



Alien Vs Predator

In the words of **Sergeant A. Apone**, "Okay, **marines**. We come here, **we gonna conquer** and we gonna get some. Is that **understood**? We gonna get some."

INFORMATION

FORMAT	PC
PUBLISHER	Fox Interactive
DEVELOPER	Rebellion
STYLE	First-Person Shooter
RELEASE	April
PRICE	£TBA
PLAYERS	TBA
PROCESSOR	P200
MEMORY	32MB
DISK SPACE	TBA
3D ACCELERATOR	Required

I'd like to start this Beta Look with a small confession. As a huge fan of both the Aliens and Predator films, I feel slightly biased towards this game – a game that I have been eagerly awaiting for some time now. All of the best games ever created share one very big thing in common – atmosphere. And this is one of the advantages of basing games around movies or other already established themes; because you already know the background, it's far more easy to get drawn into the game. Star Wars titles such as the recent *Rogue Squadron*

could be compared to *AvP* in this respect; fans of the films will obviously take a lot more from the game than those who do not like or have never seen the movies. One thing that *Alien Vs Predator* pulls off spectacularly is replicating the atmosphere from the

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films. The dynamic soundtrack, taken direct from the films, responds to the on screen action brilliantly, and the electronic beeping of motion scanners, Alien screams and Predator gurgles are all authentic samples that come

together to create a very tense atmosphere that fans will lap up.

As you may already know, this is not an original release. The developers, Rebellion, had already released the game on the ill-fated 64-bit Atari Jaguar. Spectacular though it was for

the time, it never took off, largely because of the machine. The PC is an obvious choice for a remake, and it has been done very well indeed. The first-person engine is thankfully entirely original, giving the game a very fresh



The combined total of each creature's equipment is greater than any other shooter

look. It's ridiculously fast – at times bordering on the unplayable if you don't learn how to use the walk button properly – but it's an amazing technical feat, especially when you consider the detail, lighting effects and in-game video on the monitors. You'll want a pretty quick PC to get the best from it, but the specs are not much higher than that of *Half-Life*, so this should include the majority of you.

Want some candy?

Aliens Vs Predator is three completely separate games in one. You have the option of playing the role of either a Colonial Marine, Alien or Predator, and the only thing shared between all three is the setting. The three games all take place inside the same area and the levels are shared, but each species begins in a different place, has different objectives and, because of the different abilities, each will have access to parts of the level unreachable by the others. It may not sound it on paper, but there is a big difference to the gameplay depending on the character you choose.

As a Colonial Marine, the game is perhaps the most standard. Landing in the Pandora Research Station, you are the last survivor of your squad and must find and retrieve five data tapes containing the base's research records and then destroy the base. Your view is

very similar to that of *Quake*. There are a number of weapons available (eight in total) that all have both primary and secondary fire, whilst armour, health, ammo and new weapons can all be found around the levels. One big advantage is the motion tracker that bleeps away in the bottom corner of the screen when enemies are near, but you also have an image intensifier for use in dark areas, plus a limited supply of flares. The Marines are the weakest and slowest species.

We're in some real pretty shit now, man...

As the Alien, you begin with the task of alerting the rest of the hive to the presence of intruders. The positioning of the Alien eyes is manifested in the game by a fisheye viewpoint, giving you a greater sense of your surroundings. Despite being unable to use high-tech weaponry, you have close-range claw, tail, jaw and acid spit attacks. The alien won't find health pick-ups but can eat its victims, though you must be quick to do so before the body disappears – eating live prey enhances your health far more than dead prey, but at the same time it is far more difficult to do. The Alien's strength increases after each level, and eventually you can find an experimental tonic that will mutate you into a Xenoborg, the most

STOP YOUR GRINNIN' AND DROP YOUR LINEN

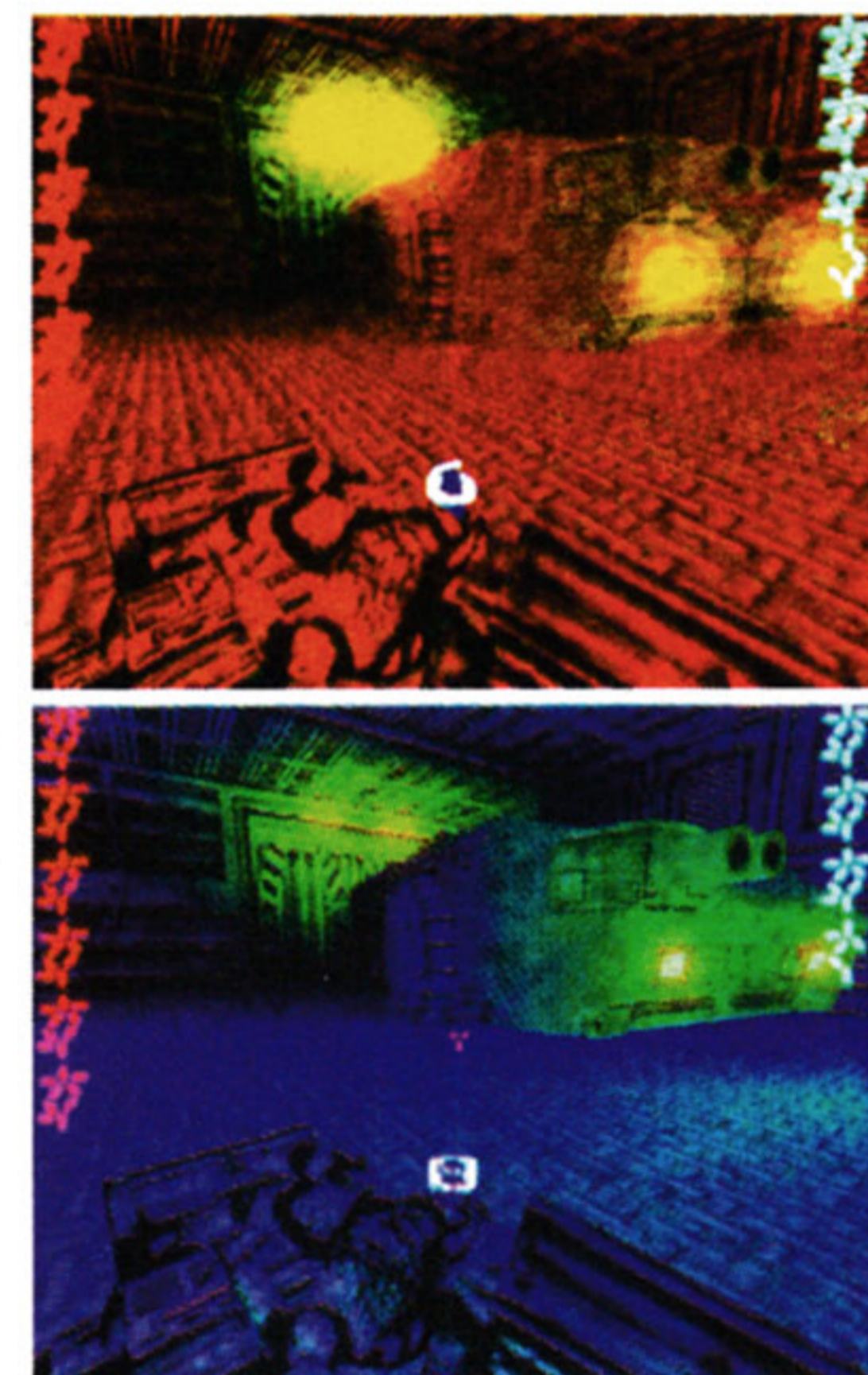
The new engine on show here is definitely the most impressive seen so far, with certain features that are hugely innovative. At one point you find yourself in a room partially covered in water with debris on top. Moving forwards creates a ripple in the water which actually moves the floating debris around realistically. This is, as far as I can tell, the first time such an effect has been used, and even if it has no specific purpose or use in the game, it does look spectacular and deserves a special mention.



powerful creature in the game. The Alien can also scale walls and roofs, can pounce on its victims from a large distance, and is by far the fastest species to use.

As the Predator you are the only member of your crew to escape capture and must free your crew and ship before leaving. The majority of the Predator's long-range weapons draw power from a limited supply in its environment suit, but its high armour means that if this runs out you can take on the Alien in close-range combat. Power can also be used to replenish health at any time and cloak yourself (only effective against the marines). You also have a number of different zoomable views such as the thermograph and, to begin with at least, the biggest health in the game.

Alien Vs Predator looks as if it will certainly be capable of rivalling *Kingpin* and *Quake III* following their respective releases, and fans of the movie or the genre should start saving now. A full review will feature next month. **TC**



True to the films, the Predator has the greater variation of view modes, the best of which depends on the lighting and prey



The detail on show is incredible, especially on the other characters, but sadly the game is so quick that you often won't notice it

SUMMING UP



- Excellent game engine, blisteringly fast, very smooth, with loads of great effects.
- Follows the films brilliantly and has three very different modes of play.



- It's pretty tough, at least to start with, which can lead to frustration.
- The Predator's weaponry is not as powerful or spectacular as it should be and at this stage is not up to the standard of the other species'.



Any fan of the film with a PC fast enough to run it will love the game, but the depth in each species and frantic, tense gameplay means that this will be a truly universal shoot-'em-up.