



The interactive movie has arrived! Pulse rifle in hand, Nial Grimes grabs a fresh pair of socks, and enters the ultra-tense world of Alien vs Predator. Sigourney Weaver? Nowhere...



Aliens come charging out of the darkness as you try to reload your gun - in vain...

INTO THE

GAME PLAY

FACTS 'N' FIGURES

Product:
Alien vs Predator

Price:
£59.99

Players:
1

Graphics:
○○○○○○○○○○

Sound:
○○○○○○○○○○

Value For Money:
○○○○○○○○○○

Playability:
○○○○○○○○○○

OVERALL

84%

The stasis pod opens with a loud hiss. Your custodial sentence is over, but there's something wrong - fellow crewmen lie motionless on the floor and the whole ship is sealed off, the result of a condition red emergency. So begins your quest to rid Training Base Golgotha of an alien infestation and rescue the surviving members of the crew. You start the game with nothing more than a shotgun (discovered soon after emerging from stasis) and a good supply of rounds - extra energy and ammunition can be collected along the way.

The sound effects add to the tension of the mission. The faint hum of the ship's engines fills the air, and all of the samples have been taken from the *Aliens* film. When you let off a few rounds with the pulse rifle, it sounds like a pulse rifle, and the same goes for every other effect used. Occasionally, you hear the eerie clicking of the Alien Queen - enough to strike terror into the heart of this rough 'n' ready journalist.

But the audio delights pale in comparison to the graphics. This

game is represented through the most amazing 3-D system you have ever seen in your life. The picture spreads into all four corners of the monitor and a semi-transparent control panel has been laid over the top. Aliens come charging out of the

darkness as you stumble backwards letting off shots as fast as possible. What's more, the whole thing moves very smoothly and only when a monster jumps you from behind do you wish that there was a bit more urgency about the screen updates!

Some floors can be accessed only through the air-ducts - bumping into an alien down here is no fun!



The Alien faces the tricky task of cocooning its enemies and rescuing the Queen from the clutches of the Predator.



Details of the plot emerge as you begin to use the computer panels - it ain't pretty!



Bad breath is no defence against this little sucker – a spot of joypad wiggling is called for!



The pulse rifle makes short work of alien pods, but you'll need a level 1 security pass to find it.

FIRE

ANY OBJECTIONS?

The temptation is to view *AvP* as *Doom* with aliens – an out and out shoot-'em-up – but there's a lot more to the game than that. In fact, it's best described as an arcade adventure, with the emphasis firmly on exploration. Although aliens are waiting behind almost every door you open, the main challenge is finding security passes and making your way to new floors in the complex. Many of these can only be reached via air-ducts and you need to make good use of the mapping system to get very far. In common with the control panel, maps are laid over the centre of the screen and you soon get used to reading them while dealing with any aliens that insist on getting in the way – yeah, bug soup!

Although the manual gives a general idea of the plot, it's up to you to search for the details. Computer panels are built in to most areas of the station and are packed with reports on the nature of the aliens and schematics. In line with the movie atmosphere, there are no levels as such, but it is very progressive in slowly letting you get at the harder obstacles. Alien eggs aren't encountered until the training maze for example, and the same goes for the bulk of the bad guys. It feels like a totally interactive experience and yet in reality you are being led on a subtly planned route through the game.

That's not to say that the gameplay is perfect. In the film, the aliens' acid blood ate through the floor and yet in *AvP* it forms a pool and robs you of energy should you walk over it. Admittedly the effect is small, but it's still annoying considering that the easiest place to zap the rotters is in

Pest control, '90s style! Aliens explode into a pool of acid that zaps your energy.



JAGGED EDGE

a doorway. However, this minor inconvenience is counterbalanced by numerous nice touches in the presentation – aliens try to claw their way into airducts as you move through them and the marine comes up with all sorts of comments as new weapons are discovered. Add to that the horribly satisfying squelching noise that accompanies a splattered alien egg and you get some idea of the degree of atmosphere that *AvP* creates. In fact, it's not long before you find yourself muttering quotes from the film under your breath – very sad indeed!

ADDED EXTRAS

The colonial marine game is obviously the main attraction of *AvP*, but there are also two other scenarios to play: an Alien or the Predator. Although the same impressive graphics engine is used for both, they somehow don't measure up in terms of atmosphere or gameplay and besides, who wants to play a bad guy anyway?

The Alien outing fares reasonably well, the overall aim being to rescue

the Queen. Speed is on your side, but you only have a claw, tail and telescopic teeth to fend off the enemy. Extra lives can be obtained by cocooning the unsuspecting marines, but that's far easier said than done – in fact, the whole affair is very, very difficult indeed. The Predator, on the other hand, has the equally tricky task of collecting the Alien Queen's skull. Unfortunately that's the only goal and it all gets boring rather quickly.

It's an arcade adventure without very much adventure and there's just not enough to keep you occupied for any length of time. It's as though the programmers wanted to make a game based on the *Aliens* films and just slotted Predator in at the last minute.

Of course, the big question when it comes to any title costing nearly sixty quid is longevity – just how much enjoyment is it going to provide? Well, the scenario is huge and it's the sort of game that you will play until you complete it (sleep or no sleep). Judging by my own progress, I can't see that taking much more than a month, but the satisfaction level is high – it's a real buzz to discover a new floor, or gain a level 5 security pass.

There are still the *Alien* and *Predator* games to think about after that, but they don't have the same "grab you by the throat" (or some other part of the human anatomy... Ed) appeal.

SUMMARY

GOOD POINTS:

Drop-dead looks
Movie-style atmosphere
Strong gameplay

BAD POINTS:

Alien acid
The abysmal Predator game

FINAL WORD:

"Alien vs Predator creates movie atmosphere like no other game – it's the first of a new generation."

DAMN AND BLAST

Alien vs Predator is based on films aimed at an adult audience and the gameplay does reflect that to a degree. Having said that, it's the atmosphere and tension that make it such a scary experience. The strategic marine gameplay is also likely to appeal to more mature players. Atari has given *AvP* an "advisory" 13 certificate, but both of the *Aliens* films were rated 15 or above – draw your own conclusions!

Alien vs Predator is a landmark title. The marine section has a strong plot – this is one of the most atmospheric games ever released...

ST Review would like to extend its thanks to:

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...for the kind loan of all games in Jagged Edge.