Sid Meier 's Alpha Centauri

Sid Meier 's Alpha Centauri is a video game in the 4X genre which is considered a spiritual sequel to the Civilization series . Set in a science fiction depiction of the 22nd century , the game begins as seven competing ideological factions land on the planet Chiron (" Planet ") in the Alpha Centauri star system . As the game progresses , Planet 's growing sentience becomes a formidable obstacle to the human colonists .

Sid Meier , designer of Civilization , and Brian Reynolds , designer of Civilization II , developed Alpha Centauri after they left MicroProse to join the newly created developer Firaxis Games . Electronic Arts released both Alpha Centauri and its expansion , Sid Meier 's Alien Crossfire , in 1999 . The following year , Aspyr Media ported both titles to Mac OS while Loki Software ported them to Linux .

Alpha Centauri features improvements on Civilization II 's game engine , including simultaneous multiplay , social engineering , climate , customizable units , alien native life , additional diplomatic and spy options , additional ways to win , and greater mod @-@ ability . Alien Crossfire introduces five new human and two non @-@ human factions , as well as additional technologies , facilities , secret projects , native life , unit abilities , and a victory condition .

The game received wide critical acclaim , being compared favorably to Civilization II . Critics praised its science fiction storyline (comparing the plot to works by Stanley Kubrick , Frank Herbert , Arthur C. Clarke , and Isaac Asimov) , the in @-@ game writing , the voice acting , the user @-@ created custom units , and the depth of the technology tree . Alpha Centauri also won several awards for best game of the year and best strategy game of the year .

Synopsis

Setting

Space @-@ race victories in the Civilization series conclude with a journey to Alpha Centauri . Beginning with that premise the Alpha Centauri narrative starts in the 22nd century , after the United Nations sends " Unity " , a colonization mission , to Alpha Centauri 's planet Chiron (" Planet ") . Unbeknownst to humans , advanced extraterrestrials (" Progenitors ") had been conducting experiments in vast distributed nervous systems , culminating in planetary biosphere @-@ sized presentient nervous system (" Manifold ") on Chiron , leaving behind monoliths and artifacts on Planet to guide and examine the system 's growth . Immediately prior to the start of the game , a reactor malfunction on the Unity spacecraft wakes the crew and colonists early and irreparably severs communications with Earth . After the captain is assassinated , the most powerful leaders on board build ideological factions with dedicated followers , conflicting agendas for the future of mankind , and " desperately serious " commitments . As the ship breaks up , seven escape pods , each containing a faction , are scattered across Planet .

In the Alien Crossfire expansion pack , it is learned that earlier alien experiments had led to disastrous consequences at Tau Ceti , creating a hundred @-@ million @-@ year evolutionary cycle that ended with the eradication of most complex animal life in several neighbouring inhabited star systems . After the disaster (referred to by Progenitors as " Tau Ceti Flowering ") , the Progenitors split into two factions : Manifold Caretakers , opposed to further experimentation and dedicated to preventing another Flowering ; and Manifold Usurpers , favoring further experimentation and intending to induce a controlled Flowering in Alpha Centauri 's Planet . In Alien Crossfire , these factions compete along with the human factions for control over the destiny of Planet .

Characters

The game focuses on the leaders of seven factions , chosen by the player from the 14 possible

leaders in Alpha Centauri and Alien Crossfire , and Planet (voiced by Alena Kanka) . The characters are developed from the faction leaders ' portraits , the spoken monologues accompanying scientific discoveries and the " photographs in the corner of a commlink ? home towns , first steps , first loves , family , graduation , spacewalk . " The leaders in Alpha Centauri comprise : Lady Deirdre Skye , a Scottish activist (voiced by Carolyn Dahl) , of Gaia 's Stepdaughters ; Chairman Sheng @-@ Ji Yang , a Chinese Legalist official (voiced by Lu Yu) , of the Human Hive ; Academician Prokhor Zakharov , a Russian academic (voiced by Yuri Nesteroff) of the University of Planet ; CEO Nwabudike Morgan , a Namibian businessman (voiced by Regi Davis) , of Morgan Industries ; Colonel Corazon Santiago , a Puerto Rican militiawoman (voiced by Wanda Niño) , of the Spartan Federation ; Sister Miriam Godwinson , an American minister and social psychologist (voiced by Gretchen Weigel) , of the Lord 's Believers ; and Commissioner Pravin Lal , an Indian surgeon and diplomat (voiced by Hesh Gordon) , of the Peacekeeping Forces .

The player controls one of the leaders and competes against the others to colonize and conquer Planet . The Datalinks (voiced by Robert Levy and Katherine Ferguson) are minor characters who provide information to the player . Each faction excels at one or two important aspects of the game and follows a distinct philosophical belief , such as technological utopianism , Conclave Christianity , " free @-@ market " capitalism , militarist survivalism , Chinese Legalism , U.N. Charter humanitarianism , or Environmentalist Gaia philosophy . The game takes place on Planet , with its " rolling red ochre plains " and " bands of lonely terraformed green " .

The seven additional faction leaders in Alien Crossfire are Prime Function Aki Zeta @-@ Five , a Norwegian research assistant @-@ turned @-@ cyborg (voiced by Allie Rivenbark) , of The Cybernetic Consciousness ; Captain Ulrik Svensgaard , an American fisherman and naval officer (voiced by James Liebman) , of The Nautilus Pirates ; Foreman Domai , an Australian labor leader (voiced by Frederick Serafin) , of The Free Drones ; Datajack Sinder Roze , a Trinidadian hacker (voiced by Christine Melton) , of The Data Angels ; Prophet Cha Dawn , a human born on Planet (voiced by Stacy Spenser) of The Cult of Planet ; Guardian Lular H 'minee , a Progenitor leader (voiced by Jeff Gordon) , of The Manifold Caretakers ; and Conqueror Judaa Maar , a Progenitor leader (voiced by Jeff Gordon) , of The Manifold Usurpers .

= = = Plot = = =

The story unfolds via the introduction video , explanations of new technologies , videos obtained for completing secret projects , interludes , and cut @-@ scenes . The native life consists primarily of simple wormlike alien parasites and a type of red fungus that spreads rapidly via spores . The fungus is difficult to traverse , provides invisibility for the enemy , provides few resources , and spawns " mindworms " that attack population centres and military units by neurally parasitising them . Mindworms can eventually be captured and bred in captivity and used as terroristic bioweapons , and the player eventually discovers that the fungus and mindworms can think collectively .

A voice intrudes into the player 's dreams and soon waking moments , threatening more attacks if the industrial pollution and terraforming by the colonists is not reversed . The player discovers that Planet is a dormant semi @-@ sentient hive organism that will soon experience a metamorphosis which will destroy all human life . To counter this threat , the player or a computer faction builds " The Voice of Alpha Centauri " secret project , which artificially links Planet 's distributed nervous system into the human Datalinks , delaying Planet 's metamorphosis into full self @-@ awareness but incidentally increasing its ultimate intelligence substantially by giving it access to all of humanity 's accumulated knowledge . Finally , the player or a computer faction embraces the " Ascent to Transcendence " in which humans too join their brains with the hive organism in its metamorphosis to " godhood " . Thus , Alpha Centauri closes " with a swell of hope and wonder in place of the expected triumphalism " , reassuring " that the events of the game weren ? t the entirety of mankind ? s future , but just another step . "

= = Gameplay = =

Alpha Centauri , a turn @-@ based strategy game with a science fiction setting , is played from an isometric perspective . Many game features from Civilization II are present , but renamed or slightly tweaked : players establish bases (Civilization II 's cities) , build facilities (buildings) and secret projects (Wonders of the World) , explore territory , research technology , and conquer other factions (civilizations) . In addition to conquering all non @-@ allied factions , players may also win by obtaining votes from three quarters of the total population (similar to Civilization IV 's Diplomatic victory) , " cornering the Global Energy Market " , completing the Ascent to Transcendence secret project , or for alien factions , constructing six Subspace Generators .

The main map (the upper two thirds of the screen) is divided into squares , on which players can establish bases , move units and engage in combat . Through terraforming , players may modify the effects of the individual map squares on movement , combat and resources . Resources are used to feed the population , construct units and facilities , and supply energy . Players can allocate energy between research into new technology and energy reserves . Unlike Civilization II , new technology grants access to additional unit components rather than pre @-@ designed units , allowing players to design and re @-@ design units as their factions ' priorities shift . Energy reserves allow the player to upgrade units , maintain facilities , and attempt to win by the Global Energy Market scenario . Bases are military strongpoints and objectives that are vital for all winning strategies . They produce military units , house the population , collect energy , and build secret projects and Subspace Generators . Facilities and secret projects improve the performance of individual bases and of the entire faction .

In addition to terraforming , optimizing individual base performance and building secret projects , players may also benefit their factions through social engineering , probe teams , and diplomacy . Social engineering modifies the ideologically based bonuses and penalties forced by the player 's choice of faction . Probe teams can sabotage and steal information , units , technology , and energy from enemy bases , while diplomacy lets the player create coalitions with other factions . It also allows the trade or transfer of units , bases , technology and energy . The Planetary Council , similar to the United Nations Security Council , takes Planet @-@ wide actions and determines population victories .

In addition to futuristic technological advances and secret projects , the game includes alien life , structures and machines . " Xenofungus " and " sea fungus " provide movement , combat , and resource penalties , as well as concealment for " mind worms " and " spore launchers " . Immobile " fungal towers " spawn native life . Native life , including the seaborne " Isles of the Deep " and " Sealurks " and airborne " Locusts of Chiron " , use psionic combat , an alternate form of combat which ignores weapons and armor . Monoliths repair units and provide resources ; artifacts yield new technology and hasten secret projects ; landmarks provide resource bonuses ; and random events add danger and opportunity . Excessive development leads to terraforming @-@ destroying fungus blooms and new native life .

Alpha Centauri provides a single player mode and supports customization and multiplayer . Players may customize the game by choosing options at the beginning of the game , using the built @-@ in scenario and map editors , and modifying Alpha Centauri 's game files . In addition to a choice of seven (or 14 in Alien Crossfire) factions , pre @-@ game options include scenario game , customized random map , difficulty level , and game rules that include victory conditions , research control , and initial map knowledge . The scenario and map editors allow players to create customized scenarios and maps . The game 's basic rules , diplomatic dialog , and the factions ' starting abilities are in text files , which " the designers have done their best to make it reasonably easy to modify ... , even for non @-@ programmers . " Alpha Centauri supports play by email (" PBEM ") and TCP / IP mode featuring simultaneous movement , and introduces direct player @-@ to @-@ player negotiation , allowing the unconstrained trade of technology , energy , maps , and other elements .

= = Development history = =

= = = Inspirations = = =

In 1996 , MicroProse released the lauded Civilization II , designed by Brian Reynolds . However , the firm 's management had changed and moved to California by the time the game shipped , and disagreements between the new management and its employees prompted Reynolds , Jeff Briggs , and Sid Meier (designer of the original Civilization) to leave MicroProse and found Firaxis . Although unable to use the same IP as Civilization II , the new company felt that players wanted " a new sweeping epic of a turn @-@ based game " . Having just completed a game of human history up to the present , they wanted a fresh topic and chose science fiction .

With no previous experience in science fiction games , the developers believed future history was a fitting first foray . For the elements of exploring and terraforming an alien world , they chose a plausible near future situation of a human mission to colonize the solar system 's nearest neighbour and human factions . Reynolds researched science fiction for the game 's writing . His inspiration included " classic works of science fiction " , including Frank Herbert 's The Jesus Incident , A Fire Upon the Deep by Vernor Vinge , and The Mote in God 's Eye by Larry Niven and Jerry Pournelle for alien races ; Kim Stanley Robinson 's Red Mars , Slant by Greg Bear , and Stephen R. Donaldson 's The Real Story for future technology and science ; and Dune by Herbert and Bear 's Anvil of Stars for negative interactions between humans .

Alpha Centauri set out to capture the whole sweep of humanity 's future , including technology , futuristic warfare , social and economic development , the future of the human condition , spirituality , and philosophy . Reynolds also said that " getting philosophy into the game " was one of the attractions of the game . Believing good science fiction thrives on constraint , the developers began with near @-@ future technologies . As they proceeded into the future , they tried to present a coherent , logical , and detailed picture of future developments in physics , biology , information technology , economics , society , government , and philosophy . Alien ecologies and mysterious intelligences were incorporated into Alpha Centauri as external " natural forces " intended to serve as flywheels for the backstory and a catalyst for many player intelligences . Chris Pine , creator of the in @-@ game map of Planet , strove to make Planet look like a real planet , which resulted in evidence of tectonic action . Another concern was that Planet matched the story , which resulted in the fungus being connected across continents , as it is supposed to be a gigantic neural network .

Terraforming is a natural outgrowth of colonizing an alien world . The first playable prototype was just a map generator that tested climate changes during the game . This required the designers to create a world builder program and climatic model far more powerful than anything they 'd done before . Temperature , wind , and rainfall patterns were modeled in ways that allow players to make changes : for example , creating a ridge @-@ line and then watching the effects . In addition to raising terrain , the player can also divert rivers , dig huge boreholes into the planet 's mantle , and melt ice caps .

In addition to scientific advances , the designers speculated on the future development of human society . The designers allow the player to decide on a whole series of value choices and choose a " ruthless " , " moderate " , or " idealistic " stance . Reynolds said the designers don 't promote a single " right " answer , instead giving each value choice positive and negative consequences . This design was intended to force the player to " think " and make the game " addictive " . He also commented that Alpha Centauri 's fictional nature allowed them to draw their characters " a lot more sharply and distinctly than the natural blurring and greyness of history " .

= = = Alpha Centauri = = =

In July 1996 , Firaxis began work on Alpha Centauri , with Reynolds heading the project . Meier and Reynolds wrote playable prototype code and Jason Coleman wrote the first lines of the development libraries . Because the development of Gettysburg took up most of Firaxis ' time , the designers spent the first year prototyping the basic ideas . By late 1996 , the developers were playing games on the prototype , and by the middle of the next year , they were working on a multiplayer engine .

Although Firaxis intended to include multiplayer support in its games , an important goal was to create games with depth and longevity in single @-@ player mode because they believed that the majority of players spend most of their time playing this way . Reynolds felt that smart computer opponents are an integral part of a classic computer game , and considered it a challenge to make them so . Reynolds ' previous games omitted internet support because he believed that complex turn @-@ based games with many player options and opportunities for player input are difficult to facilitate online .

Reynolds said that the most important principle of game design is for the designer to play the game as it is developed ; Reynolds claimed that this was how a good artificial intelligence (AI) was built . To this end , he would track the decisions he made and why he made them as he played the game . The designer also watched what the computer players did , noting " dumb " actions and trying to discover why the computer made them . Reynolds then taught the computer his reasoning process so the AI could find the right choice when presented several attractive possibilities . He said the AI for diplomatic personalities was the best he had done up to that point .

Doug Kaufman , a co @-@ designer of Civilization II , was invited to join development as a game balancer . Reynolds cited the Alpha Centauri 's balance for the greater sense of urgency and the more pressing pacing than in his earlier game , Sid Meier 's Colonization . According to producer Timothy Train , in designing the strengths and weaknesses of the factions , the goal was to suggest , without requiring , certain strategies and give the player interesting and fun things to do without unbalancing the game . He didn 't want a faction to be dependent on its strength or a faction 's power to be dominant over the rest . Train felt that fun meant the factions always have something fun to do with their attributes .

Around the summer of 1997 , the staff began research on the scientific realities involved in interstellar travel . In late 1997 , Bing Gordon ? then Chief Creative Officer of Electronic Arts ? joined the team , and was responsible for the Planetary Council , extensive diplomacy , and landmarks . A few months before the 1998 Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) , the team incorporated the Explore / Discover / Build / Conquer marketing campaign into the game . The game was announced in May 1998 at E3 .

In the latter half of 1998 , the team produced a polished and integrated interface , wrote the game manual and foreign language translations , painted the faction leader portraits and terrain , built the 3D vehicles and vehicle parts , and created the music . Michael Ely directed the Secret Project movies and cast the faction leaders . 25 volunteers participated in Firaxis ' first public beta test . The beta testers suggested the Diplomatic and Economic victories and the Random Events .

There were a lot of " firsts " for our team in the making of Alpha Centauri . We had never done a public beta test before Alpha Centauri , and this was also the first time we released a demo before the game was out . Since we 'd not done one before , we didn 't know exactly what to expect when we released it , but it turned out to fit right in with Firaxis ' iterative design method .

The design team started with a very simple playable game . They strengthen the " fun " aspects and fixed or removed the unenjoyable ones , a process Sid Meier called " surrounding the fun " . After the revision , they played it again , repeating the cycle of revision and play . Playing the game repeatedly and in @-@ depth was a rule at Firaxis . In the single @-@ player mode , the team tried extreme strategies to find any sure @-@ fire paths to victory and to see how often a particular computer faction ends up at the bottom . The goal was a product of unprecedented depth , scope , longevity , and addictiveness , where the player is always challenged by the game to come up with new strategies with no all @-@ powerful factions or unstoppable tactics . According to Reynolds , the process has been around since Sid Meier 's early days at Microprose . At Firaxis , as iterations continue , they expand the group giving feedback , bringing in outside gamers with fresh perspectives . Alpha Centauri was the first Firaxis game with public beta testers .

Finally , Brian Reynolds discussed the use of the demo in the development process . Originally a marketing tool released prior to the game , they started getting feedback . They were able to incorporate many suggestions into the retail version . According to Brian Reynolds , they made improvement in the game 's interface , added a couple of new features and fixed a few glitches . They also improved some rules , fine @-@ tuned the game balance and improved the AI . Finally ,

he adds that they continued to add patches to enhance the game after the game was released . In the months leading to the release of Alpha Centauri , multimedia producer Michael Ely wrote the 35 weekly episodes of Journey to Centauri detailing the splintering of the U.N. mission to Alpha Centauri .

= = = Alien Crossfire = = =

 A month after Alpha Centauri 's February 1999 release , the Firaxis team began work on the expansion pack , Sid Meier 's Alien Crossfire . Alien Crossfire features seven new factions (two that are non @-@ human) , new technologies , new facilities , new secret projects , new alien life forms , new unit special abilities , new victory conditions (including the new " Progenitor Victory ") and several additional concepts and strategies . The development team included Train as producer and designer , Chris Pine as programmer , Jerome Atherholt and Greg Foertsch as artists , and Doug Kaufman as co @-@ designer and game balancer .
 The team considered several ideas , including a return to a post @-@ apocalyptic earth and the conquest of another planet in the Alpha Centauri system , before deciding to keep the new title on Planet . The premise allowed them to mix and match old and new characters and delve into the mysteries of the monoliths and alien artifacts . The backstory evolved quickly , and the main conflict centered on the return of the original alien inhabitants . The idea of humans inadvertently caught up in an off @-@ world civil war focused the story .
 Train wanted to improve the " build " aspects , feeling that the god @-@ game genre had always been heavily slanted towards the " Conquer " end of the spectrum . He wanted to provide " builders " with the tools to construct an empire in the face of heated competition . The internet community provided " invaluable " feedback . The first " call for features " was posted around April 1999 and produced the Fletchette Defense System , Algorithmic Enhancement , and The Nethack Terminus .
 The team had several goals : factions should not be " locked @-@ in " to certain strategies ; players should have interesting things to do without unbalancing the game , and the factions must be fun to play . The team believed the " coolness " of the Progenitor aliens would determine the success or failure of Alien Crossfire . They strove to make them feel significantly different to play , but still compatible with the existing game mechanics . The developers eventually provided the aliens with Battle Ogres , a Planetary survey , non @-@ blind research , and other powers to produce " a nasty and potent race that would take the combined might of humanity to bring them down " . Chris Pine modified the AI to account for the additions . The team also used artwork , sound effects , music , and diplomatic text to set the aliens apart . Other than the aliens , the Pirates proved to be the toughest faction to balance because their ocean start gave them huge advantages .
 Upon completion , the team felt that Alien Crossfire was somewhere between an expansion and a full @-@ blown sequel . In the months leading to the release of Alien Crossfire , multimedia producer Michael Ely wrote the 9 episodes of Centauri : Arrival , introducing the Alien Crossfire factions . The game initially had a single production run . Electronic Arts bundled Alpha Centauri and Alien Crossfire in the Alpha Centauri Planetary Pack in 2000 and included both games in The Laptop Collection in 2003 . In 2000 , both Alpha Centauri and Alien Crossfire were ported to Mac OS by Aspyr Media and to Linux by Loki Software .

= = Reception = =

 Alpha Centauri received wide critical acclaim upon its release , with reviewers voicing respect for the game 's pedigree , especially that of Reynolds and Meier . The video game review aggregator websites Game Rankings and Metacritic , which collect data from numerous review websites , listed scores of 92 % and 89 % , respectively . The game was favorably compared to Reynold 's previous title , Civilization II , and Rawn Shah of IT World Canada praised the expansion for a " believable " plot . However , despite its critical reception , it sold the fewest copies of all the games in the Civilization series . It sold more than 100 @,@ 000 copies in its first two months of release . This was followed by 50 @,@ 000 copies in April , May and June .

= = = Critical reaction = = =

The game showed well at the 1998 Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) . Walter Morbeck of GameSpot said that Alpha Centauri was " more than hi @-@ tech physics and new ways to blow each other up " , and that the game would feature realistic aliens . Terry Coleman of Computer Gaming World predicted that Alpha Centauri would be " another huge hit " . OGR awarded it " Most Promising Strategy Game " and one of the top 25 games of E3 ' 98 . In a vote of 27 journalists from 22 gaming magazine , Alpha Centauri won " Best Turn Based Strategy " of E3 Show Award . Aaron John Loeb , the Awards Committee Chairman , said " for those that understand the intricacies , the wonder , the glory of turn based ' culture building , ' this is the game worth skipping class for . "

Alpha Centauri 's science fiction storyline received high praise ; IGN considered the game an exception to PC sci @-@ fi cliches , and GamePro compared the plot to the works of writers Stanley Kubrick and Isaac Asimov . J.C. Herz of The New York Times suggested that the game was a marriage of SimCity and Frank Herbert 's Dune . GamePro 's Dan Morris said " As the single @-@ player campaign builds to its final showdown , the ramifications of the final theoretical discoveries elevate Alpha Centauri from great strategy game to science @-@ fiction epic . " Game Revolution said , " The well crafted story , admirable science @-@ fiction world , fully realized scenario , and quality core gameplay are sure to please . " Edge praised the uniqueness of expression saying it was " the same kind of old @-@ fashioned , consensual storytelling that once drew universes out of ASCII . " The in @-@ game writing and faction leaders were also well @-@ received for their believability , especially the voice acting . GameSpot reviewer Denny Atkin called the factions and their abilities Alpha Centauri 's " most impressive aspect " . Greg Tito of The Escapist said , " the genius of the game is how it flawlessly blends its great writing with strategy elements . "

Alpha Centauri 's turn @-@ based gameplay , including the technology trees and factional warfare , was commonly compared to Civilization and Civilization II . The Adrenaline Vault 's Pete Hines said , " While Alpha Centauri is the evolutionary off @-@ spring to [Civilization] and [Civilization II] , it is not [Civilization II] in space . Although the comparison is inevitable because of the lineage , it is still short @-@ sighted . " Edge in 2006 praised " Alpha Centauri ? s greater sophistications as a strategy game . " IGN said " Alpha Centauri is a better game than Civilization II ; it 's deep , rich , rewarding , thought @-@ provoking in almost every way . " Game Revolution 's reviewer was less magnanimous , saying " Alpha Centauri is at least as good a game as Civilization 2 . But it is its great similarity that also does it the most detriment . Alpha Centauri simply does not do enough that is new ; it just doesn 't innovate enough to earn a higher grade . " The ability to create custom units was praised , as was the depth of the tech tree . The artificial intelligence of computer @-@ controlled factions , which featured adaptability and behavioral subtlety , was given mixed comments ; some reviewers thought it was efficient and logical , while others found it confusing or erratic . Edge was disappointed in the game 's diplomacy , finding " no more and no less than is expected from the genre " and unhappy with " the inability to sound out any real sense of relationship or rational discourse . "

If you 're looking for gratuitous eye candy , then you 're obviously in the wrong place . Alpha Centauri 's graphics are quite good , but they 're not going to make anyone sit up and take notice .

The game 's graphics were widely acknowledged to be above average at the time of its release , but not revolutionary . Its maps and interface were considered detailed and in accordance with a space theme , but the game was released with a limited color palette . The in @-@ game cutscenes , particularly the full motion video that accompanied technological advances , were praised for their quality and innovation . Alpha Centauri 's sound and music received similar comments ; FiringSquad said " [The sound effect quality] sort of follows the same line as the unit graphics ? not too splashy but enough to get the job done . "

Alpha Centauri has won several Game of the Year awards , including those from the Denver Post and the Toronto Sun . It won the " Turn @-@ based Strategy Game of the Year " award from GameSpot as well . The Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences named Alpha Centauri the best strategy game of the year , and in 2000 , Alpha Centauri won the Origins Award for Best Strategy

Computer Game of 1999 . Alpha Centauri has the distinction of receiving gaming magazine PC Gamer 's highest score (98 %) , surpassing Civilization II 's score (97 %) .

= = Legacy = =

There have been no direct sequels beyond Alien Crossfire , something that writer Greg Tito attributed to Reynolds leaving Firaxis in 2000 to form Big Huge Games . Alien Crossfire producer and lead designer Timothy Train left Firaxis with Reynolds .
However , many of the features introduced in Alpha Centauri were carried over into subsequent Civilization titles ; in fact , upon its release , Civilization III was compared negatively to Alpha Centauri , whose Civilization characteristics were reminiscent of faction bonuses and penalties .
Edge magazine noted that Alpha Centauri remained " highly regarded " in 2006 . The government system in Civilization IV closely resembles Alpha Centauri 's , and Civilization V includes a new victory condition : the completion of the ' Utopia project ' , which is reminiscent of the Ascent to Transcendence secret project .
A decade after its release Sold @-@ Out Software and GOG.com re @-@ released the game for online @-@ download sales . Civilization : Beyond Earth , a spiritual sequel to Alpha Centauri , was announced by Firaxis in April 2014 and released on October 24 , 2014 ; several of those that worked on Alpha Centauri helped to develop the new title .
After the release of the expansion , multimedia producer Michael Ely wrote a trilogy of novels based on the game . Illustrator Rafael Kayanan also wrote a graphic novel entitled Alpha Centauri : Power of the Mindworms . Steve Jackson Games published GURPS Alpha Centauri , a sourcebook for the GURPS role @-@ playing game set in the Alpha Centauri universe .
On May 7 , 2010 , a Brendan Casey (also known as scient) released an unofficial patch , which fixes bugs in Alpha Centauri . His project began in February 2009 at Apolyton 's Alpha Centauri site , and moved in June 2009 to the Civilization Gaming Network , where he planned to continue developing further patch versions . He seemed to have resumed work in March 2013 at the http : / / alphacentauri2.info fan site . Currently , the subsequent patches of other modders generally build upon scient 's original 1 @.@ 0 patch . There is a graphics update , Artificial Intelligence update , and an additional modifications patch amongst others there .