

Alien Trilogy

READ THE SODDING MANUAL

» RETROREVIVAL



» SATURN » 1996 » PROBE ENTERTAINMENT

When I visited Play Expo Manchester earlier in the year I scoured the many vendors looking for cheap Saturn games.

I didn't really find any, but what I did pick up was *Alien Trilogy* for a very reasonable £12. I'd played it in the past on PlayStation back when it was first released, and I was eager to see how the Saturn version stacked up against it. As it turns out it's actually a very good port. It lacks a few graphical elements that make the PlayStation version look so nice, and the pistol is all but useless, but it's every bit as fun to play.

However, I did notice a few difficulty spikes at certain points in the game. The first comes on level 1-9 when you have to deal with an increased Xenomorph threat and gouts of flame that shoot out from the floor. "Just take it easy," my cousin advised. "You're probably rushing it." After a few abortive attempts, I got past that particular level, took down a queen and finished most of the second set of stages. All was well until I hit 3-3 a festering level of misery with narrow walkways and pits of acid, which rapidly drains your health.

"This level is shit mate," I told my cousin. "If I fall into the acid I can't get back up the slopes and the nearby lifts operate too quick for me to get back on them so I just end up dying."

"You must be doing something wrong or forgetting something," he replied, "just read the manual."

"I'm not reading the sodding manual, it's a first-person shooter – this is just rubbish game design."

After several more attempts over a couple of days I finally completed the game and (those few moments aside) deeply enjoyed it. *Alien Trilogy* actually holds up really well and while it mechanically shows its age there's still plenty of variety thanks to the decent mission structure that the team implemented.

Just under a week later, I got a call from my cousin as he'd been playing it on PlayStation to see if it was as difficult as I was making it out to be. "You do know there's a run button, right? So you can easily get on lifts and climb up the slopes?" Damn, I should have read the sodding manual. ✱



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