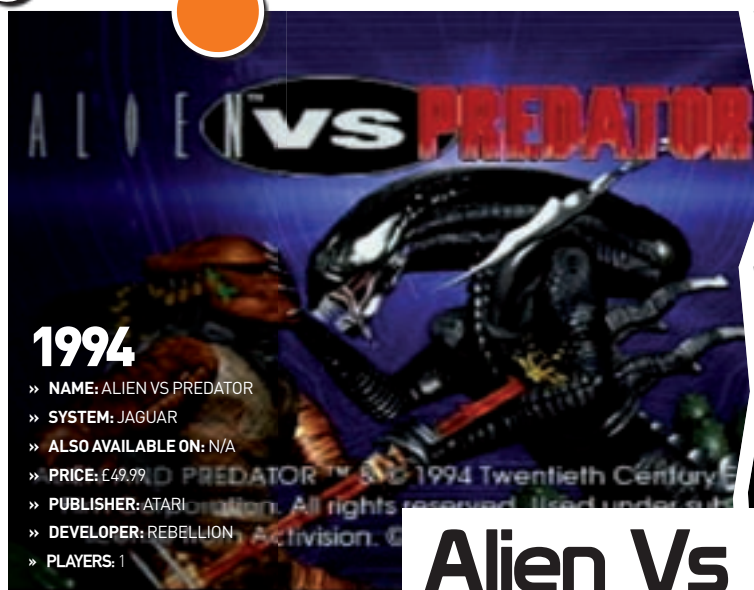


Retro Evolution

Looking at the classic franchises being revived for a new generation of gamers



1994

- » NAME: ALIEN VS PREDATOR
- » SYSTEM: JAGUAR
- » ALSO AVAILABLE ON: N/A
- » PRICE: £49.99
- » PUBLISHER: ATARI
- » DEVELOPER: REBELLION
- » PLAYERS: 1



2009

- » NAME: ALIEN VS PREDATOR
- » SYSTEM: XBOX 360
- » ALSO AVAILABLE ON: PS3
- » PRICE: £49.99 TBC
- » PUBLISHER: SEGA
- » DEVELOPER: REBELLION
- » PLAYERS: TBA

Alien Vs Predator

The climactic marriage of one of cinema's biggest science fiction franchises was always destined for greatness in this world. The nuptials took place in 1993 after a staggering ten titles based on either the *Alien* or *Predator* franchises. Debuting on SNES, and based on the *Alien Vs Predator* comic book series by popular American publisher Dark Horse Comics, the first game was a side-scrolling *Final Fight*-style beat-'em-up developed by IGS and published by Activision.

The player takes on the role of the hardest Predator in the galaxy. You are then tasked with the small assignment of single-handedly saving a colonised planet after it's depised by an intergalactic band of face-hugging Sigourney Weaver haters, also known as the Aliens.

Praised for its good looks but criticised for its repetitive and challenging gameplay, the first AVP game was an uninspired start to the series. However, it wasn't long before the game series started living up to its promising heritage. Following the release of a similar side-scrolling game on Nintendo's Game Boy in the same year, albeit tweaked to feel a little more *Metroid*-like, Capcom released a colourful arcade game on its CPSII arcade board, which really opened people's eyes to how cool pitting two

intergalactic sociopathic alien species against each other with a couple of gun-toting soldiers could be. Once again, *AVP Arcade* was your typical side-scrolling fighter, very similar in style and look to Capcom's beat-'em-up spin on *Bionic Commando*. Refining the gameplay of that initial SNES offering, it was a moderate success in the arcades but it was in the following year that the series found its most high-profile and eagerly anticipated title.

After a slew of delays, the first and most highly anticipated AVP videogame ever was released. Developed by Rebellion and released for Atari Jaguar, the first FPS AVP game really set the tone the series would adopt therein. It found players playing the role of either species, through either the perspective of a Colonial Marine, Alien or Predator. It



★ What we think

I'm a fan of both the first-person shooter games and the film franchises, and I do think that both PC titles were excellent. Here's hoping Rebellion lives up to its word and delivers the goods again.



★ What we think

The Jaguar and PC versions were fantastic back in the day. Although this new update seems intent on using gore for the sake of it, it's nevertheless roused my interest. I'd still prefer a new 2D scrolling fighter though...

Alien Versus Predator Timeline

Alien Vs Predator
YEAR RELEASED: 1993
SYSTEM: SNES



Alien Vs Predator
YEAR RELEASED: 1994
SYSTEM: ARCADE



Alien Vs Predator
YEAR RELEASED: 1994
SYSTEM: JAGUAR



Alien Vs Predator
YEAR RELEASED: 1999
SYSTEM: PC

Alien Vs Predator: Extinction
YEAR RELEASED: 2003
SYSTEM: XBOX



Alien Vs Predator: Requiem
YEAR RELEASED: 2007
SYSTEM: PSP

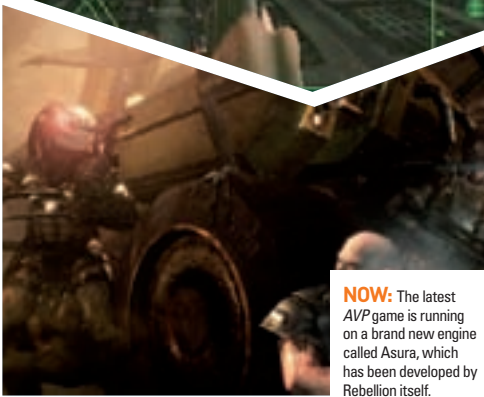
Alien Vs Predator
YEAR RELEASED: 2009
SYSTEM: XBOX 360



What's Changed?

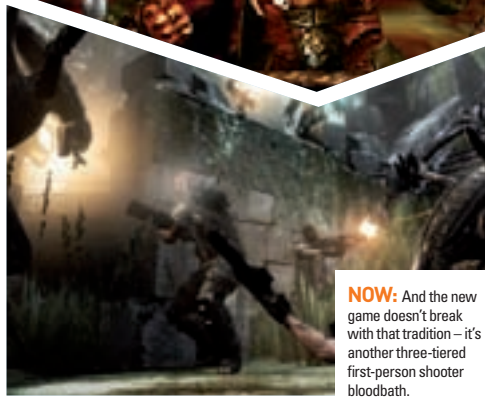
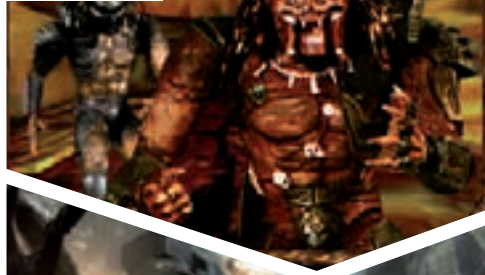
The new additions that weren't in the original game

THEN: Featuring texture-mapped visuals, the appearance of *Alien Versus Predator* was simply jaw-dropping for its day.



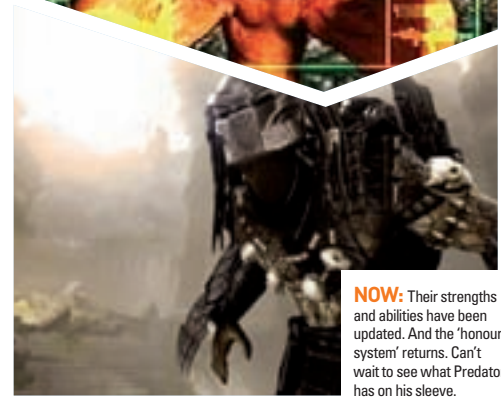
NOW: The latest *AVP* game is running on a brand new engine called Asura, which has been developed by Rebellion itself.

THEN: The original was, essentially, three games in one, played from the viewpoint of either the Predator, Alien or Marine.



NOW: And the new game doesn't break with that tradition – it's another three-tiered first-person shooter bloodbath.

THEN: Each character had unique abilities. Predator had the cloaking device, Aliens could 'cocoon' Marines, Marines had guns.



NOW: Their strengths and abilities have been updated. And the 'honour system' returns. Can't wait to see what Predator has on his sleeve.

both of the hostile alien species. While no one could fault *Alien Vs Predator* for its ambition – it captured the spirit and atmosphere of the movies wonderfully – the game garnered mixed reviews from the press. Nevertheless, it remained a success, and sequels invariably followed.

The next two instalments, the BAFTA award-winning *Aliens Versus Predator PC* (once again developed by Rebellion) and its follow-up, *Aliens Versus Predator 2* (developed by Monolith), both appeared on PC. It continued down the route of a first-person shooter perspective but refined the gameplay, visuals and atmosphere. And many cite the small PC series as being two of the most terrifying and 'best' *AVP* titles ever to be released. Following the release of *Aliens Versus Predator 2* expansion pack *Primal Hunt*, the series turned its attentions back to games consoles with the release of *Alien Vs Predator:*

Extinction, which ditched the time-honoured frenetic first-person shooter action for a real-time strategy instead. Keeping with the action split between the three factions, the game's over complicated interface, dodgy artificial intelligence, and the long-winded method by which you had to complete mission objectives meant that it wasn't particularly well received by fans and critics. But it was following this release that the franchise was handed back to Rebellion.

A videogame tie-in for the average sequel to the *AVP* movie franchise, *Alien Vs Predator: Requiem* was a third-person action game that put the player in the role of the Predator as he hacked and slashed his way through hordes of Aliens. The title received a middling reaction from the gaming press due to its lacklustre visuals, button-bashing gameplay and easy difficulty. More recently, however, the series has once again returned to its first-person shooter roots and is still firmly in the proven hands of Rebellion. Published by Sega, and appearing on Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3, *Alien Vs Predator* promises to be a return to form the franchise.

THE PROBING QUESTIONS

Tim Jones, head of art and design at Rebellion, and *AVP* project lead



■ What tricks have you learned since the original Jaguar game?

Our original Jaguar version was made when FPS games were in their infancy. Rebellion was developing it even before the first *Doom* came out, though it was released a couple of months later and many assumed it was a *Doom* clone

when in fact nothing could be further from the truth. We now have 15 more years of game development experience under our belt, not to mention 15 years of enthusiastic game playing. I think it's fair to say the number of tricks we've learned along the way are too many to list here.

■ It's gorier than others in the series. Does potential censorship concern you?

We're trying to make a game that's consistent with what you see in the *Aliens* and *Predator* movies and comic books. We wouldn't feel comfortable with toning down the harsh reality of the universes so we could get a specific age rating. We want to create an authentic experience and that was our goal with the originals too. A similar level of gory violence comes across as a little more shocking now because the graphical detail is so realistic.

■ Will any Jaguar elements remain?

The core concept of playing as the three

species – Marine, Predator and Alien – remains. Beyond that, it's been built from the ground up.

■ What improvements does this new title offer over previous games?

We constantly go back to our 1999 PC version of *AVP* to remind ourselves what elements are key to the experience. That said, gaming has moved on a long way in the last ten years so many aspects have been rethought to bring them up to date. There's so much we can do now that wasn't possible before... we're able to develop the *AVP* game we always wanted to make. We can make everything so much more visceral, convincing and in-your-face.

■ Your original AVP pushed the Jaguar, can we expect the same from this one?

Oh yes, we're using our Rebellion game engine named Asura to power *AVP* and we're able to deliver the kind of dramatic, real-time dynamic lighting and shadows that are key to the experience and atmosphere. The game is looking very special right now.

■ Why do you think this licence remains so popular with gamers?

The movies are so iconic and have stood the test of time. [I'm] sure they will continue to do so for many more years... It comes down to the character design, the Alien and Predator are two awesome specimens, quite ingenious and innovative in their design, and then you add to that the Colonial Marine, a heavily armoured human out to annihilate these monsters, and you have a classic conflict on your hands.



★ What we think

I've always thought the original Jaguar game was overrated, so I can't say I'm too excited about this sequel. I'm not much of an FPS fan either, so this will have to do something really special to change my mind.