



45 Ninja Gaiden: Master Collection

I don't wanna rain on your parade, but we're not going to last 17 hours. Those things are gonna come in here...



LEGEND OF MANA 40 | SAMURAI WARRIORS 5 41 | BOMB RUSH CYBERFUNK 42 | KEYWE 44 | MOTOGP 2021 46
NIER REPLICANT VER.1.22474487139... 48 | SUBNAUTICA: BELOW ZERO 50 | THE STONE OF MADNESS 51
SERIAL CLEANERS 51 | RICO LONDON 51 | SCOURGEBRINGER 51 | CHERNOBYLITE 51 | TORMENTED SOULS 51

"THEY CRAWL UP WALLS,
OVER YOUR HEAD, AND
UNDER YOUR FEET."



"They're coming
out the walls!" The
game aims to ape
the movies' tone.



FORMAT PS5, PS4 / **ETA** SUMMER / **PUB** 20TH CENTURY GAMES / **DEV** COLD IRON STUDIOS / **PLAYERS** 1-3

Aliens: Fireteam

“We’re on an express elevator to hell, going down!”

That’s inside the room” – and we’re here too. Finally, there’s a reason to be excited for an Aliens game as Cold Iron Studios embraces the squad-based gung-ho bluster of the classic movie.

There’s a subtle caveat, however, as Aliens: Fireteam is set after the events of Alien 3. While Hudson and the team landed on LV-426 in innocence, these marines know exactly what they’re getting into. The universe is aware of the Xenomorphs and specialised marine units are regularly sent to hotspots to surprise the creatures and uncover the collusion of the Weyland-Yutani Corporation.

The years have been kind to the Xenomorphs as there are 11 variants of the creatures in Aliens: Fireteam (20 in total if we include the genetically enhanced Weyland-Yutani experiments). Each has unique AI and attack patterns; the dev is keen to point out the enemies work in a 3D space, meaning they crawl up walls, over your head, and under your feet. These creatures make full use of the environment to get the drop on you. It’s time to dust down that classic blipping movement detector.

BUG HUNT

While the behaviour of the acid-bleeding Xenomorphs may surprise you, Aliens: Fireteam’s core gameplay offers

few shocks. This is three-player survival squad shooting in mould of Left 4 Dead (PC kids), World War Z, and the forthcoming Back 4 Blood. Each space grunt has a class to exploit – Gunner, Demolisher, Technician, Doc or Recon – and these can be customised to bend their perks and abilities to your style of play. These manifest as deployable gun turrets, the chance to ‘overclock’ your weapon to reduce load times and speed up fire rate, and an area-of-effect attack that releases an explosive wave to knock back any sneaky Xenos.

The game is promising 30 weapons to unlock, and over 70 mods, and a perk board offering the opportunity to tinker

with loadouts and enhancements. Yes, the chunky M41A Pulse Rifle is in the game – and we’re fully acquainted with it – but gear such as the Charge Coil (a sticky stun grenade that freezes Xenos in place) is new to the Aliens universe.

This is a fairly standard arsenal to exploit, and in action Aliens: Fireteam leans into The Division as much it does a survival shooter. There’s a familiar rhythm to the action as teams of marines group up to hold

back the mass of wall-crawlers, staving off death using charged abilities and deployable weapons. The mix of swarms and tech-led abilities feels comfortable. But... that’s not the sensation we want from an Aliens game.

Yet Cold Iron Studios is layering in new features to shake things up a



FACTRICK

1. TIME ATTACK

The game is set 23 years after the original film trilogy, and completely ignores Alien: Resurrection.

2. SOUND VALUES

The audio replicates the sensations of the films, so expect eerie echoes and the ping of a detector.

3. XENO-FILES

Aliens include facehuggers and acid spewers, plus heavies that charge and explode, spraying acid.

TRACK RECORD

This is Cold Iron Studios’ first game, but the team is comprised of seasoned developers with backgrounds in MMOs and RPGs, which include Neverwinter and Star Trek Online. It’s a promising record.



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» little. A Challenge Card system is in place to alter repeated plays – you’re able to choose from 40 modifiers that can be applied to a mission ahead of launch. These range from visual tweaks to give your bug hunt a new feel (such as Noir mode) to challenges that restrict enemy damage to head shots or increase the numbers of Xenomorphs your team will face off against.

If you just want to plough through the four story campaigns, you can, but activating Challenge Cards that modify aspects of the AI, enemy combinations, and more should make relaunching into these hives feel fresh.

KILLER QUEEN

The hope is that the four separate but connected story missions will hold your interest. Set aboard the Katanga, a space station orbiting an oil refinery that went dark decades ago, the premise fits in with Aliens’ canon. Space marines from the USS Endeavor are deployed to hunt bugs, and no doubt take out the Queen.

Each story mission is unique and set in Aliens-like environments; the oil refinery backdrop is no coincidence and echoes the industrial texture the films set in place. Though each story campaign can be played independently

they form a cohesive narrative, and will tap into the broader corporate conspiracies teased in the movies. We expect a mix of metallic, functional ship corridors, fiery furnaces, and ancient alien technology – most of which will be caked in Xenomorph goo.

WATCH THIS SPACE

Out in the wilds Aliens: Fireteam faces the same obstacle the movie franchise has had to overcome: the contradictory ferocity of the franchise’s creatures. The Xenomorphs are the universe’s deadliest killing machine, and a whole hive drove Ripley to nuke them from orbit, but one could be vented as she scurried around in her grundies. In-game this means the devs have to balance giving us the space marine fantasy with ensuring there’s enough challenge to make every firefight a frightening event. With a deep upgrade system, a focus on squad play, and a variety of enemy types to compete against, this could just make it.

IMPRESSIONS

Rather than being revolutionary Aliens: Fireteam is aiming to deliver tried and tested ideas within the confines of the licence. How far it can bend the rules of this universe will determine if it succeeds.

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1 Weapons classes are drawn from the movies, and include the flamethrowers from Aliens. 2 Team formation is important, with different classes meshing to create support and offensive roles. 3 But you can also play solo, experiencing the core narrative as a lone wolf and discovering Katanga’s secrets on your own. 4 The development team has a solid background in RPGs, so expect deep weapon and class upgrade paths.

