



## VIDEO GAME GALLERY

### Alien 3

LJN  
NES  
1 Player

Those acid-bleeding, life-sucking creatures that scared the world in three movies provide all the player can handle in this horizontally and vertically scrolling action contest. There aren't many entertaining new games for the 8-Bit system these days, so this race against time to rescue captives is most welcome.

As Ripley, the player has crash-landed on a prison planet where criminals toil in subterranean mines to pay for their crimes against society. The situation couldn't be worse for the heroine. Her crewmates Newton and Hicks are dead, the aliens have hitched a ride to the planet, and the vile creatures are holding prisoners hostage in various nooks and crannies of the immense warren of the mining operation.

Although The Company wants to bring the aliens to Earth as part of a scheme to achieve world domination, Ripley cannot let such a horror come to pass. She must blast the ferocious adult creatures and the energy-sapping face-huggers whenever she encounters them during her attempt to rescue people.

Ripley has four weapons, which she chooses among with the Select button. Her arsenal contains a machine gun,



Players must run through the mazes and rescue the prisoners while there is time.

grenade launcher, flame thrower and hand grenades.

The game reports the supply of ammo available for the currently active weapon with a digital read-out to the right of the weapon box. Ripley can collect additional ammo lying around the installation, which is not quite as security conscious as the documentation claims.

As an added complication, weapons used too frequently in too short a time span can overheat and jam. The Gun Meter reports the condition of the active weapon.

The bottom center of the screen shows the score, time remaining in the round, and the number of prisoners left to rescue.

The lower right-hand corner of the screen contains a radar scope. It's very handy for locating the captives, but only after Ripley finds batteries to get it started.

The control system holds few surprises for experienced video gamers.

The direction disk moves the character left and right on the side-perspective playfield. The up and down directions enable Ripley to climb up and down ladders. (There are also staircases, but they work only in the downward direction.)

There are also elevators, which are a snap to use. Ripley hops on and hops off again when she reaches her destination.

The stout walls of the underground complex are impervious to firepower. Bulkhead-style doors block almost every passage, but Ripley can raise and lower them with the direction disk. The instructions fail to mention that the attempt must be made while the character is directly on the green symbol found on the wall near each such portal.

**Alien 3's** option screen offers a choice of three levels of difficulty. The user can further customize the skill level by adjusting the number of tries. The default is



This is the screen that will greet players who can't manage to beat the clock.

"3," but it can be raised as high as "9."

Now that gamers have grown used to 16-Bit visuals, it is sometimes hard to appreciate NES art and animation in light of the system's capabilities. **Alien 3** is well above 8-Bit average in both sound and graphics. This cart proves that strong programming counts.



Game play is this cartridge's strongest suit, however. The player must work very rapidly, employing all four weapons, to finish the mission under intense time pressure.

— Arnie Katz

RATING	
Complexity	Average
Graphics	80%
Sound	85%
Playability	90%
<b>OVERALL</b>	
85%	