

New PlayStation Games



Game info

- Publisher: Fox Interactive
- Developer: Argonaut
- Price: £35
- Release date: Out now
- Players: 1
- Extras: Dual shock-compatible, mouse, memory card

ALIEN RESURRECTION

Grade
PlayStation
Game of
the Month

BE AFRAID. BE VERY AFRAID.



■ Brilliant lighting sets the scene and the atmosphere.

HR Giger has much to answer for. Many a sleepless night has been had thanks to his satanically evil creation: the alien. You don't need to be told that after Giger designed *Alien*, his gory influence went on to inspire three sequels that – with perhaps the exception of the last one – are real horror-fests ripe for conversion to videogames. Strangely, though, only a few such games have been successful; *Aliens Vs Predator* for PC was the only one that has really done the series any justice. Until now, that is.

Alien Resurrection places you in the quaking shoes of four of the film's main characters. Naturally there is Ripley (or rather the cloned, alien DNA-enhanced version), Winona

Ryder's android Call, the super sharp shooting Christie and Distephano, a US marine.

• The game is more concerned with actual events in the film rather than the plot, although it does use the film's premise to set the scene. It's 300 years into the future and genetic scientists, working for the government, are developing the ultimate biological weapon: the alien species. Somehow they've got it into their heads that they can tame and turn them into productive members of society, always willing to help your granny across the road. When will these people ever learn?

To recreate the monsters that Ripley killed off in the third film, samples of alien DNA have been used. And the scientists aren't without a sense of irony – they've also



■ Things get very claustrophobic, especially when you have to use the air ventilation shafts. Obviously this is prime alien territory. Just make sure you shoot them at long range – the acid blood can still harm you.



■ Set-pieces crop up all the time – above, an alien burst.



■ There are some powerful guns. Just not much ammo.



■ Gruesome scenes litter the game throughout.



■ A room full of eggs and two alien tails. Happy days.



■ Ripley cloning experiments must be destroyed.



■ You have to worry about marines as well as aliens.

cloned the dead Ripley to be used as a host for the creatures. The game begins just as the aliens have escaped from their holding pens and all hell has broken loose. Quite literally. The aliens are everywhere on the now panic-stricken space ship and you begin the game as Ripley, alone in your cell, with no weapons and an army of aliens and face huggers between you and your ultimate goal: escape.

Along the way you have to complete various tasks to get to commercial freighter Betty. One mission sees you having to launch one of the lifeboats manually to prevent it from destroying the ship. Another sees you locating and destroying all the failed attempts at cloning Ripley – these monstrosities have to be destroyed to prevent anyone else from recreating the alien species.

Although this sounds fairly inventive, gameplay is limited to traditional first-person shooter territory. In other words finding various keys, activating switches and shooting a spaceship full of nasties. But it's not quite as simple as that – much of *Alien Resurrection's* appeal comes from the intensely evil and foreboding atmosphere that it generates.

Alien Resurrection the game manages to recreate the atmosphere from the first three films, an atmosphere that was sadly lacking from *Resurrection* the film. With dimly lit corridors, strobe lights, smoke, the ambient sound effects of people screaming in the distance, the blip on your motion tracker and the tap-tapping of your feet on the metallic floors, this is classic *Alien* territory. A place where you're

FOR REAL ATMOSPHERE, TRY PLAYING ALIEN RESURRECTION IN THE DARK, WITH NO ONE AROUND, LATE AT NIGHT. IT'LL SCARE YOU ABSOLUTELY WITLESS.

never sure what's around the next corner, even though it's usually an alien with a lust for human flesh. Of course for real atmosphere, play it in the dark, with no one around, late at night and it'll scare you absolutely witless.

Play alternates between the characters on different levels and each has slightly differing abilities. Thanks to Ripley's alien DNA she can sense the monsters approaching, with a slight rumble on the Dual Shock analogue pad signifying this. Being an android, Call can take slightly more damage than the others, while Christie and Distephano start with better weapons.

There are only three kinds of enemy in *Alien Resurrection*: human marines, the aliens themselves and face huggers. This is more than enough – after all the alien is possibly the most intimidating enemy ever dreamed up and is perfect for this kind of game. The face huggers pose a different kind of threat – they're faster and smaller and will impregnate you with an alien embryo if they get half a chance. Some will even play dead. This is the clever bit: if you do get impregnated then a time bar is displayed. When this reaches zero then you're in for some chest bursting of the highest order. The only way to get the critter out of your body is to find a portable Auto Doc. You'd think that the aliens would leave you alone if you've got one of their kind inside you, but they'll still attack, though will pause before they do so giving you vital seconds to blast them.

There's also a sense of subtlety that is missing in most games of this genre. We've already mentioned that the face huggers play dead and will attack you once you walk past but you're in for shocks even with the motion tracker; aliens still manage to hide and wait for you then jump out at the most unexpected moments. The result is that you're constantly on the edge of your seat – just like you were when you first saw the films. The attention to



■ The bite's worse than the bark. So is the acid spitting.



■ That'll be the alien queen's nest, then. Best not go there.



New Playstation Games



■ Face huggers have a nasty habit of appearing from out of nowhere. They'll even play dead to try and fool you. Clever.



■ You change between characters via the TV screen.



■ No more than three aliens will attack you at once. Gulp.



■ Once impregnated with an alien embryo you only have a short time in which to find an auto doc and get the sucker out.

THE ATTENTION TO DETAIL EVEN GOES AS FAR AS THE VIBRATION ON THE DUAL SHOCK, WHICH POUNDS HARDER AND HARDER IN TIME WITH YOUR HEART BEAT.

↑ Uppers & Downers ↓

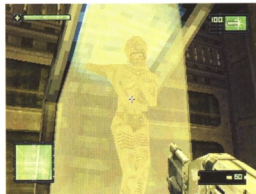
- | | |
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| Xenomorph
■ Terrifying atmosphere
■ Fantastic graphics
■ Frighteningly difficult | Morph
■ Almost impossible without a mouse
■ A little predictable at times |
|--|--|

detail even goes as far as the vibration on the Dual Shock which pounds harder, the closer you get to the ship's engines, also pounding along with your heart beats when energy is low. It all adds immeasurably to the atmosphere, one of the scariest ever created in a videogame.

But for all its brilliant spookiness, *Alien Resurrection* isn't without its problems. For starters, it's just far too difficult playing it with just a Dual Shock pad. Aiming is over-fast, so against the aliens, you've basically got no chance. But with a PlayStation mouse things become more straightforward – not that this makes *Alien Resurrection* an easier game, just a little more playable.

It's this difficulty that makes *Alien Resurrection* arguably the best first-person shooter on PlayStation. With ammo in short supply and aliens and face huggers in great quantities it makes for quite a challenge, even on easy mode where the game will automatically use med packs and reload your gun for you. There are no such luxuries on the hard setting but watching your ammo running out while trying to blast several aliens brings back memories of the classic films.

If it weren't for the overly difficult default control method, *Alien Resurrection* would receive Arcade's five star treatment. But for this reason alone it loses a star. If you're going to play this game then you really need to invest in a mouse and that's an extra £20. It could have been sorted with the inclusion of a few control alternatives (just like



■ One of the horrific cloning experiments. One mission sees you having to track them down and destroy them.

GoldenEye, *Turok* and *Quake II*) but as it is, *Alien Resurrection* is almost unplayable without a mouse.

This aside, it's a terrific game. It drips with a horrific atmosphere that's guaranteed to give you nightmares, harking back to the good old days of *Doom* where you actually don't really want to play the game because it scares you, but are strangely compelled to do so, anyway. Of course it's come a long way from *Doom* and it helps that it has those aliens. But this is probably the best *Alien*-inspired game yet and one of the scariest games ever created. If you're a fan of the films then you'll hate and love every minute. Frightened? You should be. ★★★★★ **Nick Jones**

Or you could try...

Quake II
Arcade ★★★★★
Brilliant port of the PC classic. A must buy for fans of first-person shooters.

Demon
GF Entertainment ★★★★★
Second-considerable shooter, though obviously looking a little dated now. As scary as hell.



■ The flame-thrower heats things up a bit. Watch with glee as aliens dance around in agony. Not so scary now, eh?

