Alien War: first 'total reality' ride?

Alien War is being branded the UK's first 'total reality' ride. But exploring a maze with men in rubber suits chasing you isn't everyone's idea of a great day out... Edge reports

Photography: Peter Canning

A massive Alien Queen at the entrance to Alien War. You get to meet the whole family within the complex, from eggs and face huggers to full blown xenomorphs

The producers of Alien War, the new attraction at the Trocadero in London, have made some big claims. Forget Virtual Reality, this is Total Reality – or so ran the hype. They've promised a new era in public entertainment, a participatory experience to scare you out of your wits, or to put it in the words of American venture capitalist **Charles Buggy**, 'I hope you brought a change of drawers'.

Alien War follows on from the movie Alien 3. The story is that the Weyland-Yutani Corporation have managed to get a face hugger back to Earth, having captured it for the Bio-Weapons Division. The aliens are being held in a Research Utility and you are set for a tour through the alien's life cycle. At the beginning of your tour, something goes wrong (of course) – aliens are on the loose and you only have 15 minutes to escape the labyrinthine installation to safety.

The experience is that of a sophisticated ghost train on foot. Colonial Marines drag and bully you through the complex, hurrying you past aliens and shooting at them. The public play themselves – civilians caught up in the movie. The maze itself is closely based on the sets from Aliens, and much of the scenery is taken from the original vacformed panels constructed at Pinewood studios.

The Colonial Marines guides were selected from hundreds of applicants, and

are a burly bunch. After an intensive two week training course and crewcuts, they really look the part. Their heavy body armour is made out of fibreglass from casts provided by Twentieth Century Fox. The Marines also carry huge assault rifles taken straight from the film, plus blank-firing nickel plated Barretas. The participants don't actually get to discharge any weaponry themselves – all the seriously loud fire power is taken care of by the Marines.

An additional member of the group is an anonymous screamer, planted in your midst to heighten the excitement. At one point in the maze, a lift breaks down and the doors are forced open by an alien who drags the screamer out (assuming his comrades let him go, of course). The aliens within the maze

Sigourney Weaver, suitably terrified after her ordeal...

'One of those things has gotten in here. Check under your seats!' your Colonial Marine escort advises...