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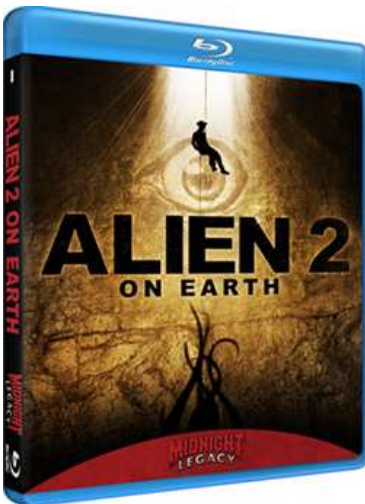


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ALIEN 2: ON EARTH Blu-ray Review



by [J.Hurtado](#), April 22, 2011 9:48 PM

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I'm just gonna get this out there: *Alien 2: On Earth* is not a good movie. If you're looking for something cinematic, you can move on to my reviews of *Bicycle Thieves* or even *Dogtooth*. That is not what you're going to find in *Alien 2: On Earth*.

Last Fall we reported that a brand new cult video label was starting up called Midnight Legacy, and that their maiden release was a film called *Alien 2: On Earth*. I had never heard of this film, but I'm always interested in trying new things, so I started doing a little bit of research. When the first copies of *Alien 2* started shipping directly from Midnight Legacy the almost universal cry was, "Wow, this really terrible movie looks beautiful!"

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This, of course stumped me. I am a collector, and I was kind of hoping that this would be some great undiscovered classic. I started asking around on more cult/horror focused online forums and the image of *Alien 2* started to soften a bit. These were people who understand the limitations of micro budget ripoffs, so I decided to give it a shot, and I'm kinda glad I did.

Alien 2: On Earth is a sequel in name only to the original *Alien* film. Director, Ciro Ippolito (here credited as Sam Cromwell) managed to register the title before the Alien name was trademarked. As such, it has nothing to do with *Alien*, apart from the fact that the plot seems to feature aliens munching on happy-go-lucky spelunkers.

A group of cave explorers are confronted in an underground cavern by a mysterious living rock. Little do they know that it bears home to deadly, flesh-eating creatures, intent on wiping out the entire human population. Can they survive and ultimately prevent Earth's total annihilation?

That synopsis is actually a bit of a stretch, as there is no way in Hell you ever believe that these chumps could save the world. However, it really isn't as bad as it could have been.

Alien 2's great success, in my eyes, is the amount of creativity used to mask the film's minute budget. There are no big reveal shots of a sinister disgusting alien, only the insinuation of a face-hugging beast. The alien appears on screen, but in very unusual ways. In the big money shot featuring the beast popping some poor spelunker's face, the creature is entirely in silhouette. The shot is effective, but we don't get much detail. At other times, the alien is masked by creating POV shots in which random red, bloody tentacles attack its victims, often shooting directly at the screen (this probably would have looked great in 3D). We never get a really good look at the whole alien, only bits and pieces as it attacks and devours these cave hoppers. Brilliantly, Ippolito has the dormant state of the alien appear as though it is a rock, which is a great way of disguising the low-budget nature of the film.

The real problem with the film is that it is deadly slow. The first fifty minutes or so are trying. There is some attempt at establishing relationships between the characters, but it is pretty miserable. There is a lot of unnecessary spelunking. Lots of POV shots of people climbing ropes and coming down ropes and lots of flashlights pointing at the camera. At least the cave seemed to be real. This only leaves about 30 minutes to get the action in, but once it kicks in, it moves pretty quickly.

Alien 2: On Earth is a deeply, DEEPLY flawed film, but with the right kind of mindset, and moderated expectations, one can come out of it with a smile. The bizarro ending is especially potent. I won't reveal any details, because I truly enjoyed seeing that for the first time, and I think it might be spoiled if you know what is going to happen before you start the film.

The Disc:

Holy shit. A film this cheap has no business looking this good. For its entire thirty year history until this point, *Alien 2* has only been available on chopped and cropped VHS. Midnight Legacy have really outdone themselves with this restoration. The video is outstanding, taken from the original 35mm negative, *Alien 2* is seriously one of the best visual presentations I've seen so far. Really amazing stuff, if this is what Midnight Legacy is going to do for all of their titles, you can count me in! The audio is also impressive, though not quite as much. The only audio track available is an English language dub. It is worth noting that Italian films almost never recorded live sound back in those days, so there is no "original audio". Luckily the English audio is very clear around the dialogue, with only a very low hiss on the track worthy of mention. A really outstanding presentation of this film.

Extras are slim, but with a feature as good-looking as this, I'll forgive Midnight Legacy for not including more. On the disc we have a Dutch VHS trailer for the film, which, I think, includes every single gag in the film. Seriously, if you watch the Dutch trailer, there is almost no reason to watch the whole film. Also included are a couple of unused FX shots, which show just exactly how paltry the FX were. It is also unedited, which means a couple of REALLY long takes where nothing happens. Not really that fun to watch.

Midnight Legacy have done a brilliant job with this film, probably better than it deserves. If you are at all interested in *Alien 2: On Earth*, you can feel safe spending your money on this release, I would bet money that it has never looked this good, even on the big screen.

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by [Brandon Tenold](#), April 22, 2011 11:22 PM

Damn, can't believe this movie got a blu-ray. Here's a link to a less favorable but hilarious review:

<http://thecinemasnob.com/2010/06/02/alien-2-on-earth.aspx>

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by [Karlos](#), April 23, 2011 6:46 AM

I can only echo the gentleman's comment above - how this got chosen for a blu-ray release, I'll never know!

It was fairly notorious here in the UK, with it's title fooling plenty of ALIEN fans into shelling out their hard-earned cash.

I agree, the final scene is pretty good - but not near enough to save this.

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