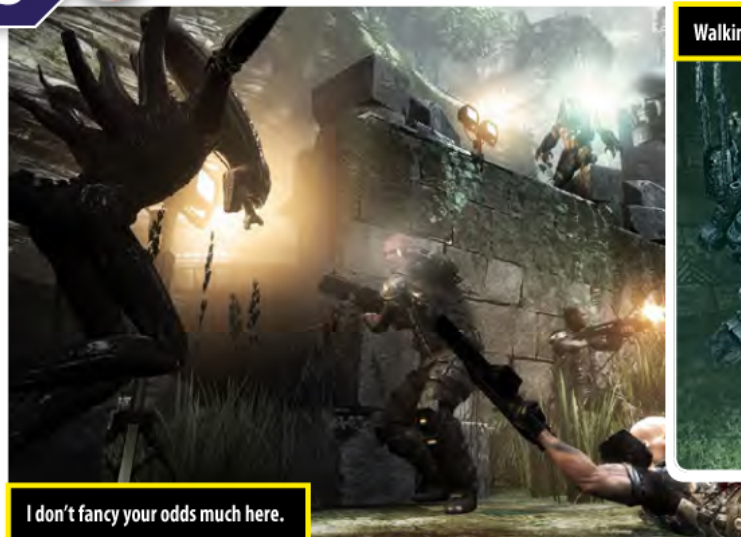

The lighting effects are outstanding.
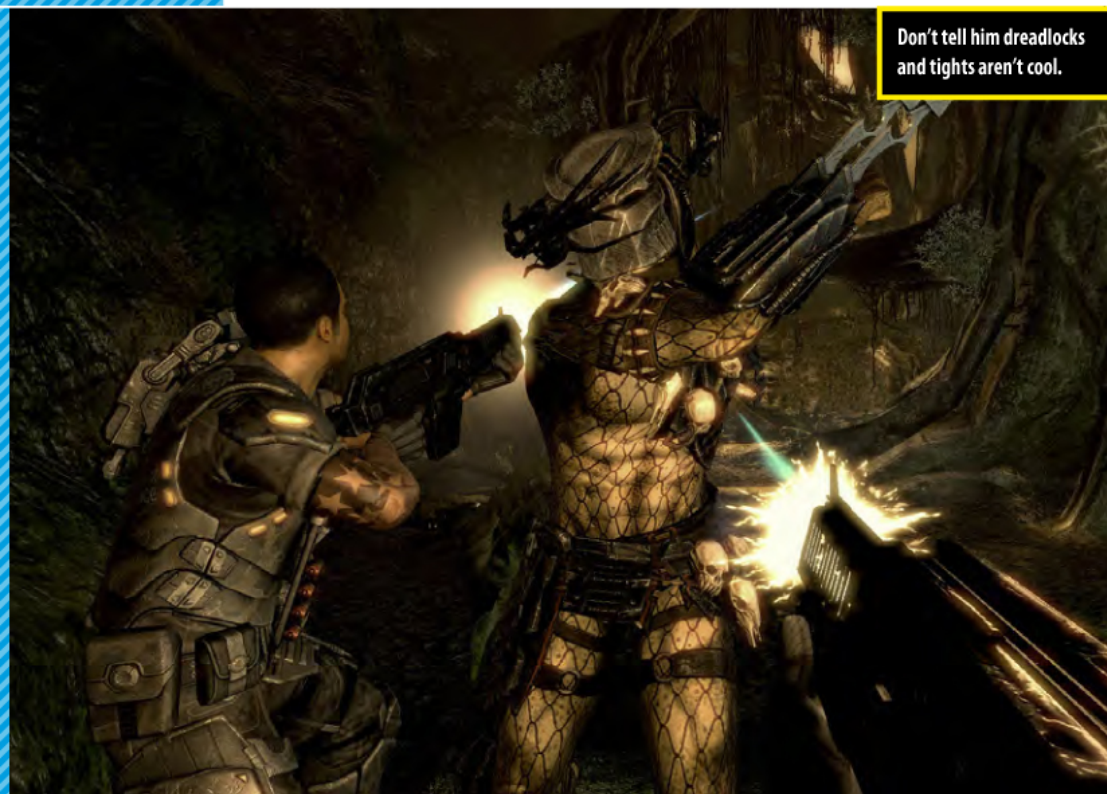
"Just wait until I get the smartgun."

Behind you…

PCGZine
Previews

ALIENS vs PREDATOR

Walking Shish kebab.

I don't fancy your odds much here.

Don't tell him dreadlocks and tights aren't cool.

> AvP continued

And then there's the Alien. The raw power and speed of the Xenomorph needs to be respected. Faster here than ever before, it can quickly get to any foe and rip 'em to shreds.

18 multiplayer levels will feature in the final release, and the three we sampled were well designed to play to the abilities of each species. The Aliens had plenty of dark hiding places and the Predator numerous opportunities to snipe, while the Marine was left cowering and shooting at anything that looked organic. Also on show was the new melee system, which facilitates instant kills when approach an enemy from behind as an Alien or a Predator. Understandably Marines aren't able to

cut a Predator's throat or decapitate an Alien, but you can floor them for a swift shot to their sensitive areas.

For fans of the series, this is a long overdue reboot. And while it's still very early in AvP's development, our brief time with the game suggest the franchise is back in safe hands. ●

THRILL OF THE HUNT
Three online modes to sink your teeth into
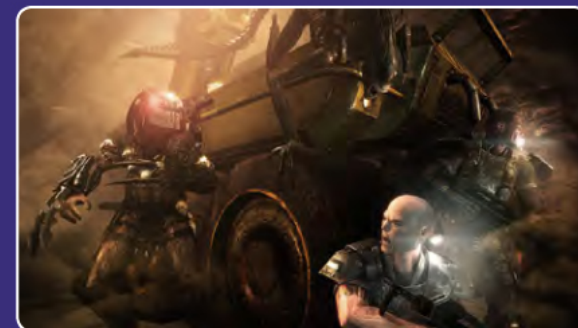
Deathmatch   **Infestation**   **Predator Hunt**

Deathmatch

Having three of the deadliest creatures in sci-fi facing off in an arena is always fun! Always remember that Aliens lurk in the darkest of corners and Predators tend to snipe from those hard-to-reach platforms. As for the Marines, they generally look sharp and try to keep bowel movements to a minimum.

PCGZine

ALIENS
PREDATOR

HOW COMPLETE? 60%   **FIRST IMPRESSIONS?** 80%

A promising return for the sci-fi monster mash-up