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Acclaim
ENTERTAINMENT





THIS IS FOR NEVER RETURNING MY PHONECALLS



BUT WE'VE ONLY JUST MET



GOTTA MY WAY BEEFEAK



THAT SOLVED MY PROBLEM



HOMNY!



I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THAT WALL LOOKED AT ME



HOT ENOUGH FOR YA?



BLAT BLAT BLAT BLAT



I'M SURE THIS ISN'T GOOD ON MY BOOT LEATHER

Alien Trilogy

Available: NOW • Category: ACTION • Players: ONE • Publisher: ACCLAIM • Price: \$99.95 • Rating: M15+



SETTING THE SCENE



HHNNNNNN.....



COME ON, TRY ME.

Alien Trilogy is Acclaim's latest highly-anticipated instalment of the classic movie licence, but does it live up to the hype? AMOS WONG shaves his head, grabs a pulse rifle and hopes to put an end to his recurring nightmares of xenomorph infection...

There's been many attempts to make an 'interactive movie' experience, but a lot of them boil down to nothing more than pointing, clicking and then maybe watching some video scene play itself out. Boring. While Alien Trilogy is really just a first person shoot-em-up, it looks so good and captures the incredible design work and atmosphere of the movies so well it feels as if you're actually there!

The 30 odd levels of the game are split into three sections on the doomed LV-426 colony: the first is based on Aliens; the second is a prison section inspired by Alien 3 and finally you're inside the derelict ship from the first classic film. The intro provides the situation, which is basically that after contact was lost, you (as Ripley) and a pack of Marines are sent down to the colony to investigate. In no time they get wiped out by the aliens and you have to continue on with the various missions, which mainly involves wiping out anything in your path! Still, it's not carnage all the way, as similar to Alien 3 on the SNES, you have to seek out and power up all the lights in a level or shut off steam valves...as well as exterminating the bugs of course!

BUG HUNTING

Initially you're armed with a 9mm pistol, and while it's OK against the plethora of face-huggers that skitter around, it's nothing more than the equivalent of a pea shooter against pretty much everything else! Thankfully more weapons are made available as you progress: a shotgun, flamethrower, seismic mines (that pack a hefty wallop) and of course, the pulse rifle/grenade launcher. Even better still is the smart gun for multiple targets! Batteries for powering-up certain doors, ammo and other useful items including shoulder lamps, armour and extra health can be found with a bit of exploration. To aid your progress you can access a barely adequate map screen of the level. Upon finding an auto-mapper you can go to a more detailed magnification that shows where doors, switches and objects containing goodies are. But there's also many hidden rooms that don't show up; they'll need a bit more work to find and can be exposed by the use of a grenade or mine. It's apparent at the start that the graphics and sound of Alien Trilogy are nothing short of outstanding. The cinematic intro sequence reproduces scenes from James Cameron's Aliens shot for shot, and when the marines stake out the colony they move with uncanny smoothness and realism - evidently Acclaim's motion tracking research and development have paid off.

As I started playing the game proper in the dimly-lit complex with the eerie music and blip of the motion tracker, it didn't take long for the hairs on the back of my neck to stand on end. The interiors are very faithful to their celluloid counterparts and they're reproduced with astonishing detail; as I made my way through I was also impressed by the smoothness of motion - as good as, if not better than a similar game running on a high-end PowerMAC or Pentium. Soon enough, my tracker emits that familiar 'whistling' sound and a blip is rapidly approaching. Then comes a scuttling sound and a facehugger rounds a corner and attempts to give me the kiss of death! They're fast. There's quite a lot of them later on too. And they're the least of your worries! The alien warriors are relentless; once they spot you they'll be on your back and only a grenade or mine will take them out instantaneously. There's nothing quite like the sheer terror of backing down a narrow corridor, somewhat lightly armed, blasting away...and they just keep on coming! You'll meet pretty much everything you've seen in the movies, as well as gun-toting synthetics and soldiers sent by 'The Company.' Oh yeah, there's three Queen aliens too!

THE DOOM GENERATION

I guess the inevitable question is whether it's better than Doom. Well, yes...and no. Like a lot of the newer first-person shooters around, you can interact more with your surroundings: steam escapes from pipes hit by bullets, hypersleep pods can be opened to reveal surprises (!) and panes of glass separating chambers shatter spectacularly when hit - it's awesome when being chased, you blow a hole through a huge glass wall ahead and bolt through it, just like in an action movie! The music is far superior and excellent in parts and the sound effects are way cool. Graphically it's awesome; obviously a lot of time and effort has been spent

getting everything looking as authentic as possible. My only complaints are that the levels aren't quite as challenging to get through (puzzle-wise) as compared to Doom 2, but maybe I'm just being picky - after all, they recreate the vibe of the

movies perfectly. Unlike the wide open spaces of Doom, Alien Trilogy takes place in dark, claustrophobic settings - very scary. And while there aren't that many tricks and traps, you definitely have to think strategically to make it through the levels alive. The only other disappointment is the lack of a two player mode; imagine being able to play the game through as Ripley and Hicks!

But overall, Alien Trilogy is not a dreaded dodgy movie licence: it's one of the more addictive and terrifying games I've played lately and if you loved the movies (even just the first two) you'll just have to buy this and re-experience the terror. Except this time, it's really in your face.

VISUALS 94 - Magnificent, claustrophobic and in-your-face - just like the movies. There's a bit of slowdown later on, but it's thankfully rare.

SOUND 94 - The 'heartbeat and breathing' music is creepy and those skittering sounds really put you on edge! Hearing your own footsteps is a nice touch too.

GAMEPLAY 92 - Challenging, despite the odd dull patch in the prison section. So good, you almost experience the movie for real!

LONGTERM 10/10 - Play the game. Watch the movies. Play the game again. It's not super hard, but you WILL come back.

OVERALL 92 - It's heaps of fun and you gotta buy it now! As Vasquez says, "let's rock!"

