

= Sinistar : Unleashed =

Sinistar : Unleashed is a 1999 action space shooter video game for Microsoft Windows . It was designed by Marc Michalik and Walter Wright and developed at GameFX , a small studio composed of former members of Looking Glass Studios . Originally titled Out of the Void , development of the project began in 1997 and had no relationship with the Sinistar franchise . After licensing the franchise from Midway Games that year , GameFX shifted the focus of the game and developed it as a sequel to the original Sinistar , which was released by Williams in 1982 .

Like the previous installment , Sinistar : Unleashed focuses on the destruction of the Sinistar , a large bio @-@ mechanical machine , powered by machines called the Sporg . To achieve this goal , the player has a variety of starships , power @-@ ups and weapons . Unlike its predecessor , the game has full three @-@ dimensional graphics and a wider control scheme . Sinistar : Unleashed features 29 levels , five of which are hidden ; each level has a Sinistar .

Sinistar : Unleashed received mixed reception when released . Critics lauded its audacity , as well as the addition of new features into the game . Several journalists felt that GameFX captured all the elements that represented a Sinistar game and stayed true to the franchise by feeling familiar to fans of the original game . However , critics faulted the boss designs and the repetitiveness of the gameplay .

= = Gameplay = =

Like its predecessor , Sinistar : Unleashed is an action space shooter video game . While the original Sinistar features graphics and gameplay in a two @-@ dimensional space , the sequel features three @-@ dimensional graphics and gameplay , giving the player the ability to maneuver and roam freely across six different axes . Sinistar : Unleashed features 29 levels , five of which are hidden as a bonus ; each level has a Sinistar . The bonus levels are timed missions that involve destroying or protecting a particular object .

The player is given a starship , and the main mission is to fight an alien race called the Distilled Evil and their slaves , the Sporg . The Sporg are mining ships controlled by the Distilled Evil , tasked with powering the jumpgate , a portal through which the Sinistar (a bio @-@ mechanical monster dedicated to destroying the player) appears . The jumpgate is stationed at the center of the level , and the Sporg power it with energy crystals collected from the asteroids that appear sparsely along the sector .

The player must prevent the Sporg from completely powering the jumpgate . While completing the task , the player encounters several warships that attempt to protect the jumpgate . These enemies are indicated on the radar with a dynamic set of coordinates that turn from white to red as they approach . If the player succeeds , the jumpgate breaks and the level is finished . Otherwise , the Sinistar will arrive through the activated jumpgate , and the player must defeat it to progress further . The player has six different starships to choose from , as well as eight power @-@ ups and nine weapons to destroy the mining ships and the Sinistar . The most powerful weapon is called the Sinibomb , which is designed to defeat the Sinistar , although it can also be used to destroy the jumpgate . The player obtains Sinibombs by harvesting crystals from asteroids in the same way Sporg do .

= = Development = =

Development of Sinistar : Unleashed , originally titled Out of the Void , began in 1997 . It was handled by GameFX , a small game developer consisting of former members of Looking Glass Studios . At first , the project had no connection , or gameplay similarities , to the Sinistar franchise . When the studio acquired the rights for the Sinistar franchise that year , it decided to refocus the development of the title to fit into the newly acquired property . It altered the game to introduce similarities to Sinistar , although the graphic structure remained unchanged . During development of the game , AGH noted that the final product was expected to be " a combination of Out of the Void 's

graphical flash with Sinistar 's fast and frenzied action . "

AGH also noted that " according to GameFX , Sinistar : Unleashed 's render @-@ on @-@ the @-@ fly 3D visual effects are said to tower above the [then-] current generation of games . Advanced texture @-@ mapping technology , plasma lighting effects , and particle systems make Sinistar : Unleashed much more than just a mere enhancement over the original . " Additionally , the technical capacity of the game allowed " more than 25 uniquely dynamic enemies ... controlled by advanced AI and their own arsenal of weapons , deadly attacks and evil personalities . " THQ revealed that the game was optimized for the then @-@ recently released Pentium III processors from Intel to allow the " lighting and geometry transformation engine to process more detail faster . " In the Computer Gamer 's Bible , Mark L. Chambers and Rob Smith noted the technical design of Sinistar : Unleashed , writing that " developers have added accurate collision physics , and mining the asteroid field will require precise timing and good trigger finger . "

= = Release = =

Sinistar : Unleashed was announced by THQ in February 1999 , two years after the company licensed the Sinistar franchise from Midway Games . Two demos for the game were produced . The second , released in September 1999 , included several gameplay and technical enhancements over the first , showcasing the initial two levels of the game .

When announcing the game , C. Noah Davis , chief technology officer of THQ and general manager of GameFX , said " What made the original a classic is that it was easy to learn , yet difficult to master . " He elaborated : " We are focused on capturing that magic using many elements of the original , while showcasing the universe using our proprietary GameFX Technology . " IGN reported on September 3 , 1999 that the game had gone gold (its development had concluded) , and it was released worldwide on September 15 , 1999 . A patch was released on November 22 , 1999 .

= = Reception = =

Sinistar : Unleashed received mixed to positive reviews from media outlets , gaining an average score of 65 @.@ 75 % according to review aggregator GameRankings . Critics agreed that the developers stayed true to the original game and lauded the graphic enhancements as " unquestionably beautiful " and a " graphical powerhouse " . Erik Wolpaw , writing for GameSpot , noted that the game suffered mostly from gameplay issues , such as the control design , which he called " overly complex for a mindless shooter " . He added that although the developers succeeded in capturing the arcade essence of the previous game , this was " somewhat to the detriment of the final product . "

AllGame 's reviewer was satisfied with the game 's graphics but criticized how its bosses were designed , elaborating that " the Sinistars ... simply don 't instill the same sense of sheer panic [as in the previous game] . " Vincent Lopez from IGN noted the game 's similarity to its predecessor and complimented its graphics and the addition of a wide variety of weapons as well as other technical features . However , he viewed the weapons as " more of a checklist than an actual asset . " He stated that Sinistar : Unleashed " feels immediately familiar to fans of the original , while adding just enough new features (and a completely new graphic overhaul) to make this feel now @-@ dated . "

Nash Werner from GamePro shared Lopez 's views , explaining that GameFX , along with THQ , " have released a modern 3D version " of the original Sinistar that " sports some of the best graphics ever seen in a space shooter " , although he added that it had lost " some of the soul " that the original game had . Bob Mandel from The Adrenaline Vault was impressed with the game . Although he agreed that there would " certainly be both buyers and reviewers who will bash this title mercilessly , bemoaning the absence of complicated missions and tactical planning " , he stated that with Sinistar : Unleashed , GameFX and THQ managed to create a " true arcade classic " . He saw it as the only remake of a game from the 1980s to achieve that status .

Caryn Law , writing for Computer Games Magazine , applauded THQ for including the original game 's elements and rendering them with " jazzing " graphics . She criticized the plot and gameplay design , stating that " players want games that involve more than simply blowing things up . " She also contended that Sinistar : Unleashed " hearkens back to the days when all you needed was keen hand ? eye coordination and a pocket full of quarters . " Chris McMullen from Games Domain discussed the game 's technical aspects in his review , maintaining that it " not only sounds and looks good " but is also " fun to play and strangely addictive . " However , he cited the gameplay 's repetitiveness as a flaw that prevented Sinistar : Unleashed from " being a must @-@ buy game . "

PC Zone praised the game , noting that " the rich , organic style lends the game a hypnotic atmosphere " and stating " with the Sinistars still taunting you as they did back in 1983 , and the gameplay essentially unchanged , those who enjoyed the ageing classic will find Sinistar : Unleashed a worthy successor . " John Lee , writing for Next Generation , gave a somewhat mediocre review of the game , casting it as " a lot like one of those Baywatch babes ? luscious to look at , but not much between the ears . " He added that it was basically " another retro / nostalgia trip . " GameSpy 's Caryn Law concluded that Sinistar : Unleashed was " simply Sinistar dressed up in 3D graphics " and that it offered " nothing new in the way of a challenge . "