

Review

Saturn

Alien Trilogy

Probably the best film license of all time has made the jump from PlayStation to Saturn.

What's the conversion like and was the game really all that good in the first place?



Here, cop a face full of this.

Film-licensed games have a bit of a chequered history. All too often a Mega Drive film license meant a normal platform game with the budget that should have gone on creativity, design and innovation spent securing the rights to characters and names that would provide some easy sales for the software company concerned. Games like *Judge Dredd*, *Waterworld* and *Jurassic Park* managed not only to be titles almost completely lacking in imagination, they also failed to capture the spirit of the films that, ahem, 'inspired' them.

"The good news for Saturn owners is that the great strengths of Alien Trilogy arrive more or less intact."

So you can imagine the joy with which *Alien Trilogy* was received when it came out on the PlayStation early this year. Here was an exciting-looking game with a sense of cinematic claustrophobia that actually

Ammo is left carelessly around.



He says "Kill me", so you have to oblige really.

189
Charge 074
Armour 046

The two most common Aliens (Warrriors and the Huggers) occur in level one.

Introducing the band

Another excellent feature of Alien Trilogy are the computer-generated intro scenes that mark out the three parts of the Trilogy. Let's have a look at the first one, hmm?



The drop ship enters orbit. The infested colony lies somewhere below.



On board are Ripley and a platoon of rough tough Space Marines.



The Marines leave their APC and break their way into the colony.

Home cinema

Alien Trilogy sounds pretty good on a bog-standard television but try a little harder and you can have an aural experience at an altogether higher level. If your telly has the appropriate sockets, connect the stereo output to the Aux (auxiliary) input port on your stereo (you can buy the right connection lead from shops like Tandy). If you now arrange your speakers either side of the telly, switch to the Aux channel on the stereo and pump up the volume the effect is superb.

made you feel like Ripley – exploring gloomy corridors Pulse Rifle in hand stalked by some of the most terrifying monsters that Sci Fi has created. Take *Alien Trilogy*, the Dark, a Big Screen hooked up to a decent stereo and you have probably the scariest, most atmospheric computer game ever.

The good news for Saturn owners is that this great strength of *Alien Trilogy* arrives more or less intact. The sound remains as eerily accurate to the films as does the music and the little touches such as the door sounds and the 'blip' of the motion tracker. There are glitches and as with all non-development conversions it's not perfect but the most important basics have made it through the translation process.

If you read our exclusive preview back in Issue 82, you'll know that *Alien Trilogy* relies for most of its content on the second two Alien films. There are 32 missions each with a defined objective explained at the beginning while the level loads. These can range from simply killing

The glass effects have been rushed. There's no hardware reason why they don't look as good as on the PSX.

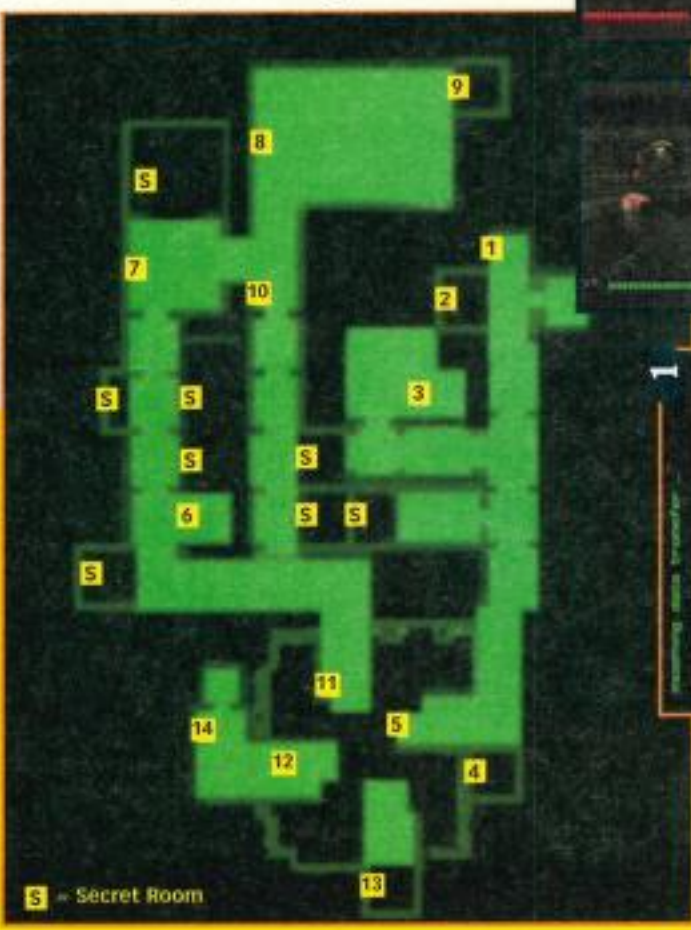


any Xenomorphs (as the game calls the Aliens) to shutting down flame jets in the lead mill of the prison colony of Alien 3.

(Middle) Simulants with smart guns are hard to kill but not that dangerous.

Walk this way...

Level 16 is *Alien Trilogy* at it's best – lots of Aliens, plenty of secret bits and a mission objective that actually means something. It's not a huge level by the standards of other games (one of the biggest in AT, mind) but if they'd all been as good as this, we'd be talking 90's scores not low eighties.



Read your mission brief. On level 16 you've got to turn off all the furnaces and kill everything.



Immediately on your right hand side is a secret room. Grenade or Seismic Charge your way in to get the goodies.



Flick all the switches in here and pick up the Automapper – there should only be Face Huggers to worry about. Destroy the eggs and then blow up the crate for a nice surprise.



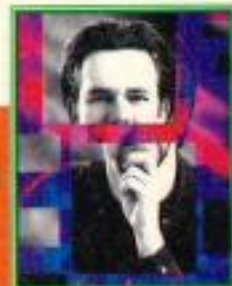
Armed to the teeth, the Marines find that all seems quiet until...



The Aliens attack. Ripley is the only survivor. She'll have to deal with the situation alone.

second opinion

Even though I'm not the biggest fan of the Alien films, I found *Alien Trilogy* pretty enjoyable. It's got all the bits that Alien fans will love – the atmosphere, all the Aliens, loads of graphical effects and references to the films, excellent intro and sound. Overall it works pretty well, it's easily better than a lot of the film licenses we've been treated to and more than just another *Doom* clone. However, like James says, it is flawed in some major ways and never deserved the 95%+ scores it got from the PlayStation mags. **Dean**



Although this mission system moves *Alien Trilogy* away from the 'shoot everything' simplicity of other first-person perspective shooters such as *Doom* and *Duke Nukem*, the disappointingly small size of most of the levels means that it's very hard to get to the end without having completed your mission by default. Of the 32 levels in the game, there's only one that I couldn't complete at the first time of asking. Similarly there are only one or two levels where you begin to get anything like the sense of scale and bewilderment that the later levels of, say *Doom II* create.

On the weapons side, there can be no complaints, however. A nice scale of effectiveness exists from the 9mm pistol through the Shotgun to the Pulse Rifle and the Smart Gun



with only the Flame-Thrower being a bit of a waste of time. Ammunition resources in the levels are tight in places, making economic firing a necessity. If you cotton-on to shooting the black and white striped crates, certain lockers and control panels though, you'll find hidden ammo bonuses.

Enemy difficulty increases steadily through the three sections of the trilogy, although the



Armoured Space Marines – watch for their grenades.

"Take Alien Trilogy, the Dark, a Big Screen hooked up to a decent stereo and you have probably the scariest, most atmospheric computer game ever."

range has been limited by the nature of the license. The first section contains Face Huggers, Eggs (both from *Alien*), Alien Warriors (all

three films), Simulants (Like Ashe and Bishop) and in the twelfth level the Queen from *Alien 2* herself.

Unfortunately the second section only introduces the (graphically a bit knob) Chest Burster (*Alien*), the easy Dog

Queen (made up) finished off by a very similar-looking Queen. The final section is content to change the colour and hardness of the Warrior Aliens, add another humanoid (the Space Marine from the end of *Alien 3*) and pump up the hardness of the final Queen. By sticking closely to the film license, Probe (the Acclaim-owned development



4 After killing the colonist barring your path, blow your way into this room. The adrenaline burst will boost your health by 100.



5 Flick the switch to start these lifts moving, and carefully edge around to the right. Fall off and die.



6 Unblock this door, flick the switch and you're in. There are two consecutive secret rooms hidden behind the North wall.



7 Hidden North of the end room is another secret room. There are Aliens in here but the goodies more than make up for that.



8 This main control room contains most of the switches you need to turn off the flame jets. There are a few infected colonists as well.



9 The secret room in the North Eastern corner of the room contains eggs. Hatch them and collect the extra charges on offer



10 The unexplored corridor should now be swimming with Dog Bursters and Warriors. However, it should be a lot safer now that you've successfully

Comparison



Exhumed

Issue 83, 91%

- ▲ Superb graphics and gameplay
- ▼ Slightly frustrating in places.

Easily the best first-person shooter yet available on the Saturn, *Exhumed* beats *Alien Trilogy* on the old-school qualities of good level design, thoughtful puzzles and gameplay more than the sum of its shooting/wandering/collecting parts. Although the Egyptian background story may not be as appealing as *Alien Trilogy*, we can guarantee you'll be playing it for much longer.



Defcon 5

Issue 81, 52%

- ▲ Pot plants
- ▼ Everything else

We like to get this out and laugh at it periodically. It tried to be a puzzle game, it

tried to be a *Doom* game. It succeeded with neither. Dave still goes a bit wobbly when he remembers how long he had to spend with this software under-achiever. The bland corridors, stiffly dull alien interest and cheesy FMV are sadly now permanently etched into one of the inner folds of his upper cerebral lobe. A lobotomy will be the only cure.

company) missed the opportunity to add a bit of much-needed enemy variety. It's also meant that once you've mastered your shooting and dodging techniques, the game becomes disappointingly easy to complete.

In the 'Mine's better than yours' anal spud zone, the Saturn version stutters most noticeably in certain graphical areas. The suspended animation pods now have a nasty bright blue glass covering rather than the transparency of

Glitch on a stick

Alien Trilogy is an impressive-looking game but there are some little play testing slip-ups that make me wonder if the game has been rushed into the shops before it was properly finished.

Take for instance the Queen alien at the end of the second part of the

Trilogy. If, once you've engaged her, you run into the little alcove near the exit door, you can shoot her in complete safety. In fact, killing her becomes so simple, you can use your least powerful weapons, conserving Pulse Rifle and Smart Gun ammunition for the later levels.

over-marked a brilliantly atmospheric game with severely limited depth and replay value. You'll love *Alien Trilogy* for as long as it takes you to complete it, after that you'll use it to impress the occasional friend, after that you'll probably start to think

about the Games Exchange. *Exhumed* is a better game overall, *Doom* will be even better than that. *Alien Trilogy* is excellent at what it does but after a while for a lot of people that may not be enough. • James

verdict

GRAPHICS

Faithful to the film and varied. The Aliens aren't perfect and nor is the PSX-Saturn conversion

8

ORIGINALITY

A *Doom* clone which makes excellent use of its license. Little gameplay originality though.

7

SOUND

Some superb FX and samples. Probably the best sound package of any Saturn game.

10

LIFESPAN

The levels are too short and with limited Alien variability, this won't take long to finish.

6

FINAL VERDICT

"Superficially brilliant but ultimately a bit of an anticlimax. Recommended still as is selling it on when you've finished it." James

83%

managed to turn those flame furnace jets off.

Back to the lifts, switch the next one on and move around to this next platform and flick the next lift switch you'll find here.

With all the lifts now going, you'll be able to get to this platform at the far South of the level. Behind the secret wall is the first

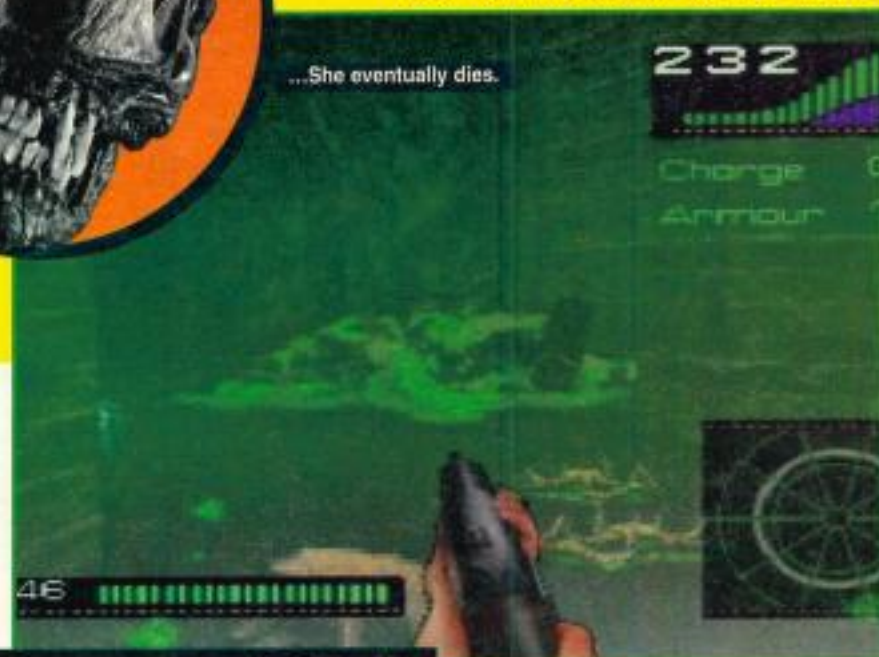
occurrence of the Smart Gun. Er, smart!

You'll have to go back around the lift complex to get back. First go back to the beginning - a new room should have opened up.

Congratulations! You've finished level 16. Only another 16 to go and you'll have finished the game.



You're quite safe here from the Queen's attacks. Just pump her full of lead until...



...She eventually dies.



The Smart gun runs out of ammo quite quickly.

the PlayStation original. Similarly, Probe haven't spent too much time trying to perfect the

steam jet effect that crops up from time to time. If you get lots of action going on-screen at once, you might spot a bit of slow-down but nearly all these glitches fall into the 'only noticeable in direct comparison, otherwise trivial' bracket. It would have been nice if Probe had included a few different levels here and there but they haven't - the only difference between this and the PlayStation version is that the game save works a whole lot better thanks to the Saturn's built in memory.

My personal feeling is that all those PlayStation mags' ninety percent plus scores

