

AUBERGINE

Version 0.1

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Game Overview

High Concept

Aubergine is a short, sweet, fast-paced scrolling shooter that takes inspiration from classic action games developed by the likes of Raizing and Treasure. Colorful characters, big bosses and even bigger explosions!

Core Gameplay

Aubergine sees the player taking control of a team of two characters (player characters will hereby be referred to as 'pilots' to avoid confusion) as they blast their way through 4 increasingly difficult stages. The game features automatic horizontal scrolling like that seen in games such as Gradius, Harmful Park, Progear and R-Type. As the camera scrolls the pilots travel along the level with the aim being to shoot enemies, avoid obstacles and collect bonus items.

Theme/Focus

I want Aubergine to really feel like a blast and so a lot of design decisions are being made with this in mind. From the minute the game starts I want to avoid stopping the player unless I absolutely have to. That means things like boss battles and transitions from one stage to the next will try to maintain a sense of movement (ie. you'll never stop flying forwards!). A big part of this is also allowing the player to set the game up in such a way that they can have fun regardless of their skill level: this isn't a hardcore shmup for hardcore shmupers! Everything from the amount of health your pilots have to the speed of the game can be tweaked right from the start. My ethos here is that everyone will be able to complete the game if they really want to but those seeking a challenge can totally get what they want. Sort of like a DIY take on the traditional Nintendo-style difficulty.

Target Audience & Platforms

I'm making this game for me and just hoping that some other people might like it. I've sort of mentioned that I'm focusing on making it enjoyable for any skill level so there's that. Platform-wise it's being developed for PC. If I can figure out how to put it on another platform that would be really cool but I'm not that fussed about it. It will feature support for keyboard and controller input.

Look & Feel

3D environments and backgrounds with 2D character sprites similar to Paper Mario, Klonoa and Ninja Battle Heroes. Bright and colorful visuals with chibi-ish characters to allow for a variety of expressions on their faces despite smaller sprite sizes. Game world is very much inspired by Dragon Ball, Megaman Legends and classic Super Nintendo JRPGs such as Final Fantasy 6 and Crono Trigger. Aubergine takes place in a part of the in-game world that is analogous to areas around the Caspian Sea and features a fair amount of Persian elements as a result.

Project Scope

Five pilots, four stages, two game modes and a few other options (which is just variable tweaking). If I have the time or energy I could happily add more to this but then I can also save ideas for hidden characters, extra stages and bonus modes for some sort of TURBO HD REMIX. It's not going to be a long game and it's not meant to be; something you can blast through on your lunch break but hopefully with different pilot combinations and the ability to tweak options people will come back to it a few times.

Gameplay

Game Modes

Walkthrough/How-to-Play

Arcade/Story

The main game mode and the only one available at the start. This mode sees the player take control of Tarragon along with another pilot of their choice as they journey to the distant island palace. This mode features a short intro and outro that kickstart and resolve the story respectively. Upon completion of this mode the player unlocks Free Mode.

Free Mode

An incredibly open game mode that allows the player to select any combination of characters they wish and take on any stage they want. This mode also has some unique game options such as "Party Shuffle" and "1 Hit Game Over" which are unavailable in Arcade/Story.

Stage Structure

Popcorn

Mini-Boss

More popcorn

End-Boss

Mechanics & Rules

The Player

Shooting

What's a shmup without shooting? Pressing the 'fire' button will make your pilot shoot forwards. Each pilot has unique projectiles and a unique firing pattern.

Moving

Moving is also good! By default a pilot's movement speed is automatically decreased slightly when firing, this can be changed in the options, however, allowing for a manual approach to slowing the pilot.

Tagging

Whilst your party is comprised of two pilots you only control one at any given time. You can hit the 'tag' button to switch between pilots. Caution! You can tag as often or infrequently as you'd like but there is a short cooldown period after you've tagged between characters. During this time you can't tag back so be careful!

Experience Level

At the start of any game each pilot starts at Level (Lvl) 1. Pilots can collect Experience Gems to increase their level and in doing so increase their powers. The max level is 3 which requires a pilot to obtain 3 Exp Gems in total (1 gem will provide enough experience to reach Lvl 2 from Lvl 1, but 2 gems are needed to reach Lvl 3 beyond that). Upon leveling up a pilot will receive a different (more powerful) firing pattern.

Stats

Each pilot has unique stats and stat modifiers that affect how they play. The pilot's own stats simply affect how they perform themselves however each pilot also has a series of stat modifiers that are applied directly to whichever pilot they are paired up with.

Attack (Atk): Affects the strength of individual projectiles.

Defence (Def): Affects the length of time a player is invincible after taking damage.

Skill (Skl): Affects the multiplier/modifier of score.

Luck (Lck): Affects chance of evading enemy bullets and rare item drops.

Speed (Spd): Affects movement speed and rate of fire.

Death

If a pilot's health reaches 0 then the pilot is KO'd and is replaced by the other pilot if possible (if other pilot is KO'd then the party blacks out and it's game over). The stat modifiers of the KO'd pilot are removed from the stats of the remaining pilot making them weaker than normal. When the player defeats a boss any KO'd pilots are revived (at Lvl 1).

Scoring

Score gems will appear whenever an enemy is defeated. The value of the gems depends on the Skill stat of the pilot who defeated the enemy as well as the current chain the player has reached. Standard enemy bullets will also be turned into score gems when the enemy that fired them is defeated.

Limits

Each pilot has a meter that fills as they defeat enemies. Once the meter has filled to 100% the pilot is able to perform a "Limit Break", a powerful technique that plays on their own unique strengths. During this time the meter slowly reduces until it has depleted completely to 0% and the Limit Break ends. Meters can be

overfilled (130%) allowing for longer Limit Breaks. Pilot's are also impervious to damage during Limit Breaks however being hit will end the Limit Break and reduce the meter to 0% immediately.

Enemies & Obstacles

Enemy Bullet Types

Enemy bullets come in two different flavours. Some enemies only shoot one kind whilst others might shoot both!

Standard

These are your run-of-the-mill bullets. There isn't anything too special about them however it should be noted that when you kill an enemy that's shot these at you the bullets will disappear!

Missiles

These bullets can be destroyed by shooting them (does that make them an enemy themselves?) unlike the standard type. The flip-side is that these WON'T disappear when you kill the enemy that fired them.

Environmental Obstacles

As you fly around the levels you'll come across a few different obstacles.

Lethal

If you fly into these then you'll take damage/die so watch out! These will be marked clearly as lethal.

Non-Lethal

Flying into things such as the ground, hills, pillars and other such things won't cause you to take damage but they may slow you down or stop you in your tracks completely!

Game Options

All options can be changed in both Arcade and Free modes unless specified otherwise.

Pilot Health (1-10): Set the health that each pilot has.

Continues (On/Off): Set whether you can continue upon both pilots being KO'd.

Revivals (On/Off): Set whether or not you can revive KO'd pilots.

Party Shuffle (On/Off): Set whether you want your party to be randomly selected for each stage. Only available in Free Mode.

1 Hit Game Over (On/Off): Set if you'd like the game to end when any pilot takes damage (nullifies Pilot Health, Continues and Revivals). Only Available in Free Mode.

User-Interface & Controls

Menu Interface

Splash Screen > Main Menu/Title Screen

>Arcade Mode

>Free Mode

>Options

>Credits

>Quit

HUD

HUD must display pilot portrait, health, limit meter and score. Limit meter might take form of a circular meter that hovers around the pilot.

Controls

Controls can be mapped to player's preference and to either keyboard or controller (including arcade stick). Default keyboard mappings listed.

z = Fire/Confirm

x = Tag/Cancel

c = Limit Break

esc = Pause/Quit

Arrow Keys for movement

Story, Setting & Characters

Story

Premise

Tarragon, a mysterious, young witch with a knack for cookery, finds herself in the bustling port town of Chai-Lavaa. Deciding to rest at a tea shop she overhears an old man telling tales of an island off of the coast that is home to a now-abandoned palace that once housed the most beautiful botanical gardens in the whole land. It also houses a great treasure sought after by many a pirate and brigand but no soul has ever returned alive as it is protected by the palace's guardian spirit, a wise and powerful Djinn. However, he explains, for those willing to fight there is a chance to return with untold treasures, the glory of accomplishing the impossible, the discovery of technological knowledge lost to the ages, the spiritual

awakening that comes with facing a Djinn, and of course, the chance to obtain one of the last aubergines in existence!

In-Game Story

The game starts as Tarragon convinces another of the customers at the tea shop to quest to the island with her. They leave the tea shop and head to the harbour where they start their adventure flying over the ocean to reach the island itself. Once they arrive they must fly through the dark forest that encloses the island before reaching the scorched wasteland of what used to be the surrounding gardens. The wastelands are now home to pirates and brigands who operate their unsavoury businesses from the safety of the secluded island. Finally our heroes reach the Palace that sits atop the lone mountain on the island, and they make a dash to the throne room where the Djinn resides. The final battle sees our heroes facing off against a powerful god-like figure.

Resolution

Upon defeating the Djinn our heroes find themselves in the treasure room of the Palace and they finally land. The Djinn compliments them on their fighting ability and strong wills and thanks them for freeing him of his shackles. In the treasure room our heroes find heaps of gold and gems, blueprints for fantastical machines, a place to pray and a vegetable patch with a few aubergines. Tarragon proceeds to cook an aubergine based dish related to whatever the player selected as their favorite food at the start of the game.

Locations

Chai-Lavaa

A bustling port town that serves as the start of our heroes' adventure.

Ocean

The first stage. A serene ocean the player must cross in order to reach the island. Enemies include sea monsters, seagulls and pirates.

Forest

Second stage. A dark and mystical forest that surrounds the entirety of the island.

Wasteland

What was once the grounds of the palace has been ruined and bleached by the Sun returning it to a barren wasteland. Camps of brigands and bandits reside here. Enemies include said bandits, desert beasts.

Palace

Final destination. The crumbling palace is infested with bats, ghosts, skeletons, and anything the Djinn wants to chuck at you!

Characters

Playable Characters

Tarragon

Description

A mysterious, young witch from parts unknown. She travels around the world with her sentient custard buddy Mush, trying to find exotic ingredients, new recipes and generally just what she's doing with her life. Sweet, somewhat care-free and with a definite sense of adventure, Tarragon does have a habit of getting herself into all sorts of crazy situations and has made many a silly decision on an empty stomach. Her reason for adventuring to the island is to obtain an aubergine, a very rare ingredient in this world!

How She Plays

Tarragon prides herself on her ability to work as part of a team with anyone. Stat-wise she's somewhat average with decent attack, speed and defence. As a result her partner has a big impact on how she rolls out in the field. Her firing pattern is a forward facing wide shot with a medium-speed rate of fire, useful for taking down any sort of enemy.

Limit Break: "Heart Food"

Increases the effect of all stat modifiers applied to Tarragon.

Soto

Description

A curious, shark-man from the distant Jahe Islands where it never ceases to rain. Deeply spiritual, Soto is actually a monk-in-training with magical abilities. He doesn't speak often but is a very cheerful person who is always looking to help others. His reasons for questing to the island lie in his desire to meet with a spiritual being of a higher level than himself so that he may better understand his place in the universe.

How He Plays

Soto is a strong-willed and focused powerhouse. High strength but lower defence and skill, with modifiers focusing on strength. His firing pattern is a forward facing concentrated shot, useful for dealing high amounts of damage to individual enemies.

Limit Break: "Zen Arcade"

Increases the size and power of bullets.

Brie

Description

A booksmart angelic cadet who is studying at the Angelica Academy; training to become an angelic knight. She is currently on a year's leave in order to travel and gain life experience and has found herself in the middle of Chai-Lavaa as a result. Kind, if a little naive, Brie tends to get flustered when she meets new people and often feels a little out of her depth. She wants to vanquish evil and restore order to the island like any good knight would!

How She Plays

Brie is clad in a massive suit of armour as well as being a little defensive in her personality. High defence but with reduced speed. Her firing pattern is split between a smaller concentrated forward facing shot and a wider range of backwards facing guns in order to cover the rear. This handy firing pattern allows her to dispatch enemies approaching from the back that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to hit with other pilots!

Limit Break: "Reckoning"

Surrounds Brie with a halo. Destroys any enemy bullets in the area once used and proceeds to deal damage to any enemies it touches.

Ashe

Description

A somewhat immature, mischievous, twenty-something thief from Chai-Lavaa itself. Arrogant and cocky at times and always wondering what's in it for her, she is a talented thief who grew up on the streets and has a bit of a chip on her shoulder as a result. She's always known about the treasure lying in wait on the island but has never been able to find an appropriately brilliant (and potentially stupid) partner to join her on the caper. That is until she meets Tarragon.

How She Plays

Ash is quick, nimble and always has her eyes on the prize. Higher skill and speed stats but with reduced attack. Her firing pattern is a slightly wide forward facing shot that she can aim by moving. A little tricky to get used to and can put you in a vulnerable position at times but rewards players by allowing a greater range of fire than most characters.

Limit Break: "Midnight Marauder"

Score multiplier is increased and number of score gems dropped during this period is increased.

Bean

Description

A peculiar robot made of parts unknown. Most tend to find him and his behaviour slightly odd and it really doesn't help that weird things tend to happen when he's around. Whilst his social skills are a little lacking he's naturally curious and has a deep fascination with science, nature and technology. He wants to travel to the island in order to find what sort of mysterious lost technologies may be lying there.

How He Plays

Bean is, how can I put this....serendipitous. That is to say, peculiar things tend to happen when Bean is around. High luck and not much else to his name. His firing pattern involves a couple of outward facing guns that orbit around him, allowing him to shoot practically everywhere (but not necessarily when you want him to). Still, it covers a lot of options.

Limit Break: "Fuzzy Logic"

Bean receives a random stat boost as well as a huge boost to his luck stat.

Non-Player Characters

Mush

A large, sentient creme-caramel that Tarragon magicked into existence so she would never have to travel alone. A bit of a grump and tends to worry a lot. He is a reliable friend, however, and always sticks by Tara's side even if he gives her some grief about what it is that she's doing. He is simply tagging along with Tarragon.