

# Aliens vs. Predator (Strategy)

Of course, what made our jaws drop at E3 were HOMEWORLD's graphics and gameplay. The game is rendered in gorgeous, real-time 3D. Every single object, from ships to nebulae, is polygonal. Your playing space is likewise 3D, meaning you can finally engage in *Star Wars*-style combat with missiles, lasers, and ships flying in every conceivable direction. If you want to form a wedge of fighters and engulf a capital ship with fire in a 360-degree bubble, you can.

With everything rendered in real-time, many possibilities for altering the gameworld come into play. You can charge gas clouds with ion cannons and make any harvesting trips into the resource-rich clouds deadly games of lightning roulette. You can break giant asteroids into a



minefield of smaller asteroids that will pelt all ships that fly through the rocky swarm.

The attention to detail in HOMEWORLD is amazing. Exhaust trails spew forth from ship engines; sparks fly when hulls get peppered with laser fire; nebulae are streaked by lightning storms; muzzle flashes from guns light up ship hulls; and thousands of lines of context-sensitive voice-overs create the feeling that your space battles are actually occurring. Fighters will call out their targets and cry for help when they get hit.

HOMEWORLD looks amazing, and the potential for incredible, epic battles is huge considering the brilliant engine that is bringing Relic's vision to life. The only question is whether the interface will make it easy to issue assignments and commands in 3D space. Relic is determined to make everything as easy to learn and play as possible. The interface right now is a simple one of left and right mouse clicks and customizable hot-keys. The team wants every player to be able to create the most natural configuration for themselves.

While HOMEWORLD is still several months from shipping, it's already taken the gaming world by storm. With its innovative look and design, and because of its movement into a full 3D tactical arena, it could take strategy gaming further than it's ever gone before. That's why it's the undisputed game of E3. Q4 '98

This action game from Fox Interactive combines both movies' creatures with a *QUAKE*-style space marine, all of whom battle in an intense free-for-all multiplayer mode. The coolest parts? The Alien character can run on any surface, giving you a decidedly *DESCENT*-like feel, and the Predator's shimmering cloaking mode looks just as cool as it did in the movie. Let's hope the single-player game is this good. Q4 '98



**Messiah (Action)** Dave Perry's MESSIAH is a game of possession. With an advanced engine that scales its polygons to create the best frame-rate, and a skeletal animation system that allows you to mess with every bone of a character's body, MESSIAH is opening up dozens of possibilities for interacting with your enemies. As a baby angel who can possess others, you can take control of enemies and make them walk through flames or off catwalks to their death. Q4 '98

**Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri (Strategy)** The real "CIVILIZATION in Space" from EA/Firaxis, featuring better AI, more diplomacy, multiplay options, a hard sci-fi tech tree, and that sense of wonder you had when playing the original CIV. While it lacks the sexiness of the latest 3D shooters, as with most Sid designs, the play's the thing—this is easily the deepest game we saw at the show. Q4 '98

**SiN (Action)** Ritual's first-person shooter looks better each time we see it. There are plenty of interactive environments, such as pillars that can be destroyed by guards, thus bringing the roof crumbling down on you.

With multiple mission branching and levels that are better designed than even SCOURGE OF ARMAGON's, SiN should be a blast when it hits sometime this summer. Q3 '98

**Slave Zero (Action)** Wanting to merge the worlds of MECHWARRIOR and *QUAKE*, Sean Vesce, the designer of MECH 2 and INTERSTATE '76, has come up with SLAVE ZERO, a game inspired by Japanese anime hits like *Evangelion*. The robot action is more fierce and intense than MECH 2's, taking place in crowded *Blade Runner*-like cities. Q1 '99

**Wheel of Time (Action/Strategy)** GT Interactive's WHEEL OF TIME makes even better use of the UNREAL engine than does UNREAL itself. The idea is to break into other players' castles and steal artifacts. However, when you are gone, other players can break into your castle and steal *your* artifacts. To protect your castle, you must design and build traps and lay down monsters to thwart would-be robbers. So while half of the game is first-person, fantasy action with spectacular spells and weapons, the other half of the game is level-building with a

## Birth of the Federation (Strategy)



**Star Trek Next Generation** fans can stop whining: MicroProse's BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION is so good it could make even Worf suppress a smile. Everything from Wonders of the Galaxy (*à la* CIV) to Ferengi economics and Romulan diffidence is modeled, in a much prettier, and more playable, grand strategy game than MOO II. The turn-based tactical space combat even supports 3D. Warp Speed, indeed! Q4 '98