Prior to gaining mainstream appeal due to a film release in 2004, *Aliens versus Predator* existed in the video game format. Throughout the early 90’s, a few side scrolling and arcade titles were released that mashed up arguably two of the most iconic aliens from film. The Xenomorph from Ridley Scott’s 1979 masterpiece *Alien,* and the Predator from John McTiernan’s 1987 adrenaline-filled sci-fi classic of the same name. On April 30th, 1999, Rebellion would release a well-received game that transitioned the series to a first-person shooter style with more horror roots than anything else.

The version that I played was the 2010 re-release on Steam called *Aliens versus Predator Classic 2000*. It adds a few new weapons, progress saving abilities, new levels, and all the bells and whistles of a PC port. The graphical options are fairly limited yet give you control over the essentials. A weird bug I encountered is that the resolution does not update on the main menu. It only changes once a level is loaded up. It isn’t a huge deal but lead to a little bit of confusion on my part for a few minutes. Also, the lack of mouse control in the menus made it frustrating and tedious to go through every time you needed something changed. When you finally get into the gameplay though, it feels worth it. Running buttery smooth in 1920x1080 resolution makes leaping from walls and stalking down dark corridors ever the more immersive. Getting to it can feel like a bit of a challenge though.

This game features three different campaigns, including one from the Alien perspective, one from a Colonial Marine’s perspective, and one from the Predator’s perspective. None of them are connected and are quite lacking in the story department. I would have liked to see some kind of overarching plot instead of a go from point A to point B and finish a few things along the way kind of deal, but it is just enough to get you into the gameplay, which is the most important part. Oftentimes you are required to navigate the labyrinthine, maze-like level design in order to find something specific that you are required to destroy. Doing so can be very challenging, but it shows off the intricate and deliberately placed paths that you can take to find your way through a level. It never feels overwhelming, but just enough to grant a sense of freedom.

Playing as the Xenomorph can initially feel disorienting, as you stalk up walls and ceilings, and leap onto the heads of unsuspecting marines. Once you get a feel for it, it plays great. I think it was my personal favorite of the three campaigns. Due to the limited saving opportunities, I found myself restarting these very often, and I would say it was the most challenging of the three. It’s tempting to run through at lightning speed, but you really have to take you time and stalk your enemies carefully. One misplaced shot can end your run. Next is the Colonial Marines, which plays like a standard-fare first person shooter. You creep through dark hallways, listening for your sensor to ping the location of an alien hanging overhead, only to have it drop in front of you and get blown into beautifully rendered bits. It also feels awesome, albeit maybe a bit too dark. You are supposed to drop flares to light up an area, but there are too few and it has too small an area to really be effective. Instead you can use your night vision, which despite being too bright sometimes, I kept on for pretty much the whole thing. Last but not least is the Predator levels, which see you tearing up marines in a similar fashion as the Alien. Playing with his weapons like the speargun, sonic pistol, shoulder cannons, cloak, and wristblades felt amazing.

One aspect that was disappointing to me however was the actual Alien v. Predator combat. You would think that being the namesake of the game, it would have been more exciting than it was. One power attack with the Predator’s wristblade is enough to decapitate a Xenomorph, and a few swipes from a Xenomorph’s tail is enough to send a Predator to his death. It doesn’t really harm the experience, but it seemed poorly balanced. There is also a multiplayer mode that I didn’t get to play (probably since it was released over 10 years ago), but I have heard nothing but great things about it.

Overall, I really enjoyed my time playing this game. So much so, that I might move on to the sequel that I heard was even better! It has that classic Quake/Doom feel to it that makes it an utter blast to control. Pair that with a world dripping with atmosphere, and you have all the makings of an excellent game. One thing I failed to mention was the bonus levels, which see you re-exploring old areas from a different character’s perspective. These were fun at first but became too tedious to get through and I couldn’t finish them. I think any classic game fan or fan of the iconic *Alien* or *Predator* franchises will find enjoyment here